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Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, October 7, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAMS

The House resumed from October 6 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I wish to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 43(2) the parliamentary secretary will be speaking for the regular allotted time of 20 minutes. All other government speakers today and for the remainder of the debate will be sharing the time in 10-minute sections.

Mr. Silye: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. We finished off yesterday by announcing that under Standing Order 43(2) we would be splitting our time. We had the last speaker last night. The hon. member for Edmonton Southwest had 10 minutes and 5 minutes. I believe we should be up first today to continue our allotted time, finishing from yesterday.

(1005)

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to the social policy review, the discussion paper, the Liberal plan tabled by the Minister for Human Resources Development.

The credibility of the political process right now in Canada remains very low. People are looking to politicians to be specific, to demonstrate that they at least know where we are going, but what a lackluster performance; a discussion paper which makes a vague attempt to shape a social system which is collapsing.

The minister acknowledges the obvious, a desperate need for change, but how do we get there? We diverge substantially. I would like to see a plan that recommends some courageous and creative changes but the minister obviously prefers to consult, discuss, review and study for another year before he institutes any changes at all.

Adding to the confusion of the Liberals' plan for social reform is the damage created by the leaked details to the press regarding the \$7 billion cut to support programs. The Liberal agreement has now been reduced to merely an issue over money. There are no numbers in the plan to support any defence the government may put forward to stem this challenge to its credibility.

How can the minister in all good conscience continue with his consultation process until all of the questions have been answered with hard numbers to validate his approach to social reform?

This government continues to spend taxpayers' dollars, giving the appearance of action, but it continues to be the Liberal version of action, continued overspending while doing nothing to reduce Canada's deficit and debt load.

The Reform Party has always supported the idea of listening to the voice of the people, what we call the grassroots of Canada. We listen to what they have to say and we have tried to do for them what they have asked.

Canadians are being quite clear. They want leadership and they are challenging government to produce real legislation to reform a shockingly wasteful and battered social safety net. We cannot afford to wait. Canada's debt and deficit are lodestones around the necks of Canadian taxpayers.

The government spends \$110 million a day more than it earns on programs that are antiquated, misguided and that Canadians no longer believe in or support. Given this mindset the government now has an excellent opportunity to begin to overhaul the system and to redirect funds to individuals who need it.

The Reform Party believes that the people of Canada are this country's most valuable resource and that the nurture and development of human knowledge, skills and relationships are the keys to full participation in the 21st century.

We affirm the value and dignity of the individual person and the importance of strengthening and protecting the family unit as essential to the well-being of individuals and society.

Page 9 of the discussion paper states: "As too many older workers and young families have been squeezed out of the middle class our society increasingly has begun to be polarized between well educated, highly skilled Canadians in demand by employers, today's economic elite, and less well educated people without specialized up to date job skills who have been losing ground. Thus the key to dealing with social insecurity

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can be summed up in the single phrase, helping people get and keep jobs”.

How specifically are the Liberals going to ensure people get back to work? It is evident in Canada that the median family standard of living is falling even with two wage earner families. The number of people living in poverty is growing and within that group the number of those who work full time but are still poverty stricken is growing even faster.

The number of unemployed, even counting the part timers as fully employed and not counting the 100,000 who are too discouraged to seek work, is at a shocking 1.1 million Canadians. It is time to get to the root of the problem facing Canadian families and their children.

This problem is ultimately the state of the nation's finances. The reason so many children are reported to be living in poverty is that many are the children of parents who are unemployed. Unemployment still remains above 10 per cent in this country. Even though the Liberals have been throwing billions of dollars into the so-called infrastructure program the unemployment rate has only dropped two-tenths of a point.

Why is the infrastructure program not working? The government is giving billions of dollars to infrastructure projects. Yet here we are one year after the election, billions of dollars poorer and the unemployment rate has barely moved.

We are experiencing an economic polarization that affects everyone.

(1010)

Canadian taxpayers are less able to buy the products that big industry produces. Industry consequently has fewer opportunities for further expansion. The rich consequently have fewer opportunities for investment. Workers consequently have fewer job opportunities. Less money now flows into normal projects and investment cycles. Wages are affected and further restrained and the end result is reduced employment. Who suffers? Our families.

The Liberals continue a status quo approach to Canada's employment dilemma and divert attention from this problem by calling it child poverty. The Liberals suggest that Canada's children live in poverty. The Campaign 2000 group issued a report that condemned the Canadian government and indirectly the compassion and generosity of Canadians. It is alleged that our child poverty rates are higher than all other countries in comparison except for the United States. The statistics that are tossed carelessly about would have us believe that fully 20 per cent of all Canadian children live in poverty. This condemnation leaves a very graphic image in the minds of all who hear it. Children are seen to be living in a deplorable state: malnour-

ished, poorly clothed, poorly housed and under loved. Such careless statements damage the image of Canada both within the country and internationally. This repeated suggestion that 20 per cent of children in Canada live in poverty is not defined. What does this really mean?

The report of the standing committee on health and welfare, social affairs, seniors and the status of women stated on page 5 of its report that the Statistics Canada measures are continually and deliberately misused as poverty measures.

When the Liberals state that 20 per cent of Canadian children live in poverty they are using a definition of poverty that does not conform to what most people think it to mean. This is where the confusion begins. This government is purposefully perpetuating this confusion and is misleading the Canadian public in terms of what the real problem is. Perhaps it has become easier to create a problem that does not really exist than to fix the real one.

Let me explain to the House how this interpretation has been purposefully and carefully crafted. When the Liberals refer to poverty they are referring to a financial state measured by StatsCan low income cut-offs. Each year, StatsCan produces a series of income cut-offs that marks the level of gross income below which families must spend disproportionate amounts on food, clothing and shelter. The cut-offs are commonly referred to as poverty lines. They are adjusted for family size and size of the community in order to reflect differences in basic expenditures. StatsCan considers those whose incomes fall below these lines to be living in straitened circumstances. A poor child is one who is defined as one who lives in a family whose total income is below the low income cut-off.

When StatsCan states that 20 per cent of children live in poverty what it means is that 20 per cent of children live below the low income cut-off point. This LICO is purely relative and does not relate in any way to actual comparable standards of living. Fully 18 per cent of Canada's LICO population own their own homes mortgage free. This issue becomes a matter of responsibility on the part of not only government but Canadians. My party supports the legitimate role of government to do for people whatever they need to have done but cannot do at all—or do as well for themselves—individually or through non-government organizations.

The solution to Canada's dysfunctional social support system is less government interference. Provide assistance in meaningful ways. We need to offer incentives for parents in determining the best choices for child care. Social engineering policies that force parents to place their children into day care are intrusive and discriminatory. Treat all families fairly and remove the day care expense allowance.

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Support single parent families by allowing private collection agencies to go after deadbeat parents delinquent on maintenance payments.

Provide good jobs for Canadians and cut their tax burden, creating a climate of initiative and investment. Stop overspending, balance the budget and begin to pay down our debt which now totals over \$533 billion.

While I recognize the attempt that has been made to wrap some protective arms around Canadians in the name of social reform, the discussion paper is mere rhetorical flourish, long on words, short on numbers and devoid of any plan.

Mr. Murray Calder (Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the hon. member's speech. I have one very short question.

The hon. member's party has repeatedly criticized everything that we have put forward so far, and the social reform is no different. It has said, and I caution it is in *Hansard*, that it is going to cut \$15 billion. From where?

(1015)

Mrs. Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I am going to be quite blunt this morning in my response to the question from the hon. member on the other side of the House.

All that happened yesterday during question period was an attack on the opposition side by the Liberal side of the House. Genuine questions were placed yesterday during question period and all we saw was an attack.

I am going to give an answer this morning to the hon. member and ask him to look at the big picture because this government has failed Canadians financially, socially, economically and constitutionally. Quite frankly, Canadians are fed up, like I am, with this kind of approach to social reform. That is my answer.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister of Human Resources Development and this government for taking on a very important initiative. It is an initiative of historical proportions and is extremely important for this generation of Canadians as we deal with changing dynamics and the changing configuration of the Canadian economy.

If there is one thing that is constant about our society, it is change. If we look at the social, technological and economic changes that have occurred over the past 30 years, it would follow logically that our social programs which were initiated many years ago need to be altered to better deal with the present reality.

Our social programs touch every single individual who resides in this country. It is about the people in this Chamber. It is about our neighbours. It is about our friends. It is about this

country's children. It is about the young people who today are struggling to get that very first important job, to reach that milestone of getting the type of training they require.

Underneath this change and new configuration there is a very simple notion, a simple premise which ties all the issues together. The best form of security for Canadians comes from having a job. That premise underlies every part of this discussion paper.

Canadians want to work not only for economic security but for the sense of purpose and dignity that work provides. The Catholic Children's Aid Society in Toronto expressed this point very well in its submission to the parliamentary standing committee earlier this year. It said that people receive meaning and a sense of who they are from their work. Their well-being, social involvement and contributions are defined by their work. That is what social security reform is all about.

If the best form of security is a job, then our social programs should help people get jobs. Unemployment insurance should really be employment insurance, a springboard to launch people back into the workforce. Employment programs should be measured by one simple criterion: Do they help people get jobs?

Social assistance should help people find jobs, not hinder them. It should provide support where it is needed, but focus on helping people gain independence. That is not the way the system works now. For too many people it does just the opposite, making it harder for people to gain that independence, to access training. For too many people the system gets things backward.

(1020)

This debate is about addressing the real challenges and real problems of real people throughout this country.

In a letter to the Minister of Human Resources Development a divorced mother of two writes about how she tried to get off welfare and how the system abandoned her as a result. She says: "It is very backward that I had to quit my job to provide better for my family".

A young man writes about his pride in staying off UI by taking short term jobs in his desire to improve his job prospects through training, training that he cannot afford unless he quits work and gets UI benefits. He comments: "The price of values is extremely high under the present system". How in heaven's name can we motivate youth with things as they are?

An unemployed worker writes about the bureaucratic red tape that has delayed the training he needs while his UI benefits run out and his life savings are depleted.

A young woman who lost her job writes about programs that seem irrelevant and ineffective. After a year in the system she finds herself no closer to finding a job than the day she started.

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A disabled athlete writes with enthusiasm about his plans to get off welfare and start his own business. He expresses his frustration with the welfare rules that stop him from raising the capital he needs to get the business started.

Is the status quo working for these people? Is the system working for these people? Or is the system that is supposed to help these people actually denying them their rightful opportunity to bring about positive change to their lives?

We could have chosen to do what past governments have done and shy away from this very difficult debate. However we asked Canadians and members in this House to take on the challenge of changing people's lives and their children's lives by providing them with a better tool kit.

Everywhere I go, in every city and town, on every street and avenue, citizens of this great country are looking for change. It is our responsibility to bring about that change. It is our responsibility to give our young people a green light, not a pink slip. It is our responsibility to get people off the welfare rolls and on to the payrolls of our businesses. That is what this debate is all about.

It is clear that things are not working. We can sit idly by and not answer to the changes which are occurring all around us, or we can take some tough decisions and engage Canadians in a meaningful debate about the type of social security system they want.

I would like to look specifically at the options proposed in this debate. Let us look at increasing investment in our people through better employment programs, refocusing unemployment insurance to help people get jobs, and helping parents to balance work and family responsibilities through such measures as funding for better child care.

(1025)

Let us bring children into the fold and give them opportunities. Let us get started the right way. Let us give young people, our children the support they need. Start them off on the right foot so they can look to the future with confidence because they have been given the tools, the nurturing and the love so many of them require. Let us support a welfare system that opens up opportunity and hope instead of locking people into dependence and keeping too many of our children in poverty.

I hear the hon. member from the Reform Party heckling. I think the Reform Party should come clean with Canadians. The only thing it has offered in this debate is that the way to erase poverty in this country is by lowering the level at which we define poverty. That is a simpleton's approach to a very important problem.

The federal government spends more than \$3 billion on employment programs and services like job counselling, training and labour market information. It is or should be a good investment. It should help people get off UI or welfare and back

into paid work. However, far too many people end up in programs that have little to do with opportunities or their needs. Many get training for jobs that do not exist locally. Many are shunted from one training program to the next when all they really need is some basic counselling and advice on what jobs are available.

The key is to build a flexible system. Social programs should serve people, not the other way around. People should not be made to fit into programs. Programs should be made so that people can have access to training. There should be flexibility so that people can go from one program to another to obtain the tool kit they require to participate fully in our economy.

For example only 10 per cent of all UI claimants receive counselling. We have to change that. We have to provide Canadians with wider opportunities, a bigger menu. Sometimes we put people in training programs when what they really require is some counselling and a personal action plan. Give them better labour market information. Tell them where the jobs are and what they should be training for. Tell them what the opportunities are in the present market and give them the required tools so they can get back into the labour force.

The action plan we are talking about would have to be supported by more flexible programs. As I said earlier, people need good information about the job market, more accessible training programs, different kinds of training, classroom training, on the job training, computer based training and distance learning to ensure they get what works best for their situation in their community.

Let us talk about incentives for hiring unemployed workers. In some cases government could pay part of the wages for those unemployed workers who need experience and on the job training. This would make it easier for employers to hire people with employment problems. Funding could also pay wages for unemployed workers to do useful work in their communities or to help unemployed individuals start their own businesses using the available tools. We have to pay more attention to getting results, to making sure that people get the help they need to get jobs. This means less attention to rigid rules and procedures set in Ottawa, more flexibility in letting communities manage their own programs. Businesses, workers, and others in the community can often decide what kind of programs work best at the local level. Let us put the words empowerment for communities, empowerment for the individual, a reality. It is by far the best way to deal with the issues ahead.

(1030)

Let us look at better ways to deal in a co-operative manner with the provinces. Let us talk about a single window approach. People should not have to go to 7, 8, 9, 10 different offices to find out who is going to help them during these difficult times of unemployment and restructuring in our society.

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Let us establish single windows in co-operation with the provinces, with local communities. Let us reach out at the community level and use what we have at our disposal to make sure that people are provided with better services, with better assistance, with a more efficient system that can help them deal with the challenges they face.

In addition, discussions with the provinces should look at improving the federal vocational rehabilitation of disabled persons. This exercise is about maximizing human potential. It is about giving our country the best possible, best skilled workforce available so that people, so that businesses, will be attracted to our nation. They will invest and we will create the type of vibrant community business environment that will speak to generating wealth for our nation.

Better employment programs will depend in part on designing a better UI program. The UI program works well for people who require short-term support while looking for a job but it does not work well for those who need help adjusting to the changes in the job market.

Canadians who find themselves repeatedly out of work need better support to get and keep jobs. The program often discourages adjustment. For some unemployed people there is no incentive to learn new skills that are in demand by employers.

The program is easily abused. Some workers and employers plan their work schedules around the UI program, alternating employment with UI benefits as a way of life. Many working Canadians, such as people in part time jobs or the self-employed, are not covered at all by the existing program.

What does that say about a society that on the one hand speaks about self-employment, promoting business, but then does not provide the support mechanism that is required for business to prosper?

The discussion paper outlines two basic proposals for unemployment insurance. One would work more or less the same way it does now but what is really the key is the adjustment component. Forty per cent of all UI claimants in the past five years have had at least three claims. That tells us that there is a dysfunctional relationship between that individual and the marketplace. So what do we do. We have to provide people with a tool kit that can reintegrate them into the workforce. These are new problems. We are not dealing with cyclical unemployment, we are dealing with structural unemployment. We cannot have the old form of unemployment insurance dealing with the new reality, the new economy. We need to change it, and this is proposed in the discussion paper.

(1035)

There are many options to explore in this approach. For example, we need to decide how long claimants can draw adjustment benefits, and how much they should get. Two of the hardest questions would be the following.

Should benefits be income tested so that the amount a person receives depends on what other family income is available? That is one question we have to openly debate.

Is it fair that an individual who makes \$40,000 or \$50,000, working eight months of the year, receives UI benefits? Is it fair that somebody somewhere making \$18,000 or \$20,000 a year, working 12 months of the year, actually subsidizes that other individual? Is that fair?

An hon. member: Not fair, no.

Mr. Bevilacqua: Is it worth debating?

An hon. member: Yes.

Mr. Bevilacqua: It is worth debating, and that is why the government has placed it in the discussion paper.

The second approach to UI reform does not distinguish between occasional and frequent users. It adjusts the eligibility requirements or the benefits available to all claimants. This involves increasing the time a person must work to get benefits, reducing the length of time that people can draw UI benefits, or lowering the amount a claimant receives.

This approach could save money which might be re-invested in employment services. However, I feel it does not in itself address the real problems of people who have trouble getting and keeping work. Under either approach we should consider the needs of workers in non-standard employment.

More people today work in part time or temporary jobs, or have more than one job. Also there are more self-employed people. Many are not fully covered by unemployment insurance. Some are excluded entirely from UI. If the current trends continue many of these kinds of employment will not be non-standard for long, they will set new standards. If the UI program is going to stay in touch with the needs of Canadians we will have to start thinking about where the new kinds of jobs can fit in.

The discussion paper talks about child care. It talks about restructuring and modernizing Canada's social security system. Many questions need to be answered. I ask Canadians, members of Parliament who will be holding town hall meetings, Canadians whom I think should be sitting around their kitchen tables discussing these key issues, to participate in this historic debate so that we can bring about positive change to the lives of our people.

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[Translation]

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development. There was much that was well-intentioned, but instead of all these words, I would have liked to hear figures and specific proposals.

I would have liked the parliamentary secretary to tell us how much will be cut from employment programs, student assistance programs and income security programs for the neediest in our society. I would have appreciated some figures.

When the Minister of Finance brought down his budget, the figures mentioned were in the billions of dollars. I would have like the parliamentary secretary to show us the courtesy of explaining how this applies to the government's proposals, or in any case, the proposals mentioned in the paper. If that means three or four or five billion dollars less invested by governments in social programs, it would have been nice if he had said so. I think that is the least we could expect.

(1040)

I also wish he had elaborated somewhat on the implications of the minister's proposals for provincial jurisdictions. We are getting into a big federal-provincial squabble here. Of course, as a sovereigntist Quebecer, I do not really mind because I see the federal government and the State of Quebec as having entirely different objectives, and I think they should each have their own policies. When I see the federal government massively invading provincial jurisdictions, it merely confirms my arguments in favour of Quebec's sovereignty. I should be pleased, but in a way I am not because, once again, the neediest in our society, in Canada and Quebec, will have to wait and listen to all these discussions, and meanwhile, there will be no solutions on the horizon.

In other words, I would have liked to see some clearcut proposals at last. Basically, the minister is inviting us to participate in a big dialogue. It is like being invited to *Parler pour parler*, on TV. For six months, Canadians and Quebecers will discuss the minister's proposals but there will be no solutions on the table. I would have like to hear this: "We, as a government, propose to deal with unemployment this way; we propose to deal with unemployment in another way; and we propose to invest certain amounts in income security". Nothing is being proposed. We are invited to talk about it, to discuss it amongst ourselves. That was the comment I wanted to make.

I also have a question for the parliamentary secretary. So far, I can see no proposals in this document concerning employment. However, the parliamentary secretary did say that some jobs in Canada were not being filled because Canadians lack training. I wish he would tell us which newspaper today, in English Canada

or in Quebec, has pages and pages of want ads with jobs that will not be filled because people lack skills. We do not find that in the papers. The papers tell us that the unemployment rate is between 10 and 12 per cent. The papers tell us that people want training but are not getting it.

We have a society that tells us: "We are going to help you find a job", but as far as anyone can see, there are not that many jobs to go around.

So I wish the parliamentary secretary would help me in this respect. Where should my constituents in Jonquière look to find all these job offers in Canada?

[English]

Mr. Bevilacqua: Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to what the hon. member said. I have a bit of a problem with some of the comments he made vis-à-vis federal-provincial relations.

If the hon. member takes some time to read the program as outlined by the federal government, he will see that we have a very caring federal government which is reaching out to the provinces in a number of ways.

We have a federal proposal dealing with the management and planning of the labour market, a single window approach which I am sure the hon. member would like to support in the province of Quebec, to make our system more efficient and to avoid the waste and duplication that occur in various programs we deal with as federal and provincial governments.

On the issue of fiscal parameters, the hon. member should read that section once again. It is in the green paper. It is quite clear. We spoke about it in the last budget. The hon. member knows about the \$2.4 billion that we cut from UI. That is in here. The government was elected on a commitment to reach 3 per cent of the GDP deficit reduction target. That is in this book.

(1045)

We are being extremely upfront with Canadians. In reference to job creation, I find it quite ironic that we have created over 275,000 jobs. Nothing illustrates more the success of the government than what we have been able to do in the riding of the official opposition critic of human resources development. When she came into office in October the unemployment rate in her riding was 12.3 per cent. I am happy to report to the House of Commons that the unemployment rate in her riding is now 9.1 per cent. I do not hear members of the Bloc Québécois congratulating us on such initiatives, and may I add that members on that side rise in the House day in and day out.

When we look at job growth the province of Quebec is number two in Canada. That speaks to the type of programs the government has initiated in bringing about what we refer to as positive change in the lives of the people of Quebec.

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On the issue of the general philosophical thrust of the government, when we look at legislation that has gone through the House already; when we look at the fact that our Canada student loans legislation, which was approved by the House, has a section that deals with special opportunity grants for disabled Canadians, for women who are pursuing doctoral studies, for high need students, and for people who come from lower incomes; and when we look at the whole notion of deferred grants where students graduating with debt loads of \$22,000 are seeing them reduced by \$6,000 by the federal government, it speaks to the spirit in which we operate.

Let us also look at the unemployment insurance changes we made in the last budget. Low income unemployed Canadians with dependants are receiving the highest possible benefit rate of 60 per cent; 27,000 people have benefited from that change.

For the life of me I do not know where the hon. member has been in the past few months. We have moved very quickly since the October 25 election when we received an overwhelming mandate from the people of Canada on legislation that speaks to improving the quality of life of Canadians from coast to coast to coast, including those in the province of Quebec.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested to hear the member mention in his speech that we may have to take a look at the size of family incomes when we talk about social services. I think that is a really great idea.

The biggest problem we face at the end of the process is that most members in the House will not be permitted to vote freely on whatever legislation the government decides to bring down. They will end up having to toe the party line regardless of all the consultation that took place in the ridings. As the House knows, I am originally from New Zealand and I have seen what happens when consultation goes on and on and on.

Is the member taking responsibility for letting his constituents know that the whole area of social programs is costing a phenomenal amount of money?

Mr. Bevilacqua: Mr. Speaker, I engage in very extensive consultation in my riding. I take great pride in representing the views of my constituents.

Talking about free votes, I have not noticed too many people voting against their own parties; everybody stands at the same time. Let us put the rhetoric aside for a second and address the reality of the fact that the Reform Party operates more or less like any other traditional party.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this very important subject.

I recognize, as do many of my colleagues in the House, the need to reform our social safety net. There are several compel-

ling reasons for that reform. We live in a world where more and more skills are needed to meet the needs of more and more jobs today. It is also a world of rapid technological change and we have an aging labour force.

(1050)

We live in a society where unfortunately marital breakdown has become more commonplace, leading to poverty. That is one of the reasons I am a strong advocate of returning to traditional family values and of policies which help families stay together. We live in a society where those in need can rely less and less on their families and communities for help.

Canada's current income security programs were set up at a time when unemployment, regardless of skills, was a brief condition between jobs; when the one-income two-parent family was the rule; and when child poverty was hardly talked about, let alone measured.

Canada has seen great change in the last decade alone. The former government was working on reforms that would help Canadians meet today's challenges, reforms that would reorient passive income support programs to an active investment in people; reforms that would remove barriers that prevent many from becoming active members of the labour force; reforms that would replace disjointed programs with a coherent system.

Social policy must be designed for people. More specifically it should be designed for the people who need the most. Canadians already pay enough taxes to have some of the most generous social programs in the world. Our challenge is to use the money already in the system to make programs as flexible as possible so recipients can receive the benefits to meet their needs and become self-reliant.

We must encourage individuals to break the cycle of dependency and help them to help themselves. I realize, as many Canadians realize, that if we do nothing the quality of these programs will deteriorate. Social policy must be updated to fit the realities of the nineties and the 21st century so that all Canadians can participate and face the opportunities and challenges ahead with confidence.

I will be listening to my constituents in the days, weeks and months ahead and getting their input, but these are some of my initial concerns with the green paper. I am not convinced the government's discussion paper contains a coherent set of proposals that will let us move in the direction which I have been talking about.

I am deeply concerned about the time it has taken the government to bring forward the discussion paper. It was a paper that we were supposed to see in the spring. We should now, according to the original timetable, be looking at legislation. While we were waiting and as we continue to wait, thousands of people and thousands of mothers and families wanted and want to leave welfare but could not and cannot because they would lose the dental and medical benefits their children need.

S. O. 31

As members of Parliament we are often called on to help people in dire straits, people who are not worried about constitutional niceties like a division of powers. For example, I know a family with a severely disabled child. In the past the family has been able to count on government support to help meet the needs of their child, but no longer.

Families such as these look to the federal and provincial governments to work together to rationalize programs so they help those most in need. Some of the most worrisome parts of the paper are the suggestions for changes in UI, worrisome because in its two-tier proposal the government was unable to offer a definition of frequent user.

In areas of Atlantic Canada we have people who can be considered frequent users of UI. It is not because they are abusing the system. Nor are their employers abusing the system. It is because some parts of our economy are highly seasonal. That is why Atlantic Canadians need a coherent system of programs that will allow them to move with the changing times. What they do not need are proposals that cut them off at the knees.

Canada's strength has always been to combine a strong economy with a commitment to a secure social safety net that supports the needs of Canadians. Historically we have proven to be practical people who see that we have to move forward and adapt to changing conditions in order to keep our high quality of life.

I am not convinced the government's proposals will let us do that. This has been said in the past but let me repeat it because I am a firm believer in it: Good economic policy goes hand in hand with good social policy and vice versa.

We should all want to protect programs that work and change the ones that do not. We should all want to see to it that our workforce is trained to the highest standards. We should all want to make sure that our educational system produces graduates who can take full advantage of opportunities in a constantly changing economy. We want those graduates to have long term, high paying jobs. We want an educational system that encourages lifelong learning.

(1055)

I do not believe Canadians will be well served by an approach to social policy that wants governments to borrow billions of dollars or impose more taxes on Canadians to retain a false and unrealistic sense of security. Nor will they be well served by an approach that will simply rip apart the social fabric. We need a reasonable approach with the watchwords of fairness, efficiency, self-sufficiency and dignity.

I will support proposals that advocate that approach and make the system more proactive. Hopefully before it is too late the government can offer such suggestions because I fear the discussion paper released yesterday does not. In fact in the words of a wise man, "never has a government taken so long to say so little".

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I remind the hon. member across the way that this is a discussion paper. Some of the things I have heard over the last day have really concerned me; I heard a lot of partisan politics.

We were elected this time to do the very best we could. We should offer strong, viable solutions rather than rhetoric, niggling and sniping. I have heard very little concrete suggestions or very little from members about what they will actually do for input into the government before this is made government policy.

I am really looking for some concrete suggestions. What will the member who has just spoken with such heartfelt feelings about some of the suggestions in the paper do to ensure that there is good input into this paper?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member will have time to answer the question after question period.

It being 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

LUPUS AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, October has been proclaimed National Lupus Awareness Month. Lupus is an autoimmune disease that affects thousands of Canadians, mostly women during child bearing years.

The cause of Lupus is yet unknown. As one of its priorities the government has issues relevant to women's health. Here we have an example of an illness that affects women for which treatment is limited and about which medical science has yet much to learn.

I encourage all members of the House to support the many volunteer groups at work all year round to help and support the individuals affected by the disease.

Please join me in extending best wishes to Lupus Canada for a successful awareness month.

*S. O. 31***NATIONAL DEBT**

Mr. Ivan Grose (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, today I address an annoying action being taken regularly by some hon. members opposite. Each day they list the current amount of national debt, down to the last penny.

What they fail to do is list the assets balancing the debt. I have no doubt that if they were asked to list their personal net worth they would declare their property mortgage, car loan, credit card balance and maybe even the balance owing to their tailors for the suits they are wearing. I have no doubt hon. members would then list their property, cars, et cetera, as assets, pointing out the equity they had in the items.

In the interest of fairness, if they persist in these statements I will at every opportunity list the assets of our country from each plane, train and ship, down to the last public toilet, bus and buffalo.

We could start with the building in which we stand. I trust it is paid for by this time.

* * *

[*Translation*]**MEMBER FOR
BONAVENTURE—ÎLES-DE-LA-MADELEINE**

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies): Mr. Speaker, to our great surprise, the member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, the Liberal Party's specialist on statements under S.O. 31, has dissociated himself from his party's caucus and expressed reservations about the proposed reform of social programs. He said: "I have some reservations about occupational training, etc."

To show his dissent and to distance himself from his party, the member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine joined a strategic friend in his party, the member for York South—Weston, who said: "For the ten years we were the Official Opposition, we accused the Conservatives of reducing the deficit on the backs of the poor and we are doing exactly the same thing".

I therefore call on the Liberal Party's No. 31 to pay attention to his fine career, because breaking the party line is unlikely to please his Prime Minister or many other people, for that matter.

* * *

[*English*]**NATIONAL UNITY**

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, Monday night the Reform Party heard the views of thousands of Canadians during an historic nationwide electronic townhall meeting.

Unlike the Prime Minister, these Canadians are willing to look at new methods of solving the problem. Ninety-three per cent of the more than 10,000 callers want to see an end to the national unity issue. Fifty-seven per cent believe the best course of action is to change the system for all of Canada, with 92 per cent saying that change should come from the people.

While the Prime Minister has stated that he finds referenda revolting, he might want to pay attention to these results. The Prime Minister has also said that Reform wants to discuss this issue because we are a failure with other issues.

Failure is defined in the dictionary as a falling short of what is wanted or expected, in not doing, neglecting. Based on these definitions, it would appear that the word failure is best used to describe Liberal policies when they have them.

* * *

ST. CATHARINES' OKTOBERFEST

Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, the fall season is upon us and in St. Catharines fall means Oktoberfest.

This year Oktoberfest will be held from October 15 to 23. It features special events at local clubs, pubs, city hall, the St. Catharines centennial library and much more. The festival means music, food and the occasional beer, a nine-day celebration of Bavarian fun.

As Canada's oldest Oktoberfest, St. Catharines is very proud on this its 34th annual festival.

Special thanks and congratulations to the St. Catharines Oktoberfest—Pumpkinfest committee and to the many volunteers who will make this event great.

I encourage everyone to visit St. Catharines next week. As president Stephen Ruf and CHSC Morning Mayor John Larocque say, come for the friendship, come for the music, come for the food and come for the fun.

* * *

AIDS

Ms. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre): Mr. Speaker, look around the House. Many persons are wearing red ribbons.

The red ribbon has become the symbol for AIDS, the commitment to end this tragic disease and a memorial to the men, women and children who have died in its lethal grip.

Last Sunday I attended the 8th annual walk for AIDS in Vancouver. Thousands of men and women, seniors and families walked to raise badly needed funds for community services and to increase public awareness of this tragic disease; walking in solidarity against a virus that wreaks global devastation but also walking in triumph of life over death, of compassion over prejudice.

S. O. 31

Sadly some still remain ignorant of the origins of the HIV virus. They stigmatize and stand in judgment of those who are sick and dying from AIDS. Therefore in this week of AIDS awareness, I implore all Canadians to fight ignorance and prejudice, to wear the red ribbon in celebration of the courage of those who live with AIDS, in respect of those who have died of AIDS and in hope of the day when AIDS will be banished from our world.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MANPOWER TRAINING

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères): Mr. Speaker, after the referendum episode, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs is still up to his tricks, with a skill and subtlety that no one expected.

This time, the incorrigible minister is telling us what he thinks about labour force training: he is offering the provinces half a loaf and suggesting that the other half will be negotiated later. He might as well have added that the federal government will take the best part and leave the crumbs for the provinces.

However, the minister should understand that Quebecers were not born to accept crumbs.

His intention not to transfer full responsibility for labour force training to Quebec, on the pretext of national standards, is the cavalier response of the federal government to the broad consensus expressed by Quebecers.

Drawing on the famous cartoon character Gaston Lagaffe, I say to the minister: "Keep it up and thanks!"

* * *

(1105)

[*English*]

BREAST CANCER

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to challenge the medical community to assume a more aggressive approach to breast cancer research.

Women are asking why it is taking so long to answer questions about breast cancer. No one even really knows what causes it.

The cancer establishment continues to focus on basic research, treatment and diagnosis. We should be exploring further than that: toxins in the environment and their effects, the relationship between smoking and breast cancer.

I know what it is to feel the abject terror of a potential breast malignancy. There is nothing lonelier or more fearful and there is not anyone who can remove that fear.

We need to consider this statistic: one in nine women will get breast cancer. Look around this Chamber, that means six of us here.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. It is time to refocus our energies and find a cure.

* * *

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow marks the 23rd anniversary of a visionary policy that recognizes the cultural diversity of Canada and ensures the cultural freedom of all Canadians.

Former Prime Minister Trudeau said in this House: "There cannot be one cultural policy for Canadians of British and French origin, another for the original peoples and yet a third for all others".

Designed to integrate and not assimilate all Canadians in every facet of Canadian life, the policy of multiculturalism has become the envy of countries around the world struggling to integrate minorities into the mainstream of their societies.

Today multiculturalism continues to contribute to a shared sense of Canadian identity and societal cohesion.

Let us reaffirm through this policy our commitment to managing the diversity within our society to the benefit of Canada as a whole, that it may remain a united, strong and prosperous country.

* * *

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of Canadians the importance of business development corporations. At the same moment that we are looking at a wide ranging revision of our programming through human resources development it is important that we recognize programs that work well.

Since 1981 over 200 BDCs have been providing loans to small businesses. In Ontario 55 BDCs have granted over \$115 million in loans to almost 5,000 businesses. Companies exist today which otherwise would not.

The job creation impact has been impressive. In Ontario the program has created 10,926 jobs at an average cost of only \$6,200. Even more impressive is the realization that the corporations make loans which have been turned down by traditional lenders and that in 93 per cent of the cases the advances are repaid in an orderly fashion.

BDCs are a success story of small business support and job creation. They deserve continued support.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AIDS

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonnette): Mr. Speaker, AIDS is now an unavoidable reality in Quebec and Canadian society. It is more than ten years since the first AIDS case was diagnosed in Montreal. The AIDS epidemic is far from abating

and it is now reaching population groups that so far were thought to be safe from it.

Unfortunately, no effective remedy to relieve the people affected exists yet. Only prevention can stop the virus from spreading. A public inquiry revealed that less than a third of high school students said that they used a condom the first time they had sex. These facts clearly show that governments must support community organizations which, better than anyone else, reach people where they live. In closing, I want to thank all the community organizations for the support that they give affected people.

* * *

[English]

SOCIAL POLICY

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House the Minister of Human Resources Development gave a speech on social programs. In that speech he outlined the type of attitude he felt would be needed in examining Canada's social programs, the need for co-operation, earnest debate, the free exchange of ideas and, most important, the need to refrain from deliberate, partisan cheap shots.

No sooner did he get those words out of his mouth than he proceeded to deliver a cheap shot of his own by repeating the ludicrous charge that the Reform Party would cut \$15 billion out of social programs. This is rubbish, old style politics and he knows it. It is the Liberal government that is facing \$15 billion in cuts out of total program spending if it is to meet its meagre deficit targets.

Canadians deserve better than this type of irresponsible scare mongering. Preying on the fears of the needy is no way to garner the respect of the people of this country.

When it comes to partisan cheap shots the do as I say, not as I do attitude is totally unacceptable. The minister should reread his speech and follow his own advice.

* * *

(1110)

[Translation]

BLOC QUEBECOIS

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle): Mr. Speaker, on October 2, the Montreal daily *La Presse* published an article entitled "Le Bloc lance ses troupes à la chasse au vote souverainiste sans attendre" (the Bloc decides to go after sovereignist vote now).

In it, we learn that the official opposition whip is exhorting the separatists to infiltrate local community service centres, school boards, municipal governments and any other organization or body controlled by so-called federalists.

S. O. 31

The message is clear—the Bloc cares not a whit about the administration of government and the quality of services delivered to the public. The Bloc is now pushing an out-and-out sovereignist propaganda campaign. This will rapidly turn into a exercise in demagoguery that can only destroy the country.

* * *

[English]

SOCIAL POLICY REFORM

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to commend the Minister of Human Resources Development on his discussion paper on social policy reform.

We made a promise last fall that there would be a different way of doing things in Ottawa. This week we proved that. The road to social policy reform will be navigated by the entire country, not just by politicians and bureaucrats in Ottawa. This government, unlike the previous one, is not interested in fighting the deficit on the backs of the poor and the unemployed. Nor are we interested in the system collapsing and serving nobody. By working with all Canadians we can deliver what we promised, a vibrant and prosperous economy in a country in which the need for social programs will decline.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, as of September 28 the government's infrastructure program claims to have created 71,000 jobs. Even if that were true, these jobs are only short term. By its own admission with the total expenditure of \$4.5 billion just 10 per cent of these jobs are permanent. It comes as no surprise on this side of the House that some provinces have received no long term jobs at all.

B.C., Prince Edward Island, Yukon and First Nations people have none. Saskatchewan, though, has six long term jobs and, hurray, Manitoba gets three. The most obvious fact is even less of a surprise; the lion's share, 73 per cent of the long term jobs, has been created in one province alone. Which province could that be? Of course, that province is the minister's own.

The infrastructure score is Ontario, 5,140; British Columbia, zero. The taxpayer, as usual, loses the entire political shell game by \$4.5 billion.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister of Canada will soon undertake an important trade mission to Asia with his provincial counterparts to try to find new markets for Canadian services and products.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

The objective is to find new markets. In line with the decision taken last December, the Prime Minister was to go to Asia with his provincial and territorial counterparts. Until recently, all the premiers were to accompany him with one exception: the premier of Quebec is still refusing to be a part of Team Canada.

Contrary to the explanations of the leader of the Bloc Québécois that Mr. Parizeau has more pressing obligations, we have just learned that the Quebec premier will in fact be taking a holiday at that time. Instead of representing Quebec on Team Canada, he will apparently be on vacation. Imagine! This is shameful!

* * *

*[English]***ST. ANDREWS**

Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, this past Monday the town of St. Andrews, New Brunswick launched its daffodil project by planting several thousand bulbs. This project is being carried out for two major reasons: for the beautification of the town and to complement the already thriving tourist industry in that area.

These are the types of initiatives that assist in moving our tourism industries forward. I would like to congratulate the town of St. Andrews and its citizens on this worthy project. Not only did the community participate in its own program, but the town was also kind enough to provide daffodil bulbs for planting here on Parliament Hill.

I am sure that next April when they bloom we will all recall this donation from St. Andrews by the Sea.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

(1115)

*[Translation]***SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM**

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The centralizing offensive being mounted by Ottawa with its reform of social programs has already caused a general outcry, and not just in Quebec. Yesterday, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs categorically rejected, for the first time moreover, the complete transfer to Quebec of federal responsibilities in the area of manpower training.

Does the Minister of Human Resources Development confirm the statement by his colleague the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs that Ottawa is announcing that the federal government will refuse to transfer full responsibility for manpower training to Quebec?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, last spring we proposed a new three year agreement on manpower training to all the provinces. As I said yesterday in the House, it included a transfer of responsibility for institutional training and training that is purchased in community colleges and CEGEPs.

We indicated our willingness to invite the provinces to plan priorities for federal resource investments in each province. In the case of Quebec where we spend about \$800 million, that takes in an envelope of almost \$500 million. We indicated our willingness to work with them on a system of guichet unique, of single window deliveries. We also indicated that if the provinces would be willing we would look at transferring responsibility for some of the programs which are more clearly in the educational field, such as stay in school programs and others.

Several provinces have responded positively and quite constructively. We are in the process of negotiating with them. We have not heard officially from the new Government of Quebec as to what its response to that agreement would be.

Let me make one important point. These are our proposed three year agreements. There is no point in having longer term agreements until we know what the new structure of our programs will be. There is no point in reassembling or reallocating programs that may not exist or that may be changed or altered. Therefore, the three year interim agreement is a very good demonstration of how we are prepared to be flexible. We are prepared to assign more responsibility to the provinces in areas of their competence. We want to work in co-operation with the provinces.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, the minister has perhaps not heard back from Quebec, but former premier Johnson, a Liberal and a federalist as well, said during the recent election campaign in Quebec that he was not interested in this sort of half-measure from the federal government.

I come back to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, who said that what they were proposing did not run counter to Quebec's demands, that they were meeting Quebec halfway. What they are saying is "Take half the loaf now and we'll negotiate the other half later".

Oral Questions

Does the government realize that in stubbornly refusing to give Quebec the whole loaf in the areas of training and manpower, it is perpetuating the duplication and waste that are costing Quebec over \$250 million, at the expense of those people who would like to return to work?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): On the contrary, Mr. Speaker. The federal government is showing a great deal of interest in working with provinces to redesign how we can better deliver services and programs.

We already have agreements in place with a number of provinces. We just signed one with Ontario four weeks ago to establish a new Ontario training board where the federal and provincial governments would co-operate with business and labour to deliver services. We are certainly interested in doing that with other provinces as well.

The study referred to by the hon. member, frankly, was a study not based on sound analysis. The hon. member took analysis done by the OECD covering 15 countries. He took an artificial figure and applied it across Quebec. He did not take the actual numbers. Therefore, any judgments being made are really subject to serious reconsideration. We have already submitted to the province of Quebec a reassessment of those numbers. I think you will see the duplication that is there is primarily because in many cases it is not on the federal side. We would like to see single window deliveries, and I think that is the key to it.

(1120)

[Translation]

We need single window capability. All partners, the community groups, labour, the business community, the provinces and the federal government would share the work and collaborate on the review of services to serve every member of the public better.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, when he questions the \$250-million figure, the minister is actually questioning Robert Bourassa, Daniel Johnson and former minister Bourbeau, all of whom happen to be Liberals as well as federalists. In fact, they should have said so during this past election campaign, but they chose not to for quite understandable reasons. It did not make much difference anyway.

When the minister talks about co-operation, does he realize that, for two or three years now, there has been a consensus in Quebec amongst unions, business circles, the co-operative movement, the academic community and even the Liberal Party of Quebec that all powers concerning manpower should be repatriated in Quebec?

How can the minister contend that his government is committed to discussing, or even co-operating, with the provinces, while it rejects from the outset one of Quebec's fundamental demands which enjoys widespread support among all the socio-economic stakeholders in Quebec?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, as I said in my first answer, we have already made an offer to all the provinces to transfer training responsibility to them. The member does not seem to have understood the importance of that particular statement in his scripted lines. It seems to me that would be a good demonstration at this time of how we can share.

One thing not on the table is the unemployment insurance program. It is a national program. It is clearly in the Constitution. It is one program by which we can ensure that this country's resources are shared from one region to another to help those most in need. By the way, the hon. member well knows that Quebec has benefited mightily under that sharing over the past many years.

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Not only does the reform herald an unprecedented centralization effort, but one of its objectives is to reduce substantially the federal contribution to social assistance funding. This will leave the province no choice but to either increase their tax rates to compensate for the withdrawal of the federal government or cut back welfare benefits.

How does the minister want us to take seriously his government's stated objective to do more for children living in poverty, when Ottawa is cutting its transfer payments to the provinces for social assistance? How can it be taken seriously? How contradictory, Mr. Speaker!

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the hon. member was last February or where he has been since, but that was clearly announced in the federal budget last February. I am glad that after nine months he is finally able to catch up with the figures.

There was a clear declaration in the budget that we were going to hold transfer payments under these programs at the 1993-94 level. As a result we have started to work with the provinces to find ways of more efficiently dealing with the problems of social assistance. We have already worked with provinces to find collaborative ways of enabling people on social assistance to get back to work, to begin to change the rules.

Oral Questions

That is one of the things which is part and parcel of the green book. We are prepared to immediately work with the provinces to change the rules under the Canada assistance plan to enable almost 50 per cent of those who are on social assistance and want to get back into the workforce to do so without being prohibitively discriminated against by losing income. The best way to handle the social assistance problem is to get people a job.

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, the minister wishes to know where I was in February. I would like to tell him through you that, if he was to the left of the Liberal Party in the past, he is moving far to the right with this reform.

How can he claim that he wants to help disadvantaged children, when the main consequence of his reform would be to impoverish the parents? How can he claim that he wants to help disadvantaged children?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, obviously the hon. member has not talked to the people who are on social assistance. They want to have self-sufficiency. They want to have independence. They want to be able to earn an income for their families. They do not want to stay on dependency.

(1125)

That is what this green paper is all about. It is about giving people real hope that they do not have to be dependent on a program and cheque, but once again can go to work.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, the government claims to be concerned about education and job skills for Canadians but the social policy discussion paper tabled yesterday calls for the virtual elimination of federal transfers in support of higher education.

At the same time the government continues to spend billions of dollars on subsidies to businesses, interest groups and crown corporations. The minister must have had some set of spending priorities in preparing this paper. I ask the Minister of Human Resources Development, where does the funding of post-secondary education come in the government spending priorities?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, it clearly comes very high because we are committed to an expenditure of over \$8 billion to help the provinces in the area of higher education. It seems to me that we are prepared to put our money where our mouth is, unlike the hon. leader of the Reform Party.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, slashing \$1.5 billion from transfers to higher education hardly seems like an indication of high priority.

In developing our approach on this issue, Reformers have said that the federal government ought to maintain as its highest spending priorities transfers in support of health care and education. We have advocated cutting virtually everything else in order to sustain those spending priorities.

I ask the minister, why does the government not preserve federal funding for post-secondary education at current levels and get more bang for the buck by transferring that funding directly to students through educational vouchers rather than to the provinces and the institutions?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, the question posed by the hon. leader of the Reform Party shows one thing clearly: He has not read the green book. If he had read it, he would have learned a couple of important facts.

He likes to deal in facts. I am going to give him some facts. Number one is that present transfer arrangements under the existing EPF means the provinces are getting a substantial increase in revenue by the tax points we transfer to them. Therefore the revenue to provinces is going up for education through the tax points, but as a result of the existing formula the cash transfer declines over a period of time on a proper ratio.

If the hon. leader of the Reform Party would understand that fact, he would not be using the kind of nonsensical statement that we are slashing programs. In fact the revenue is growing. We are saying that rather than having the cash disappear over a 10 year period, let us use that money in order to lever an additional \$3 billion back into higher education to assist all kinds of Canadians in going back to school. That is what is called creative government.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, students know the difference between a repayable loan and a non-repayable voucher. I was endeavouring to get the minister to consider this more innovative way of transferring funding for higher education by paying directly to the students through non-repayable vouchers rather than through either tax points or transfers directly to the provinces.

Hundreds of thousands of students are worried that the federal government's withdrawal from federal support of higher education will damage the quality of their education. Students worry that the minister's scheme will end up loading themselves with a higher and higher debt load. Is the minister in his vaunted consultation process intending to travel and talk to university and college students to explain his position to them? I am certain he will get a warm welcome if he does.

Oral Questions

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, the whole point of having an open consultation process which has been opposed by the members of the Reform Party is to allow a forum in which new ideas can come about.

They say they did not do it. They have changed their minds since yesterday because five members of the Reform Party, including the leader of the party, got up yesterday and said: "Do not have consultation. Do not have open participation. Do not consult the people. Do something now". We do not believe in that philosophy. I say to the leader of the Reform Party that if he has a better way of proposing aid for students: "Put it forward. Come to the committee. Here is the chairman right here. Suggest it to the committee. That is why we have an open process".

(1130)

I also say to the leader of the Reform Party: "That is called democracy".

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The social program reform proposes establishing two classes of unemployed workers: occasional UI claimants and frequent UI claimants, that is, 40 per cent of recipients, notably seasonal workers. We know that the Government of New Brunswick is particularly critical of the reform on this point.

Does the Minister of Human Resources Development realize that the UI reform he proposes will heavily penalize the economy of the regions, which is very dependent on seasonal activities like fishing, forestry and tourism?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased the hon. member asked that question, because just about 45 minutes ago I had the privilege of being with the premier of New Brunswick in a public session wherein he said very explicitly that he supports the philosophy and direction of our reform paper.

Furthermore he said that he appreciates the efforts we are making in the announcements we made last Monday in terms of a new employment enhancement program for seasonal workers, a new program of earning supplements and the experiments we are trying on UI eligibility requirements in the Atlantic prov-

inces, particularly in Prince Edward Island, as a way of providing real support to make that transition.

If the hon. member is at all interested I invite him to sit down with us. We would be prepared to go through with him, as we have done with the premier of New Brunswick, about how we can use this important time to have a real serious examination of the interest and concerns of industries with seasonal workers. That has not really been examined in the country for a long time; we have simply let things happen.

Under this kind of review process we can seriously begin to look at the conditions and concerns of seasonal workers to make sure we build a new social security system that meets their needs.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup): Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised that Mr. McKenna was admonished by his federal big brother. Will the Minister admit, as his colleague of Intergovernmental Affairs did, that the reform he is proposing is not a miracle cure, that it will hit seasonal workers very hard, and particularly those in forestry who cannot work twelve months a year?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, it is very unfortunate when members of the Bloc run out of any substantial argument that they turn to personal insult. The fact that they would have that kind of attitude toward one of the most distinguished public servants in Canada simply does not deserve a response.

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound): Mr. Speaker, my question is unexpectedly for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Yesterday the minister promised that he would make available technical papers containing estimates of the costs and savings of the reform alternatives he has set out in the green book. These estimates are demanded by everyone taking the reform proposals seriously. They are absolutely essential for the upcoming budget consultations by the House finance committee.

Will the minister assure Canadians that these technical papers will contain estimates of costs and savings and give us a precise date for their publication?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can give the assurance that we will give the economic scenarios that are required. We will work as quickly as we can to have all the papers.

Oral Questions

As the member can understand, they are quite copious and we were busy printing the report. We will make them available as soon as possible, certainly for use by members of the committee when they begin the consultations.

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately time is of the essence. Budget consultations will have to be completed in seven weeks.

Yesterday the Conference Board of Canada and a number of business economists predicted that this year's budget plan would not be met and that more spending cuts were needed to prevent a financial crisis for the country. All these experts say that cuts in social programs are needed.

(1135)

Could the minister tell these financial experts and anxious Canadians that his reforms will lower social program expenditures in the next budget?

Mr. David Walker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance have regularly told the House and the country that we will meet our targets.

During the consultation process we will welcome suggestions from the opposition and from our own members on how these targets can be met effectively for all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Human Resources Development. On page 63 of the document he tabled yesterday, it is said that, and I quote: "It is true that replacing federal cash transfers would put upward pressure on tuition fees. This may be a necessary price to pay to put in place a permanent system for ensuring accessibility to post-secondary education".

How can the Minister pretend, as he did yesterday, that his reform will not limit accessibility to post-secondary education for thousands of young people when the proposed reduction in transfer payments will result in an increase in tuition fees? According to a Treasury Board memorandum which will not be released by the government, these fees could even double.

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, as we have pointed out in the House, tuition fees have doubled over the past four or five years. They have already gone up that amount under the existing system. At the same time I point out that enrolment has substantially increased in that period.

We have been providing through our student aid program, the student loan program, very successful forms of resources, but more is needed.

In the document we have said that the decision on tuition increases is not ours to make; it is up to provincial governments

to make them. If the provincial governments are prepared to use the additional revenue they will be receiving through the EPF transfer of tax points to keep tuition rates down, it is their decision to make.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, the minister also says in his document that students could use their RRSPs to repay their debts.

Is the minister really serious when he suggests that students use their RRSPs? Does he really think that students have the means to invest in RRSPs while having to borrow even more to study?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, we did not say that students could use their RRSPs. We said RRSPs could be used to help people get an education.

That means parents who presently hold RRSPs could decide to use them to help their kids with an education. We want to develop other financial vehicles by which people could begin to invest in their children's future at an early age. We want to provide investment vehicles so that parents, grandparents and other relatives can begin to put money aside with some form of incentive from the government to save for education and training, not just for income security.

I find it incredible that the Bloc Québécois and others would somehow say it is wrong for the Government of Canada to encourage parents to invest in their children's future.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Human Resources Development has claimed repeatedly that he wants to consult widely with Canadians. I think he used the *c* word about a dozen times yesterday in question period.

Perhaps the minister could tell the House why his department was actively promoting special interest group funding programs related to his discussion paper weeks ago, long before ordinary Canadians even knew what was in his discussion paper.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, when I announced last January that we were to undertake a process of reform I indicated we would be prepared to help groups that wanted to make presentations and consult their membership, particularly women's groups. We have provided funding at this point for 19 different organizations in the name of equity. There are organizations and groups that have substantial resources. Business organizations, labour organizations and the Reform Party have all kinds of money they get from private donations which they can use to make their case.

(1140)

There are many groups, particularly anti-poverty groups, women's groups and aboriginal groups, that do not have access to the same resources. In order to ensure there was full access and full participation we wanted these groups to be able to work with their membership and do the proper research so that we could have proper dialogue and debate in the country.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting how the minister interprets equal access by funding special interest groups. I am pleased he has admitted that is happening because I was prepared to table a letter in the House showing that it was indeed the case.

I would like the minister to tell the House again why he feels it is necessary to give special interest groups priority over individual Canadians. Where is the evidence that ordinary Canadians will have even the slightest influence on this social policy reform?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I realize the hon. member is new to the House, but it would seem to me that one of the first responsibilities of a member of Parliament is to ensure that individual Canadians in his or her constituency have their voices and points reflected.

The hon. member has a break next week. We have sent him all the information. I would encourage him to get back to his riding as fast as he can and start talking to his people.

[Translation]

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Initial reaction to the discussion paper on social programs was unanimous in denouncing both the approach and the content of government proposals. Some critics even come from Liberals. A colleague of the minister said out loud what many secretly think when he stated that "the minister has taken a baseball bat to go after the poorest ones".

How can the minister hope to convince Canadians of the validity of his reform when he cannot even convince his own colleagues?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I would like to read part of an article written by Mr. Alain Dubuc in *La Presse*, a highly respected newspaper in Quebec.

—first, we must commend the Liberal government and minister Axworthy. They are the first ones to tackle head-on the interrelated problems of economic slump and social assistance.

Oral Questions

This article shows how independent observers, not partisan ones, support our government's efforts to develop a new approach towards poverty, unemployment and the problems of the poor in our country.

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, would it not be simpler for the minister to admit that this discussion paper fully contradicts the principles which he supported when he was in opposition?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I came into elected politics over 20 years ago with a couple of basic ambitions in mind: first, to make sure that people were treated fairly throughout the country; second, to make sure that people who had disadvantages were given opportunities; and, third, to make sure that we had a strong, effective country that could maintain its independence and integrity.

Those values and purposes still exist. The green paper is reflective of how we can get those values and purposes to work better in today's world.

Mr. Elijah Harper (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

As the House knows, the social reform program is of crucial importance to the aboriginal peoples of Canada. We are the poorest of the poor. We see it as an opportunity to address the unacceptably high level of poverty among our young people. Our children face this prospect.

(1145)

What assurances can the minister give to the House that the aboriginal people will be heard in this important and pressing review?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question.

First I can indicate to the House that I have asked my colleague, the secretary of state for training, to undertake a special process of consultation and work with First Nations people. Because of their special problems and because of the very important initiatives by my colleague, the minister of Indian affairs, to move toward self-government, there is a need for a particular track of consultation and discussion.

We have provided to this point close to \$600,000 worth of support for a wide variety of aboriginal groups across the country to consult with their membership, to work with them and to begin to develop an ability to work in those very poor communities across the country to make sure there is a grass-roots feeling of how they can participate.

Oral Questions

I am very pleased to see that in the last day or two we have had major support from some of the national aboriginal organizations, like the National Metis Council, who say they too, like many other Canadians, want to co-operate and participate in finding a new and better way to help their people.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Human Resources Development spoke repeatedly about the need to co-operate with and consult with the provinces. In fact I can recall one quote where he said: "We have to really rely on wholesale co-operation by all levels of government".

He will know that since the paper has been tabled, there has been severe criticism of it by several provincial governments, including Ontario and Quebec. Yesterday his response to the premier of Ontario's concern was to take partisan and political cheap shots at the premier.

Is this an example of how he intends to gather provincial co-operation?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, we are faced with a curious and interesting piece of political acrobatics. We now have a member of the Reform Party defending Bob Rae. I am sure the folks at home in Calgary will be very pleased to know what the member has now committed to do.

The fact to remember is that we are open to co-operation, but we ask the provincial premiers, as we have, to also reciprocate and show that they are prepared to participate in the national interest.

The time has come to stop simply defending in an isolationist way their own interests province by province. It is time for Canadians to join together, as the premier of New Brunswick did this morning, and say this is something that is bigger than all of us. We must work together in a co-operative fashion. That is the kind of spirit and co-operation I would like to see from all the premiers.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, the House will note that the minister responded to concerns about partisan attacks on the premier of Ontario by taking more partisan attacks on the premier of Ontario and on the Reform Party.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the same minister. Does the minister intend to adopt the domineering and centralizing attitude of past Liberal governments, or will he recognize that his proposals have an impact on areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I understand now why the hon. member from the Reform Party is supporting Bob Rae and the NDP. They are both at 10 per cent in the polls. They have something in common at this time.

The hon. member once again professes that he wants to express himself in the spirit of co-operation. If he had read the green paper—I would suggest he now has a whole week to go home and look at it carefully—he would see that we have indicated very clearly various options under which we are proposing decentralization, not centralization.

We talk about a new block funding arrangement on social assistance with the provinces. We talk about evolving many areas of training. We talk about how we can work to disentangle from education. Then the provinces would have clear authority over their educational institutions. These are the kinds of things that we want to propose.

It is time for all governments to begin to think about how they can decentralize their bureaucracies, whether they are federal or provincial, and put more power in the hands of people and communities because that is where the real decisions should be made.

* * *

(1150)

[*Translation*]

REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre): Mr. Speaker, it may surprise you that my question is not directed to the Minister of Human Resources Development. In fact, it is my privilege to direct my question to the Minister of Justice.

At a recent international gathering of gynaecologists and obstetricians, Dr. Patricia Baird, formerly chairman of the Royal Commission of Inquiry on New Reproductive Technologies, once again emphasized the need for Canada to regulate this field.

When does the Minister of Justice intend to table in the House a bill to regulate practices connected with new reproductive technologies?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted with the question. I thought members had forgotten me. As far as new reproductive technologies are concerned, we are now working on a regulatory framework.

I may add that we will have to work together with the provinces and other groups to deal with all the problems in this area. There are jurisdictional problems, and as members of the Bloc Quebecois are well aware, it is always important to talk to the provinces in order to avoid encroaching on their jurisdictions. So we are doing our job.

Oral Questions

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond–Guiral (Laval Centre): Mr. Speaker, I realize that because of the party-like atmosphere in the House for the past two days, everyone in this cabinet feels like getting up. I must point out to the Minister of Health that my question was directed to the Minister of Justice. I will put my second question to him, as I imagine he still remembers the first one and should be able to respond.

Would the Minister of Justice agree that, as pointed out by Dr. Baird, action is urgently needed to prohibit the marketing of human embryos and thus preclude the possibility of research activities that are not ethically sound?

[English]

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, as I am the minister responsible for that particular file, I am answering. Perhaps the member across the way does not realize that.

We are working with other jurisdictions to regulate where we can and to bring forward a report on the whole issue of new reproductive technology as quickly as we possibly can.

* * *

SOCIAL POLICY REFORM

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are beginning to suspect that the government is using consultation as an excuse for inaction. It says it is consulting on the GST, on immigration, on agriculture, yet when it does not get the answers it wants from Canadians it ignores them.

Why does the Minister of Human Resources Development keep talking about wanting to hear from Canadians when it is clear he only listens to the people he wants to hear?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, members of the Reform Party should begin to take the same line. Consistency has not been a virtue they have honoured very often, but I think it is about time.

On the one hand we have a member this morning asking: “Why don’t you have more consultations? Why don’t you broaden it up, make it genuine, give people a chance.” Now we have the hon. member for Calgary North saying not to have consultations at all. They cannot have it both ways, but they seem to want to have it both ways.

I want to point out one important point. The primary consultation will be by a standing committee of the House of Commons which has representatives from all parties. If they bring an open

mind to the issue and have a meeting of minds, then we can have a very genuine consultation.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, as we saw yesterday, the minister seems determined to attack proposals Reform did not make instead of defending proposals he did not make. When we talk about consultation, we talk about honest consultation, giving Canadians the truth and information including real costs, not rigged consultations and rigged government funded special interest groups.

(1155)

How will this process be different? How will ordinary Canadians be heard?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, we heard yesterday from the leader of the Reform Party about how they have been consulting for a year on social programs.

The only result of that year long process was a statement by the hon. member for Calgary North that the Reform Party wants to cut \$15 billion from social programs. He would not detail where, how or what. Reform members are now beginning to preach to us about putting the facts out. Where are their facts? Where is their study? Where is the result of their year long consultations?

I have one simple piece of advice for the hon. member. Join the standing committee on human resources. Go back to your constituency and talk to the people. As parliamentarians we have provided the best place for Canadians to be heard, in this Parliament and through its committees.

[Translation]

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Since the Liberals came to power, employment has gone up significantly. We saw that 339,000 jobs were created, most of them full-time jobs. More than 97,000 jobs were created in the Atlantic provinces alone. Which policies helped to bring about this remarkable turnaround?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, that is an important question. Unlike the negativism we have been hearing, we can now explain to Canadians the positive news. Since this government was elected there have been 330,000 new jobs, 90 per cent of which are full time jobs.

Oral Questions

One of the most important elements is that Canadians have confidence and trust in the government. Therefore they know we will have a good economic future and they are prepared to invest.

Second, the infrastructure program has had a stimulating effect on the economy as have the employment programs we announced last year for young people; the youth services corps, the apprenticeship intern programs. The initiatives we have been taking recently like reducing UI premiums are now having a real impact.

We are able to prove to Canadians that with a Liberal government we know where the jobs are and it is shown by the evidence we have today.

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PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-22 has once again been rejected and sent to committee by the other place.

Will the Minister of Transport admit that this bill is not going to go away and that he has absolutely no plan as to how to deal with this ill-conceived legislation?

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the bill has not been rejected. As the rules allow it has been sent to committee. The committee will report again and the decision will be made by the other place.

Let me remind the hon. member that before the election the Prime Minister made it very clear that we would review the deal. However the maker of the deal decided to sign and went ahead despite the warnings. After we took office the Prime Minister reviewed the deal, found that it was not in the interests of Canadians and it was cancelled.

Why does the Reform Party want to have Canadian taxpayers pay the \$440 million? I thought they were for deficit reduction.

* * *

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Bernard St-Laurent (Manicouagan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice, if the Hon. Minister of Health allows it. We were amazed to learn this week that the judges of the Supreme Court now admit extreme drunkenness as a legitimate defence for sexual assault. This attitude suggests that people can commit serious crimes with impunity if they have consumed enough alcohol or other drugs.

(1200)

My question is this: Does such a judgement mean that someone with a .30 blood alcohol level could be acquitted by a court while someone with a .09 level would be convicted? It does not make any sense.

Does the Minister of Justice agree that it makes no sense?

[English]

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, without agreeing to the interpretation put on that judgment by the hon. member I can tell him and the House that I am concerned about the implications of the judgment. I share some of the concerns that have been expressed during the week in the wake of its release.

The whole general part of the Criminal Code has been under study for some decades actually. However in the coming weeks we are going to be releasing a discussion paper with respect to it. It includes the question of defences, including self-intoxication. We are going to make proposals for public discussion including the possibility that we can avoid this controversy by creating a criminal offence of criminal intoxication leading to misconduct.

That approach which was discussed by the Law Reform Commission as long as eight years ago has its merits. It has disadvantages as well. We will hear during the discussion period how people feel about that approach and we will learn from it.

In any event, I want to tell the hon. member that we are aware of the concerns arising from the judgment last week. We are examining alternative ways to ensure public safety.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

I have been informed by the department that it is presently working on pension reform legislation that will greatly fast track veterans applications and I appreciate that. However does the minister recognize that additional changes must be made to Bill C-84? If so, will these changes be put on the legislative agenda? Time is running out for the merchant navy veterans.

Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, we are looking at ways to speed up the processing of veterans claims. For too long veterans have found they have had to wait two or three years before particular decisions are adjudicated. We are looking at making structural and legislative changes. The hon. member and the House will be advised in due course as to when we will bring forward those changes.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[English]***NATIONAL DEFENCE**

Hon. David Michael Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) and an undertaking I made last Monday in the House, I would like to table in both official languages a document entitled: "Executive Floor Refit".

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CANADIAN COMPANIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Hon. Christine Stewart (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa)): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to table a document entitled: "The Canadian Companies in South Africa". It describes the code of conduct and the practices of Canadian companies for the period July 1991-94 and I present it in both official languages.

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ERITREA, ETHIOPIA AND EGYPT

Hon. Christine Stewart (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa)): Mr. Speaker, I would like to report on my visit to Eritrea, Ethiopia and Egypt in September. My participation there preceded the Cairo Population and Development Conference.

Eritrea and Ethiopia are countries in which Canada directly, and indirectly through our non-government organizations, has a long and important involvement most recently through periods of drought and conflict. Egypt as you well know is a crucial country in the politics of the Middle East.

Let me begin my comments with reflections on Eritrea and Ethiopia. These two countries were cut from Canada's bilateral assistance program by the previous government. By failing to emphasize that humanitarian assistance was exempt from the cut, Canada appeared to be abandoning Eritrea and Ethiopia just when peace was finally being realized after 30 years of civil war.

(1205)

My visit provided an opportunity to convey several important messages, the first being that Canada remains committed to maintaining bilateral relationships, if not assistance programs, with both countries. The second message was that while future bilateral assistance and partnership programs will await the outcome of the foreign policy review and be a function of our overall budgetary position, we will continue to contribute to the efforts of these countries to rebuild.

By rebuild, we mean two things. The first is to help them make the shift from relief to recovery. The second is to help them begin building structures and institutions such as the constitution by which they will govern themselves more democratically and we hope more peacefully.

Within the February budgetary allocations we have been able to provide \$18 million in food security to Ethiopia and \$7 million to Eritrea this year. In addition we have provided \$400,000 in assistance to Eritrean refugees returning from the Sudan. We have established a \$500,000 fund for democratic development activities in each country.

While there I applauded the efforts of the Ethiopians and Eritreans to promote regional peace and stability, certainly not an easy task. Both countries have been prominent in the Sudan peace talks which Canada is supporting. My meetings with the secretary general of the OAU, Salim Salim, the president of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, and Eritrea's minister of foreign affairs, Petros Solomon, touched on this issue.

I want to inform my colleagues that much more attention will be needed by western countries to support Africa's own efforts to bring peace to the horn of Africa. Within our budgetary and human resources limitations, Canada will continue to seek ways to facilitate this peace process as well as to help refugees in the region.

Now for Egypt, a country with one foot in Africa and another in Asia. Over the past decade Egypt has taken on the role of bridge builder in middle eastern affairs. Its place on the front-lines has drawn it into many conflicts and the government is currently struggling to liberalize the economy while dealing with sporadic acts of terrorism. Rural Egypt where I also had the opportunity to travel is close to Africa in its poverty and in the severity of its ecological crisis.

Canada is helping the Egyptians deal with their most precious resource, the River Nile. I journeyed to Qanater to see the strategic research unit on the second cataract of the Nile north of Cairo. This is only one project in which Canada is involved bilaterally but from conversations with senior Egyptian officials, one that is very much appreciated.

In keeping with a longstanding commitment to help women in Egypt, Canada sponsors a range of projects. A creative effort is being undertaken in the Qena region in southern Egypt by the Foundation for International Training. It is trying to open the banking system of the country to women who are small scale entrepreneurs. In tiny workshops, in back rooms of houses and even in courtyards women have started small enterprises with backing from CIDA through the Foundation for International Training. The results to date not surprisingly for those of us familiar with the Grameen Bank, are a very high repayment record and a rapidly growing clientele.

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It was in these crowded homes and workshops that the hidden tragedy of rural Africa was revealed: the number of young girls who are not in school. UNICEF statistics tell us that 80 per cent of girl children in Egypt reach at least grade 5 in primary school. For Ethiopia the figure is only 10 per cent.

On my last day in Egypt I announced on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs that Canada is contributing \$14.9 million to support primary education for girls in 15 African countries, to be channelled through UNICEF. I believe the education of young girls in Africa is the touchstone in a brighter future for the whole population. There is growing consensus that donor dollars spent on education of young girls has a positive impact not only on their lives, but on their families and on their communities. It was my privilege to be the bearer of this message of support to Africa.

[Translation]

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert): Mr. Speaker, I would first of all like to thank the Secretary of State for Latin America and Africa for the report she just gave us on her recent trip to Eritrea, Ethiopia and Egypt and on Canada's aid initiatives in those countries.

In the first place, let me point out the respect which the Secretary of State has for the work of the joint committee that is reviewing Canada's foreign policy. I would like to thank her for this. Her colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, shows little respect for the committee's work, which he himself initiated, need I remind you, and which is not yet finished; he is making choices and setting foreign policies that take for granted the results of a major review which is not yet complete. At least the Secretary of State has the decency to tell us that she intends to wait for the committee's findings before developing new bilateral aid and partnership programs.

(1210)

That being said, I think that Canada's efforts and initiatives, of which the Secretary of State has just informed us, should be well received. Canada must provide continuing tangible support for the colossal efforts that the Africans are making to establish peace and democracy in the Horn of Africa.

I would like to take a moment to talk about Eritrea. As you know, Eritrea became a sovereign state following the April 1993 referendum, in which Eritreans answered a very clear question: "Do you want Eritrea to become a sovereign and independent state?" The result was dazzling. Over 90 per cent of the vote was for sovereignty.

Canada was one of the first countries to recognize the achievement of independence in Eritrea and we should be proud of this. Canada must make a clear commitment to recognize

such democratic decisions when these are made in a context that meets criteria that appear to comply with the rules of democracy.

This being said, we think that the government of Canada should feel a special duty to Eritrea, in that it represents a promise of peace and stability in the Horn of Africa region. In our view, this would warrant the allocation of special assistance to a long-term development and recovery program. Indeed, Canada should undertake to grant substantial assistance to this sustainable development and recovery program.

I listened to the hon. Secretary of State as she told us about the strategic research unit in Qanater, north of Cairo, one of the projects in which Canada is involved. I sincerely feel this is a step in the right direction. In fact, sustainable development must be an objective that transcends Canadian foreign policy. I would even go as far as to say it should be the basic objective of Canadian official development assistance.

We welcome the Canadian government commitment to help Ethiopia and Eritrea make the transition from humanitarian assistance to economic recovery. One of the main goals of our international assistance must indeed be to promote the development of self-reliance in assisted countries. We have to help these countries set up structures and institutions, including a constitution which will allow them to govern themselves more democratically and peacefully. The Secretary of State recognizes this essential condition.

Finally, we must absolutely, through dialogue and co-operation programs, seek to reinforce respect for human rights, democratic development and good government. The promotion of sustainable human development and human rights must be at the centre of our policies. The Bloc Québécois insists on that aspect. We feel that these factors are the key elements of any Canadian foreign policy.

The commitment made by the Secretary of State towards Egyptian women and the announcement of a \$14.9 million contribution to primary education for girls in 15 African countries, through UNICEF, is a step in that direction and we applaud that initiative.

In conclusion, we believe that the government must nevertheless make other concrete commitments, including the promotion, through existing Canadian and UN programs, of the development of Erytrea NGOs and the use of local expertise in reconstruction and rehabilitation initiatives. These efforts must be pursued.

[English]

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, we welcome the secretary of state back from her overseas trip. We are glad she has arrived safely.

Routine Proceedings

From our perspective the secretary of state speaks on several positive developments. On behalf of the government she has spoken supportive words for the most needy people of the world.

We are glad the government has committed some more funds to Eritrea and Ethiopia, which have been areas of such heart rending famine and war in recent years. We need to help rebuild their shattered economies and make peace between neighbouring countries in that region. We applaud the government in its efforts.

The secretary of state seems also to imply that the government may or will restore bilateral assistance to these countries. We are certainly not opposed to that as long as the governments in those countries do not siphon off our aid for military or other purposes.

(1215)

Because of my association with the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, I do receive regular news bulletins about, for instance, the government of Ethiopia. There are encouraging signs of a trend toward democracy and stable, market oriented businesses in those newsletters.

I do hope that these reports accurately reflect a growing reality.

I wish to contrast her words with the current direction of the foreign affairs standing committee which at this moment is drafting its final report to the minister. Although I do not know what the final report will look like, and these matters are all a matter of negotiation, I am very concerned that the committee may fall to the lowest common denominator in order to try to please everybody and offer very few concrete recommendations in its report.

I am concerned, for instance, that there may not be a legislative mandate for CIDA and that the committee will not recommend that our shrinking aid dollars go to the most needy people of the world. Examples of what she has brought to our attention today is the direction we need to head in the future.

I am sure that someone in the minister's office, as well as the parliamentary secretary, is listening to this speech. I trust that whoever is listening will take note, especially in the office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. I believe we need a very strong report, one that will reflect the secretary of state's words in support of the impoverished masses in places like Eritrea, Ethiopia and Egypt.

Ministers, including this minister and the foreign affairs minister, need to speak to their Liberal counterparts on the foreign affairs committee and encourage them not to be tentative in their recommendations but to be firm in their support of the poorest people of the world.

With regard to Egypt, there is no comment about the minister's participation in the population conference in Cairo. No doubt this is because of the contentious issues that were raised there. I just want to say a word about that conference. It is a well documented fact that the best determiners of population growth are the industrialization of a country and the health and education of its citizens.

The best thing we can do therefore is to concentrate a good portion of our foreign aid on basic health and education in the third world. CIDA spends \$120 million a year on Third World higher education degrees like masters degrees and doctorates. I believe we are developing, maybe wisely, but we are putting an increasing emphasis on the ruling classes in those countries where there are just a very few well educated people but the masses are ignorant and unhealthy.

I note that CIDA also gave no less than \$28 million this year to the International Planned Parenthood Federation. I trust that most of those dollars will go to the basic health and education in the Third World rather than to coercive population control measures and abortion which proved to be such divisive issues last month in Cairo.

The way to avoid these negative practices is simple: educate the needy and upgrade basic health services for the general population.

That is why we applaud the minister's travelling in rural Egypt, going to where the problems are the worst. We appreciate the programs she described to educate girls and we are very supportive of those as long as we do not also forget that boys also need basic education.

We do not approve of every trip that this government takes, far from it, but in this case we think that this particular trip was very worth while in affirming Canada's support for the most needy people in the world. No doubt the minister's heart was touched with compassion by the poverty that she saw and no doubt her heart was also filled with satisfaction in seeing the difference that Canada can make even if it is in little ways.

I can only hope that the minister will communicate the things that are in her heart to her Liberal colleagues on the foreign affairs standing committee and that she will use her influence to strengthen the committee's recommendations in these areas.

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[*Translation*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the Report of the Canadian Section of the International Assembly of French-Speaking Parliamentarians on the second Jeux de la Francophonie, held in Paris, from July 5 to 13, 1994.

*Routine Proceedings***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 39th Report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the list of associate and permanent members of committees. With leave of the House, I intend to move for concurrence in this report later this day.

[*English*]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Elijah Harper (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development regarding Bill C-36, an act respecting Split Lake Cree First Nations and the settlement of matters arising from an agreement relating to the flooding of land, without amendment.

* * *

(1220)

OLD AGE SECURITY ACT

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-54, an act to amend the Old Age Security Act, the Canada Pension Plan, the Children's Special Allowances Act and the Unemployment Insurance Act.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

YUKON SURFACE RIGHTS BOARD ACT

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-55, an act to establish a board having jurisdiction concerning disputes respecting surface rights in respect of land in the Yukon Territory and to amend other acts in relation thereto.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

[*Translation*]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-283, an Act to amend the Official Languages Act (review of the Act).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague and friend from Nickel Belt for supporting this bill. This bill amends the Official Languages Act and provides that the governor-in-council, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister of Canada, must appoint a person responsible for reviewing this act

and the consequences of its implementation. I stress the word "implementation". The person appointed must submit to the Prime Minister a report on the review's findings in the year following the beginning of his or her mandate, while the Prime Minister must table the said report for consideration in both the House of Commons and the Senate.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I move that the 39th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs presented to this House earlier this day be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

REVIEWING CANADA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I move that the date for the final report of the special committee reviewing Canada's foreign policy be extended to November 15, 1994 and that a message be sent to the Senate to acquaint their honours thereof.

TCC

(Motion agreed to.)

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 56.1 I move:

That a subcommittee of the Standing Committee of Fisheries and Oceans be authorized to travel to Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Northwest Territories during the month of October 1994 to undertake a study of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation and that the necessary staff accompany the subcommittee.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

(1225)

PETITIONS

ETHANOL

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present this petition on behalf of the people in my riding and from Alberta who call upon the government to support the ethanol industry over the long term, in light of the fact that the U.S. is already planning 49 new major ethanol plants and Canada now imports most of its ethanol, creating American jobs and helping American farmers.

I support my constituents in urging our government to get its act together and get moving before the world passes us by on this renewable, sustainable industry.

VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here whereby the men and women who have signed it point out that violence and abuse in radio and on television have become real concerns in Canadian society.

These petitioners want the CRTC to regulate and if possible control all forms of abuse in radio and on television. Obviously, they would like it to cease if at all possible.

They request the government ensure that the CRTC does this. Parents point out that very often abuse in radio and on television counteracts the efforts that they are undertaking to raise their families in safe, healthy environments.

[Translation]

SENIORS

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition concerning seniors.

[English]

Seniors want us to remember as parliamentarians that they have contributed and continue to contribute significantly to the quality of life that we enjoy in this country. They point out that they are growing in numbers and I guess all of us will eventually, perhaps too quickly sometimes, get there. They point out that programs such as pensions and health will experience additional growing demand. These seniors need comfortable housing, social and community involvement, and they want to make sure that they have the medical care that they require.

They simply ask government that whenever it undertakes either budgetary or legislative or program changes, we remember the contributions they have made and the contributions they continue to make. I support them totally.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of presenting three separate petitions today that all touch on the same subject. Altogether another 262 of my constituents have taken the time to sign petitions stating that the majority of Canadians believe that privileges extended to heterosexual couples should not be extended to same sex relationship couples.

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Petitioners also ask that the Canadian human rights code should not be amended to include the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

I concur with these sentiments.

(1230)

ETHANOL

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and privilege to table a petition today signed by the constituents of Lambton—Middlesex pursuant to Standing Order 36 and duly certified by the clerk of petitions.

The petitioners call on Parliament to maintain the present exemption on the excise portion of ethanol for a decade, allowing for a strong and self-sufficient ethanol industry in Canada, an industry which would provide an environmentally friendly fuel from renewable resources and provide definite stability for Canadian agriculture and the Canadian economy in general.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I would like to present a petition from Cindy Silver and 98 others where the petitioners pray and request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

JUSTICE

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present petitions on behalf of my constituents and others to request Parliament to enact legislation against permanent appointments of justices.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I stand before the House to present a petition signed by residents of northern Ontario.

The heading of the petition reads: "The majority of Canadians believe that physicians in Canada should be working to save lives, not to end them".

Therefore the petitioners pray that Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

I would like to thank and congratulate the petitioners for their efforts in making their views known to me and to the House. I concur with and support their efforts.

Routine Proceedings

ABORTION

Mr. Gordon Kirkby (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions. Very briefly I present one petition on behalf of constituents who wish the Criminal Code to be amended to prohibit abortion.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Gordon Kirkby (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, I present a second petition on behalf of my constituents who do not wish sidearms to be banned.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Gordon Kirkby (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, I present a third petition on behalf of my constituents who express the desire that the present Criminal Code provisions against doctor assisted suicide be strictly enforced and that Parliament not change the law.

KILLER BOARD GAME

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table 7,012 signatures in petition pursuant to Standing Order 36. The petitioners call on Parliament to ban the product known as the serial killer board game.

These signatures are in addition to the 111,638 tabled already for a grand total of 118,640.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I note that the parliamentary secretary has asked that all questions be permitted to stand. I know that is the standard procedure. We also have an understanding in the House, in fact an order, that says that responses are to be made within 45 days.

I am sorry to take some time but I wish to point out an experience I had recently. Just last week some questions were reported from me.

As you are probably aware, Mr. Speaker, compound questions no longer seem to be permitted. If we have a question that has three or four elements, we have to use up the four spaces in our question quota all at once. Then we sit and fidget for 45 days, hoping that eventually the paper will clear and we can ask more questions. Last week I was faced with having to wait 135 days, which means that I am effectively muzzled for three times as long as I ought to be.

(1235)

To add insult to injury three of those questions elicited the response that the department, the ministry and the agencies did

not have the data to provide answers. Why did I have to wait 135 days for the department to know it had no answers?

I urge the parliamentary secretary and the government to respond much more promptly, particularly where they have no answer, because they are effectively treading very close to the privileges of members' rights to information in this Chamber. By their slowness they have effectively kept me from looking for answers to further questions for almost 100 extra days beyond what should have been my right as a parliamentarian.

I am not raising this as a question of privilege at this time, but I ask that the parliamentary secretary urge the departments to be much more prompt and forthcoming in their responses and if they do not have answers to let us know immediately.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I sympathize with the hon. member in the predicament that he has outlined. I know the government makes every effort to respond promptly to questions.

Sometimes questions are very lengthy in that they involve extensive consultation with numerous departments in the government. That often takes some time. In the case of the particular questions that the hon. member put on the Order Paper, I may say that the answers we received initially were sent back, because we were unhappy with the responses.

I understand his unhappiness with the responses, but the agencies in question were not prepared to disclose, or were not able to disclose, or did not have the figures. We could not imagine that was possible. The questions were sent back to those agencies to make sure the answers were correct. That was part of the reason for the lengthy delay. Of course, the House was not sitting during the summer, which adds to it as well.

I sympathize with him. I hope he will put more questions on the Order Paper. We will do our very best to answer them as we do for all hon. members.

Mr. Althouse: Briefly, Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member raised the problem of eliciting information from the agency involved, which was the Grain Transportation Agency under the WGTA, from whom a joint committee of agriculture and transport last May 6 found similar problems in getting information.

They have urged the Minister of Transport to immediately appoint another person to take over from the WGTA the administration and control of the allocation of the grain car fleet in order to ensure that an adequate supply of rolling stock will be provided to producers for the efficient, reliable and effective movement of grain.

Their response to my questions, which indicated they had no idea how many cars they had in the system or where they were, adds fuel to that. This was the finding of the joint committee as well. I think—

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The Deputy Speaker: We will let it go at that. Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement Government Orders will be extended by 14 minutes pursuant to Standing Order 33(2).

* * *

[*English*]

MOTION TO EXTEND HOURS OF SITTING

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker I move the following motion. I believe you will find there is unanimous consent, after consultation with whips across the way. It is the following:

That, the hour of adjournment be extended a further 30 minutes and that during the said extension, notwithstanding any standing order, the Chair will not entertain any dilatory motions or quorum calls.

The reason this motion is put forward is to hopefully enable the member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing to be able to make a speech that he wanted very much to be able to deliver to the House today. Hopefully the extension of hours by a further half hour will permit that with the usual allocation of time.

(Motion agreed to.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAMS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Saint John has the floor. She has the right to reply to the question that was put from the other side of the House.

(1240)

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member stated that she felt we should not be playing politics, that we should all deal with the social reform policies in a very responsible way. I agree with her on that.

However I have to say that the starting point for social policy reform has to come from the provinces. If the Liberal government and the Minister of Human Resources Development do not have suggestions from the provinces, then in my opinion they do not have the solutions.

The federal and provincial governments need to rationalize the programs they have to make sure there is no overlap, and eliminate the duplication and overlap.

Also, the hon. member mentioned meeting with one's constituents and getting back. It is my intention to meet with my constituents. I hope the Minister of Human Resource Development will take the suggestions of the people of my constituency under consideration, a little better perhaps than the Minister of Transport did when it came to transportation.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in debate on the discussion paper tabled by the Minister of Human Resources Development entitled "Improving Social Security in Canada".

Over the course of this debate, a few basic themes keep returning over and over. One of the most important is that any government program reflects the realities of the time in which it was created. That is certainly true of the status quo of social programs.

They were designed at a time when most people needed relatively few skills to get and keep work. What they picked up in school and on the job was usually enough to build a lifetime of earnings. People needed financial help between jobs. Others needed support if they could work at all, due to disability or family commitments.

The old system was based on a stable world with stable skills and stable jobs for the vast majority of working people. Is there a person who believes that holds true now? Too many people have learned the hard way that the programs and services we have are designed more to keep people where they are than to help them to get where they could be.

We have a system that gives people barely enough money to live but not enough opportunity to thrive, a system that at times rewards those who can manipulate the rules better than those who simply want to make something of themselves.

People see that. People know there is an activity that fits the letter of the law while offending the spirit. For example, I have a letter from a man in Ontario who points out how larger employers use the UI system to encourage workers to take early retirement. It may not be literally against the rules but it is hardly consistent with UI as a source of income for people who are genuinely between jobs.

Another person wrote about watching an economy develop in a small B.C. town around the unemployment insurance. He sees young people learning from their parents that it is all right to leave school relatively unskilled, work for only enough weeks to qualify for benefits and then collect UI benefits for the rest of the year.

Is there a member who has not heard these concerns? What do we say to people who raise these issues? It happens too often to say simply: "It is just an isolated case". It shows us that the status quo no longer works well enough and is in real danger of losing the support of Canadians. It goes a long way to show why

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78 per cent of Canadians believe our social programs are essential but 85 per cent believe they must be reformed.

The polls say it. Our mail says it. Canadians are not satisfied with the status quo. They know that a more effective and a more cost effective social safety net is not just possible, it is necessary.

(1245)

The value of the discussion paper on social security reform is that it lays out facts, ideas and real choices. It is helping Canadians to translate their feelings and experiences into useful advice to their government about social programs.

Canadians want to work. They want their fellow citizens to work. But between those goals and the reality of creating jobs and getting people into them lie a series of challenges. Some lack basic information on the labour market. Others are illiterate. Some have jobs but get little training to improve their skills. Other people face the issue of the lack of high quality, affordable child care. People with disabilities can list the barriers they face each and every day. The challenge is to set priorities based on needs and the probability of results given the real fiscal constraints that exist.

One of the central ideas in the section of the discussion paper on working is the value of community involvement. In setting priorities the federal government fully recognizes there can never be enough money to meet every possible need. That is why the discussion paper suggests that some mechanism which allowed communities to set priorities and to act on them would be appropriate.

What might our unemployment programs look like in the wake of real reform to social security? To begin with we might see communities with a centre of social program delivery. Some mechanism that allowed people to come together to determine local labour market needs and priorities would be a start. Using the best and most up to date information on what works in training, they might invest in a mix of employer based training and wage subsidies for the long term unemployed and for young people, and other forms of training from many different sources.

A partnership between governments in that community might lead to the creation of one location for all unemployment and income support services. Picture a person looking for income support who could be referred for counselling and assistance in developing good job search skills. Picture the sole support mother getting help with child care, housing and literacy training in the same place.

The agreement between the federal government and the province of Ontario to set up local labour force development boards offers a sign of things to come. These governments have agreed to work together with communities across the province.

Local boards with people from unions, businesses, education and many other segments of society will have the ability to determine and set priorities for government labour market spending. They will decide what training is needed and what employment development should be emphasized. This will be a case of people who know the regions and who care about building a better future having control of the tools to help realize those visions.

This kind of co-operation could lead to governments and communities working together to break the vicious cycle of UI dependence. Efforts to give people real skills, create real jobs and enable a real economy to flourish could all come together.

The paper looks at the issue of how unemployment insurance could better help people find and keep jobs. We are asking Canadians if we need two approaches within our insurance system, one that would provide a straightforward insurance coverage and another aimed at people who face regular unemployment and may need more assistance. We are asking them if tightening the current program is a better option or whether we should take both approaches at the same time. We want to know how they would deal with the needs of part time workers, self-employed contract workers and other people who get no help now.

These are real choices. Canadians deserve the right to determine their own priorities. We believe and they agree that giving people the skills and incentives to work is appropriate. We want to go a step further to explore what makes sense with the money we have.

How to balance the social and economic priorities of Canadians is not a simple task. We recognize that to meet our social program goals and to meet our fiscal obligations to Canadians will require some hard choices. Our citizens are capable of those choices however.

(1250)

It is obvious that no one wants us to create some new scheme and impose it on Canadians. They want us to listen to them, not just to special interests, not just to the experts, but to the people who may need these programs and who will pay for them. This government is committed to doing just that.

With the release of this discussion paper we are saying we can get people back to work. We can build a society with skills that attract investment. We can help individuals meet the challenges of life in a society and an economy that face constant change. We can take steps to ensure that more people are better off in the long term, thanks to our actions in this House. The status quo will not be satisfactory. The time has come to act.

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the hon. member's speech. I am glad someone on the Liberal side recognizes there is a danger

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of losing broad public support and confidence in our social safety net and the ability of government to deliver services on behalf of all of us. I am saying that confidence has already evaporated.

I am also encouraged to hear the member admitting that change is inevitable, that the current situation cannot be sustained. It would not matter what political party was in power, we would have to move toward the reform of our basic social safety nets.

I am also encouraged to hear that the member is looking at the priority of needs, focusing on social spending. In fact, a lot of what I heard from the hon. member today sounds like it could have come from a Reform member of Parliament. I detect somewhat of a divergence however in the encouragement and hopefulness he has and what his minister is saying. I hope he will do what he can from his side of the House to encourage his minister to truly live up to the optimism the hon. member has.

I am not so encouraged by this hon. member's optimism that the government's plan is actually going to be delivered by the minister. Certainly there are hard choices to be made. He is suggesting there will be ongoing consultation to let the people speak. He certainly gives lip service or acknowledgement to a philosophy I agree with. However, I hope there is real substance. You might ask: "Where's the beef?" Well where is the real substance in what the minister delivered? I hope his optimism is not lacking in the long run.

Mr. Szabo: Mr. Speaker, throughout this debate there is going to be a lot of smoke and mirrors based on the partisanship in the House. Unfortunately, Canadians from time to time are going to wonder if what members are saying is clear to all concerned.

The Minister of Human Resources Development tabled a discussion paper. Yet time after time when I hear opposition members address the discussion paper, they criticize it as if it were a piece of legislation. As the member has just said, they ask: "Where's the beef?" Well, if it were a piece of legislation it would have each and every single step and program the government was proposing to address the problems, but this is not a piece of legislation. This is a discussion paper for all Canadians.

The government has said very clearly that we can no longer simply tinker with social programs. It is necessary for us to make some major changes in the way and the kinds of programs we deliver to Canadians. That is why we have this discussion paper. That is why Canadians are being given the opportunity through their members of Parliament to express their views to make absolutely sure that all hon. members understand the needs, the desires and what we can afford to deliver to all Canadians.

Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight for members of the House a number of initiatives in Atlantic Canada that reinforce the need for social reform and place a stronger emphasis on the federal-provincial co-operation and consultation.

(1255)

At the forefront of the social reform process is a discussion paper tabled by the Minister of Human Resources Development. Throughout the discussion paper and at the core of social security reform is a vigorous emphasis on the need for continued and effective consultation. That means talking with Canadians, hearing their views and responding to their needs. However, consultation with Canadians is not enough.

Every section of the discussion paper produced by the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, be it on learning, working or security, stresses that successful social reform is contingent upon a strong co-operative working relationship with the provincial and territorial governments. The key to developing that relationship and intrinsic to the social reform process is the strategic initiative program approved by the cabinet last May.

This program provides a unique mechanism for both levels of government to take actions in the high priority areas of employment, learning, education, income security and social services. Approved projects are funded on a 50:50 basis with the province or territory. Not only will this initiative promote an open dialogue with the provinces and territories, co-operation of this nature will also help us to eliminate waste, inefficient allocation of moneys and duplication in the existing systems.

There are many reasons why a strategic initiatives program is a critical component of the social security reform and there are many reasons why it is working. First and foremost, it gets Canadians back to work. It helps Canadians to help themselves.

We have made tremendous progress already, particularly in the Atlantic provinces. The initiatives that have been launched in co-operation with Atlantic Canada governments will touch the lives of over 10,000 Canadians currently at risk of becoming dependent on social assistance.

In New Brunswick over 1,000 Canadians will take their place in the ranks of the New Brunswick job corps. This program will give volunteers between the ages of 50 and 65 the opportunity to put their talents and expertise to work in their communities.

In Prince Edward Island the ready to learn and adult peer literacy tutoring project will make it easier for young adults who have found it difficult to gain access to traditional education facilities. The project will provide literacy training, life skills, academic upgrading and skills training to unemployment insurance and social assistance recipients. It is hoped that the ready to

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learn project will remove the barriers to education that many Islanders have historically encountered.

In Newfoundland more than 5,000 Canadians will benefit from the transitions initiative. This three pronged program targets the young people, candidates for post-secondary education, recent university and college graduates, and working age adults.

In Nova Scotia 3,000 Canadians will benefit from four new programs designed to provide training and employment opportunities to working age adults currently out of work. The compass initiative targets those who need it the most, those at risk of long term dependency on social assistance: unemployed youth, single parents, and laid off fishers.

Each of these initiatives will not only help get Canadians back to work, they will return a sense of dignity and pride. Unfortunately, these things are often forgotten when one becomes lost in the maze of the current system. But these efforts are just the beginning.

Just this week the minister announced a new initiative in Charlottetown. Choices and opportunities will reinforce and strengthen social assistance for mentally challenged individuals. In St. John's, Newfoundland we have launched a pilot project centred around an earnings supplement initiative.

(1300)

The spirit of co-operation that now exists between the federal and provincial governments indicates the importance of the federal-provincial collaboration and is indeed welcome. It is exciting to know that our provincial colleagues, Premiers McKenna and Wells, have announced their support and enthusiasm for the discussion paper, for this government's approach to social security reform in Canada, and for the initiatives that have already had an effect on their constituents.

To date, the Atlantic provinces have been most involved in the consultation process and in the implementation of the strategic initiatives program. But this is only the beginning; there is much more to be done.

Many workers in the Atlantic region are seasonal workers. The contributions of seasonal workers and seasonal industries are significant to our economic future. Tourism, fisheries, agriculture, forestry and construction are all extremely important industries and will remain so well into the future.

For this reason I feel the government must make a commitment to ensure these people receive help in adjusting to the changes that are adopted, whatever they might be.

As the Minister of Human Resources Development has indicated, this is a consultative process. I consider it very important to my constituents. That is why I have arranged for public forums next week and in November, in my constituency of

Carleton—Charlotte, to provide the opportunity for direct input by my constituents.

We cannot rebuild our social security system overnight. Successful and effective reform tailored to the needs of this and coming generations require a strong foundation. We must build our future system one day at a time. Together with all provinces and territories we must work with Canadians to create an improved social security system. We will mould it to meet the requirements of Canadians. We look forward to a stronger and more cohesive working relationship with our provincial and territorial counterparts.

Together we can forge a social security system that will lead Canada into the 21st century.

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague used the word consultation many times in his speech. Consultations must be based on real information. If the public is to decide or to give broad support to the hard choices to be made, it must be told the truth about the numbers and the real tradeoffs. The discussion paper is a reflection of the concerns the Liberals can no longer deny or avoid.

Will the member return to his riding and outline in cold, hard terms the choices to be made with the dollar value and the direct community result, not just for the few items in the green paper but for the whole social safety net package?

Mr. Culbert: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member indicated, it is my plan to go through the consultative stage with my constituents and offer them every opportunity to bring forward their ideas and their suggestions.

One of the early things I did, in conjunction with this paper the minister brought forward, was to have the minister confirm to me the exact opportunity he has put forward for the consultation. I wanted to be assured that it was true and factual that the consultation was going to be listened to and we would have an opportunity to make change.

The minister has assured me of that. I am very confident my constituents will have suggestions and ideas that can be brought back to the standing committee, the minister and the department. This is helpful in the process of coming up with a plan and a program that will be beneficial to all Canadians for the 21st century.

(1305)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Laurin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wish to tell the House that, pursuant to Standing Order 43(2), the following period of debate allotted to our party will be divided in two.

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak about the reform of the Canadian social security system. Earlier I heard the hon. member say: "We have difficult choices to make". It seems to me that the choices are not so difficult.

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I also often heard the other side ask us to propose something. I have a proposal for you. I realize how difficult it is for the other side to make choices. When a bill aimed at changing the rules of political party financing was introduced 15 days ago, some members on the other side voted with us but most voted against us because their very wealthy friends put money in their coffers. It is easy to understand how subsequent choices can be extremely difficult to make.

True, there are two choices. But why did we have to choose? In Mr. Trudeau's time, the government got this country into debt by going on a spending spree that continued under the Conservatives. It was not the fault of the opposition parties, not the Reform Party's, not ours and not the NDP's. They were not in power. Who got Canada into debt during the past 30 years? The two parties that were in power. We have a debt of \$530 billion, with \$40 billion worth of interest payments, and as a result there are some choices we must make.

Which option do we choose? Are we going to take money from the haves or are we going to empty the pockets of the have-nots? We say get it where it is to be found. Let us do it, let us raise billions of dollars from family trusts, people who do not pay income tax and the multinationals in this country. That is where we should get those billions of dollars. Not the pennies in the pockets of the poor.

That is what I would do. And now, a look at the other side. Last week, the Canadian Council on Social Development again sounded the alarm when it noted the distressing fact that more than one million children do not get enough to eat. One million children! In the schools where I taught, many children went without lunch. Fortunately, there were some Good Samaritans who paid for their meals. Why did these children go without food?

Their parents were in debt. They had three or four children, and they bought a car, chain saw and boat on credit, and when school started, they also had to buy books and exercise books. They had to pay the student association membership. There was no money left for food. I am convinced that the purpose of social security reform in this country should be to fight poverty, not the poor. So far, the trend has been to take money away from the poorest in our society, and that is how I see this reform.

(1310)

The objective should be, in this supposedly great and beautiful country, to create more social justice, not to come down harder on the neediest, the disenfranchised and the weakest members of our society. The objective should be to ensure a better distribution of wealth, which is not the case today. The rich are getting

richer, while the poor have for years and years been getting poorer.

I am not convinced that this is what the minister responsible had in mind, and I am not convinced that what he had in mind is right for this government. The unstated objective of this reform, as I see it, is solely and entirely to reduce government spending by penalizing more and more the disadvantaged, those who cannot speak for themselves.

Conservative policies of this sort have the effect of causing a dramatic rise in unemployment and poverty levels in this country. Conservative policies are directly responsible for the systematic impoverishment of the middle class and lower-income taxpayers.

This government acts like a producer who would stop feeding his cattle. Do you think that is the way to increase production? Do you think he would achieve better results by cutting rations? Do you think he would get a better yield if he stopped cultivating his land? To get results, investments must be made in the right places and cuts must also be made in the right places.

Cutting in postsecondary education will make it impossible for a large number of people to get adequate training. Because, as I have pointed out repeatedly, there are still no general and vocational colleges in my region—there is one in Matane—and no universities—you have to go to Rimouski, Quebec, Laval, Montreal—cuts in postsecondary education will mean that hundreds of students will not be able to further their education.

If the costs double or triple, we will no longer be able to afford sending our young people to university. The university in Rimouski is great, except that it does not offer all programs. That is why we have to go to Laval or some other university. Cutting in postsecondary education certainly is not a good way to help the labour force adjust to the present conditions of the future labour market.

Literally crushing seasonal workers and the poorest of the poor by creating two categories of UI recipients certainly is not the best way to restore hope in our society. In our region, forestry workers have work for only four or five months each year; those who get to work five months are considered extremely lucky. During this period, because it is a very short period, they start work very early in the morning and finish very late at night. Many totally wreck their health in the process. If they undergo any more conditioning, this will increase their stress load.

(1315)

A few years ago, a family man had to keep chopping down trees even if he was very sick because he had to collect enough stamps, not because he did not want to work. Quebecers, especially the people in my riding, want to work. The unemployment rate in my riding is among the highest. The people want to work. They want the jobs that were promised by the Prime Minister during the election campaign. That is all we heard during the election campaign: jobs, jobs and more jobs.

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The lack of jobs makes these people feel insecure and helpless. They appear to be almost ashamed, even when they are working.

This government has waited much too long, even if it has been a year—just as previous governments waited too long—to find decent jobs for the people in the regions, especially rural regions. If this government wants respect, it should start by respecting the poor. Only then will it command our respect.

[English]

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey): Mr. Speaker I thank the member for his dissertation. I found it extremely interesting. He is right in a lot of respects. Poor people have to be fed. When they are young it is very important that they are fed and oriented properly in order for us to prosper as a society.

A very perplexing thing has happened to me since I came to the House. I understand that over the years we perpetuate things. Members of the opposition, and perhaps members on all sides of the House, get into political discussions and dissertations about how the pie should be cut. They want to keep the existing structures and situations because it is politically expedient to do so.

At the turn of the century we changed from steam power to electricity. Right now we are at the advent of the information era. We know what has happened to Bill Gates. It is a good example of what happens by using resources and entrepreneurship and getting into new technology. If some of us had embraced that approach it would have helped us out of the economic recession which started in the sixties and is being perpetuated now.

The objective of the whole exercise of social reform is: What do we do from here? How can we get people more prepared? How can we use resources better? How can we make sure that debt does not climb?

I ask the member opposite to give us some ideas, notwithstanding the concerns. We all know about those concerns. The whole object of the exercise is to make the process better. How can we make it better, not complain about how many pieces of pie we can keep or whether we belong to one region or another?

[Translation]

Mr. Canuel: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has asked a very good question and I am very proud of him. Of course, there are ways to make it better. I will give you at least one example. The money we could spend on forestry, say, is not a subsidy but an investment. Mr. De Bané himself said when he was a minister a

few years ago—he is now a senator, unfortunately—that it is an investment. Replanting forests no longer replenished by nature is an investment. There are so many other examples I could give you. We could hire twice as many forestry workers since lumber is now in great demand. They are reluctant to do that.

(1320)

In my region, they have the Eastern Plan, which my colleague from Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine is very familiar with. We fervently hope that it will be renewed as it can put people to work. Let me give you just one example in forestry.

Most farm owners tell me that they only have two people working on their farms when there is often enough work for five people. These small farmers cannot afford to pay decent wages to their employees. Something could be done. We could create hundreds of jobs that would be extremely valuable to the whole community and would in turn benefit both the federal and the provincial governments.

I could of course give you other examples but I will limit myself to these two just to show you that it is possible to create jobs.

The federal government is very wary whenever we offer solutions.

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the floor. It is always a pleasure to speak when you occupy the Speaker's Chair.

I want to say right away that I am pleased to speak in a debate like this because I represent a riding in east-end Montreal which of course went through some very bad times in the last two recessions, in the 1980s and the 1990s.

On listening to my colleagues, I said to myself that I am not a supporter of the status quo. I want to say that at the outset of this debate so that I can perhaps discuss it later in answer to a question that our colleague might raise.

I think that the minister did something laudable in proposing social programs, but there is a paradox. The minister proposes—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Ménard: I am grateful for the kind of co-operation from my friend, the member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

However, there is a paradox because social programs are basically tools that now belong to the provinces. That is how it should be, with one exception: unemployment insurance is the only program where the federal government has any legitimacy at all to act. Let us remember the context. When the federal government announced the unemployment insurance plan, it was the first amendment to the 1867 constitution and it came in the wake of the Rowell-Sirois report. We know what things were like at that time: it was a time of trouble and war, which gave rise to heated discussions.

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What a paradox! Imagine the 33 Fathers of Confederation—I apologize for the fact that there were no women—including Cartier, Langevin, Galt, Baldwin and others, coming back here to see the central government of a federation want to interfere in social programs, when neither those 33 Fathers nor their successors gave that government any authority to do that. That, in my opinion, is the problem with the Canadian federation.

The problem is that when you are in Ottawa, you think that there is a single labour market. However, this is not possible, it is not true and it would not be good in a continental country like Canada. The fact is that there are fewer and fewer continental countries with a federal regime like Canada. And that does not make me sorry.

The problem for any federal government, regardless of its good intentions—and I am prepared to admit that the minister does have good intentions—is that there are several labour markets. Canada is a continental country in which the job market in Rimouski and the Gaspé peninsula obviously does not reflect the same reality as in Calgary, for example. This is why social programs administered by Ottawa, because of their structure, are of course very inadequate.

Many economists—and I hope we have an opportunity to discuss this issue during the referendum debate—see a rather direct link between the growth of the Canadian debt since 1970 which, as the hon. member for Matapédia—Matane mentioned earlier, is around \$540 billion, and the government's will to interfere in the social program sector through various schemes. What we are saying, and I think this is a reasonable suggestion which deserves to be looked at, is that the federal government has money.

(1325)

The first part of the document, which includes an inventory of the federal initiatives as well as an overview of labour market patterns, is well done. However, things deteriorate in the second part. In the first part, we are told that federal contributions amount to \$38 billion. How do you explain the fact that a government which has nothing to do with social programs would invest an almost unprecedented \$38 billion?

I was looking at the study released by the OECD during the last summit attended by the Minister of Industry. With its \$38-billion contribution, the Canadian government is among the top investors; yet, because this money is badly invested, because it is not allocated where users could be the primary beneficiaries, the official unemployment rate in our country is still at 10 or 12 per cent.

These are complex issues and we must be careful not to view them in an overly simplistic way. However, I am convinced that

all of us, wherever we are, must work towards the implementation of a full employment policy. It is quite a paradox to see that the expression full employment is not used even once in this document.

The minister's objective is to look after the jobless. This is a noble goal but it is not enough. We would have expected this debate to start with a policy on job creation, because the idea is not to manage the unemployed but indeed to integrate those trying to enter the labour market.

When you look, as the hon. member for Mercier and other members of this House have, at the conditions under which a country, regardless of its political structures, can achieve full employment, you note a rather obvious correlation between the size of the communities or countries—the smaller the better—and the level of success achieved in that respect. This is understandable. To achieve full employment, you must first get the national partners to sit at an employment table so that, together, with their legitimacy, they can set economic objectives.

We will never be able to have a national table to discuss full employment in Canada because the Atlantic fishermen, the people of British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec all have employment structures that differ radically one from the other. This is the first impediment, one that I consider to constitute a systemic barrier, therefore confirming to the federal government the fact that the greatest favour he can do the public as a public administration is to decentralize funding towards the authorities who are in the best position to achieve full employment, that is to say, in the first place, the provinces. Municipalities could even be made choice partners in this process. Why not? This government however yearns for visibility and it will soon, as soon as possible, have to face the Quebec electorate who will make a constitutional decision. I can understand the difficulty for a government like this one to readily accept to withdraw from this kind of visibility. However, that is the price to be paid if you want to put people back to work, in my humble opinion.

In addition to the debt and other barriers to full employment, there is something else that is very disturbing. It is the fact that from 1990 onward, and especially the jobs are created in the year 2000—we both expect to live that long, Mr. Speaker—that those jobs will require 16 years of schooling. Sixteen years means a CEGEP technical diploma, that is what it means. However, and the minister said so in his paper, more than 100,000 students drop out of our educational institutions every year.

The obvious challenge for those who want to put people to work is to make the connection between training, education and the jobs available. In Quebec, we say that education is a priority and vital to our identity, and that is of course the choice we made.

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(1330)

This is different from the 19th century, when the job market was linked to immigration and to means of transportation, which is understandable from a historical perspective as they had to build a very sparsely populated country where immigrants' contribution had a major impact on labour policies. No wonder we talk about employment and immigration centres. That is no longer the case. The three components of labour force access are education, which is a provincial jurisdiction, as well as—I think the minister was right to mention it in his paper, although it is outside his mandate—all family support services.

Things have changed since the typical family included a breadwinner working outside the home, a homemaker and children from a first marriage. This is no longer the Canadian reality.

In conclusion, that is why we believe that the minister must tackle social program reform. But he must be generous, sensible and compassionate enough to recognize that the best thing he can do is to decentralize this money and allow the provinces, especially Quebec which has considerable experience dealing with the issue of full employment—A national forum on employment was held in 1985, and I must say that one of the first things the Parizeau government did was to make plans for creating a ministry of state mandated to consult on employment. The best thing this government can do to put Canadians and Quebecers to work is to decentralize this money and recognize that it is not the government best able to put Canadians to work.

[English]

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I recently listened to the two members of the Bloc. One thing we can all agree on is that the buzzword is choices. That is the operative word.

By talking about choices it assumes that we cannot have it all. The country is broke and we are still spending like a drunken sailor. The steering wheel of the ship of state is not being tended.

We are talking about cutbacks today because we cannot afford the current situation. I think the members have highlighted the kind of thinking that has got us into the present mess. Fight poverty and need with deficit financed assistance rather than appropriately building an economy of opportunity that will then be capable of adequately providing for those who are disadvantaged.

The present result is one of failure and his reasoning, continuing on the present course of continuing to deficit finance, will continue to bring us to where we are today where we cannot adequately meet requirements.

[Translation]

Mr. Ménard: Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the hon. member for taking part in the debate. I think that what distin-

guishes us—and I say this up front—is that as a political party we are convinced that the best way to help the disadvantaged is not just to let market forces prevail. We admit that our society never had as many poor people as it does today. That is true for Montreal, Vancouver, Toronto and many regions of the country.

The difference is that we think what makes the government ineffective in fighting poverty is the political structure. Take the very concrete example of a man without work who comes to our riding office. Right away we see that various options are available if he is on welfare; they are not the same if he is on unemployment. Why? Because two levels of government administer these programs.

Nevertheless, the need is the same; he needs training so that he can re-enter the work force. I am convinced that things would be much simpler if we had the government that is closer to the people, namely the provincial government, the Government of Quebec to take the example that I know; I think that the results would be much more satisfactory if funds could be concentrated in the hands of one single manager and if all the available options and programs were offered in one and the same structure.

Sometimes people try to make a distinction between the constitutional structure and the labour market, but that is wrong. We must admit that the two are closely connected. If I were convinced that the central government is the best one to put people to work, I would not be a sovereignist.

(1335)

I am not a sovereignist because I love the sound of that word. I am a sovereignist because I think that we should have only one government. When someone—who knows, it might be the member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—proves me wrong, I will be pleased to review my position, but for now I am not convinced.

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve has demonstrated that the Canadian fiscal position has constitutional connections. In view of this fact, is the slow, stop-and-go approach the government is planning to take in this reform not paradoxical? One gets the impression that it is trying to put things off until after a certain event has taken place in Quebec. I would like my hon. colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve to comment on this.

Mr. Ménard: Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. Admittedly, the work plan presented to us a few weeks ago was supposed, as the minister stated repeatedly, to lead to the establishment of a much more precise schedule than the one before us at this time.

Like my hon. colleague, I note and share the opinion that, having nothing to offer in terms of job creation and knowing the disastrous results the referendum will have from its point of view, this government has decided to buy time and defer the objectives it had set for itself.

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[English]

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, I would like to develop a little on the topic that was raised by my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby.

Here we are 12 months downstream from the election with our total debt around about \$45 billion higher than it was a year ago and with our entire social safety net in danger of collapse. In the time that it takes me to give this short speech our debt will have gone up by about \$1 million. By the time this government actually gets around to doing anything we probably will have added another \$10 billion to the debt. We will be that much closer to a total economic collapse.

Governments always seem to take too long to take care of fiscal problems. This House knows that I am originally from New Zealand and that I am very familiar with the fiscal crisis that hit New Zealand in 1984. Dependence on social programs in New Zealand was in the end reduced not by consultation and not by long delays and green books. Instead it ended up being slashed to the bone because the country went bankrupt.

A New Zealand style debt crisis is not the most pleasant way to reform social services.

I think perhaps it is worth reviewing some of the things that happened in New Zealand. This may help some of our government members understand the seriousness of our debt and deficit situation and the threat that the debt holds for the very survival of our social programs.

Getting control of government spending is a tough job and we know that. New Zealand's debt doubled from \$22 billion in 1984 to \$46 billion in 1994 by the time the first surplus occurred. These numbers are small compared to the numbers for Canada, but the fact is that the total debt doubled before expenditures came under control in the New Zealand situation.

When New Zealand hit the wall, the annual deficit could not be reduced to zero overnight. Emergency IMF funding permitted continued deficits while the economy restructured. It was these deficits over the 10 year period that caused the debt to double.

Think about what would happen to Canada in a similar crisis. We all know that the only way to balance the budget overnight would be to virtually eliminate every existing social program—welfare, UI, pensions, you name it—in order to save the necessary \$40 billion.

In practice this could not be done because of the social consequences. The IMF would allow Canada to continue to incur decreasing deficits as social programs were abandoned and the population adapted to the changes. Just as in the case of New Zealand, this could easily result in the doubling of Canada's debt by the year 2004.

In other words, if we hit the wall tomorrow it is quite likely that our debt would balloon to a trillion dollars or more before we began showing surpluses.

(1340)

By then, even if we have stable interest rates, the interest payments on the debt will be over \$100 billion a year. Growth in the economy would help reduce the relative size of that interest payment but it is virtually equal to 100 per cent of today's tax receipts.

This is a very serious situation and just like New Zealand, it will not be solved with green books and discussion papers. Every single month that we delay the decision to make significant cuts, we add another \$3.5 billion to our debt load and we simply cannot go on this way.

New Zealand was forced to take drastic action but a phoenix has risen from the ashes. New Zealand had a \$600 million surplus this year and is forecasting \$2 billion for next year. The government has promised tax reductions beginning in 1996 but a key to this is that New Zealanders must refrain from demanding any expansion of government programs or services.

This is very important. Canadians too must learn to refrain from demanding any expansion of government services and programs. In fact they must demand less. In 1984 immediately after the debt crisis the New Zealand dollar dropped about 20 per cent to be worth 62 cents Canadian. It held there until about 1992 by which time the reorganization of the economy had taken place.

Since August 1993, it has gained 17 per cent against the Canadian dollar and now stands at 84 cents. In the same time, it gained 8 per cent against the U.S. dollar, a significant measure of the strength of the New Zealand economy.

New Zealand introduced business style performance standards for public servants. The equivalents of deputy ministers were renamed chief executives, hired on fixed term contracts and made personally responsible for delivering measurable results.

Like business executives, they had the power to hire and fire and to buy any equipment they needed but they had to perform. I wonder how long some of the government's deputy ministers would last if they had to deliver measurable results.

Along with requiring results of its civil service, the New Zealand government passed a law requiring any surpluses to be used to pay down the debt and thankfully it is now into that cycle.

New Zealand's youth now have a future of reducing debt burden to look forward to while Canada's youth still have a future of increasing debt burden. The enforced social program reform in New Zealand extended to farming and corporate welfare as well.

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Almost overnight came the complete removal of subsidies for farmers. Bankruptcy for farmers and the loss of food production was widely predicted but in fact there are more farmers farming today in New Zealand and making more money per farmer than they did before the government subsidies were taken away. They now grow what the world needs instead of what the government was paying them to grow.

There is a lesson there. When one pays people so much that it is more attractive to sit at home than to work, when one subsidizes farmers to grow crops that the world does not need, when one gives out grants to business and special interest groups one produces a dependency that kills jobs, kills initiative and kills individual responsibility.

When I left New Zealand in 1979 to emigrate to Canada, I left a socialist country very close to bankruptcy. The writing was on the wall there just as it is here in Canada today. However New Zealand today is a free enterprise country, very different to the one I left.

I am absolutely convinced that by studying the New Zealand experience we will be far better equipped to handle our own debt and deficit situation. If there was one MP travel junket that would actually be in the interests of Canadian taxpayers, it would be an all expenses paid trip to New Zealand for the Minister of Human Resources Development. He needs to see what is coming and he needs to see it soon.

There is no doubt that we need social service reform but it is highly unlikely that the 89 pages of fluff in the minister's green book will make any significant contribution.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with some interest to the comments made by the hon. member.

We often hear this New Zealand example being given either by the opposition members or certain doomsayers of all kinds. If I am not mistaken, the population of New Zealand is three million and the active economy is not any larger than that of Alberta. I understand the process in what it had to go through in restructuring its economy and what not. If we look at the industrial and economic profile of New Zealand in comparison to Canada there is very little to compare except the debt figures that the hon. member would probably like to bring to our attention.

(1345)

I would like him to give us a better description of what the realities were at the time in New Zealand versus Canada. Canada has a population ten times that of New Zealand with an economy which is closely linked to that of the United States and other

western powers. We are a G-7 nation and we have a lot of things going for us than New Zealand had at the time.

Mr. White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for paying close attention to my speech and asking interesting questions.

The population of New Zealand is a fraction of that of Canada. The only message we can get from that is we are going to be given a lot more rope to hang ourselves than New Zealand was given by the international buyers of its debt load.

Up to 60 per cent of our debt today is being purchased by foreigners. The day they pull the plug on us it will not matter what sort of resource base we have. We will be scrambling to find money.

Sweden has had difficulties with its international financing. It is really not related to population other than you get, as I said, more rope to hang yourself.

The New Zealand model is a very good model for what will happen here. It was pretty tough right after the debt crisis. However the average person on the streets in New Zealand was extremely happy to see the government finally taking the initiatives they had wanted them to take all along.

It is no good pretending there are not people abusing our social services system. There are lots of them and we had better be prepared to stand up, admit it and get on top of the problem. New Zealand was forced to because the money tree was taken away. That may well happen here. But I hope we come to the realization that we have to do something before the plug gets pulled on us too.

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound): Mr. Speaker, one of the great puzzles surrounding Canada's social programs has been that they have had very little success in reducing the country's social ills. This is so in spite of the fact that expenditures per capita in real terms have increased dramatically since they were initiated during the post war years. What has gone wrong?

This question has occupied my academic research for some time. In the short time available to me today I want to share with you some of my insight on this matter. I do so because from these insights emerge policies appropriate for revisions of Canada's social programs during the present financial crisis and as we enter the 21st century.

It is part of folklore that restaurants that have fire insurance burn more often than those that do not. The insurance industry attributes this increase to what is known as moral hazard phenomenon. In simple language it is due to insurance induced changes in behaviour. The greater number of fires that occur in insured restaurants is due in part to outright arson. However, many additional fires are started because in insured restaurants less care is given to the cleaning of greasy vents and other fire hazards. They are less likely to have sprinkler systems and fire extinguishers.

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The Government of Canada provides insurance against the hazards of unemployment, poverty and old age, disability, illness and a wide range of other calamities befalling people. As in the case of fire insurance these kinds of social insurance programs induce changes in the behaviour of the insured that result in higher claims and costs.

(1350)

Let me illustrate in the context of unemployment insurance. Undoubtedly unemployment and the costs of insurance are raised by some criminal cheating through the filing of multiple claims or receiving benefits while holding a job.

Some claim that such illegal acts are rare while others think they are frequent. By the nature of the crime it is not easy to obtain reliable estimates. At any rate, clamping down on such cheating is not a contentious issue.

Of greatest concern for the present discussion of social insurance reform is the fact that much of the present high unemployment is due to individual Canadians reacting rationally to the changes in the environment in which they operate.

For example, persons with unemployment insurance benefits have higher standards on a new acceptable job than those without. The former will reject jobs with longer commutes, lower pay and higher retraining requirements than the latter.

People who behave in this way do not break the law. They act rationally in response to opportunities created by the government. They can afford to hold out longer for a better job because being unemployed costs less. Such legal and rational behaviour nevertheless increases the rate of unemployment and the cost of the unemployment insurance program.

Similar forces act on the welfare program, as was demonstrated when in the summer of 1993 in Ontario a woman created headlines with the revelation that she quit her job deliberately and went on welfare. She argued that by doing so she enjoyed a higher living standard than when she worked for \$40,000 a year.

The media made much out of the question of whether this was true. In my view, this question misses the main point. Consider as a thought experiment that the woman's income was actually reduced by \$6,000 by going on welfare. This means that full time work brought her only \$500 a month and the loss of time with her family in leisure activities and valuable work in the home.

I know few people who condemn Canadians who make the choice this woman made. She was not violating any law. She was simply taking advantage of choices created by the system. Yet such behaviour swells the number of welfare recipients and raises the cost of welfare programs.

The cost of unemployment insurance is increased even further by the adoption by society of institutions which take explicit advantage of the opportunities offered by the system. Industries with seasonal employment expand. Some governments arrange hiring to accommodate eligibility requirements. They all act rationally and within the law. No one is to blame but the system which allows the creation and exploitation of these institutions.

How large is the cost of social insurance programs due to the insurance induced changes in behaviour and institutions? Social scientists do not have precise answers to these important questions. I have been the coauthor of studies of the effects of unemployment insurance on the unemployment rate and venture to guess that without the increased generosity of the UI system introduced in the 1970s, Canada's unemployment rate today might be about two to three percentage points lower than it is.

More generally, there is little doubt in my mind that insurance induced changes in behaviour explain the puzzle of the post war years, the ever increasing costs of social insurance programs and the constancy of the problems they were designed to cure.

The green book contains a graph of Canada's unemployment rate since the 1950s. It is on a steady upward trend. My analysis suggests that this is due to the effects of insurance induced changes in behaviour, institutions and the overall increased social acceptance of such behaviour.

(1355)

What does my analysis imply for social policy reform? The answer is found in the practices used by private insurance companies to limit opportunities for risk increasing behaviour. Fire insurance premiums are lower for buildings with sprinkler systems. All forms of private property and health insurance carry deductibles, co-insurance on claims, waiting periods and rates that differentiate between people according to the riskiness of their behaviour. For example, life insurance premiums are higher for smokers than non-smokers; sky-divers face discriminatorily higher premiums.

It is important to note that the private insurance industry knows that moral behaviour cannot be controlled completely. Consequences of it are reflected in insurance premiums. Where control is extremely difficult and the costs vary as in the case of insurance against business losses, premiums have to be so high that no one is interested in buying the insurance. That is why there is no insurance against business losses.

For very noble reasons the architects of Canada's social insurance programs have made only limited use of such private insurance methods for controlling insurance induced behaviour.

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To me the most logical solution to the excessive cost of these programs is to introduce more of the true and tried methods of the private insurance industry. Deductibles can be raised. In the case of unemployment insurance and welfare this would take the form of longer waiting periods before benefits are paid.

Co-insurance can be increased by lowering the benefits relative to previous earnings. Pensioners receive benefits only when they are older. The receipt of benefits can be lessened by requiring frequent reporting and evidence of job search, retraining requirements and a host of other measures which are equivalent to increasing co-insurance rates.

Other countries which have had similar experiences to those of Canada have taken such measures. Sweden has cut housing subsidies and brought in vouchers for child care payments. Norway is tightening disability insurance payments. In France social assistance is tied to signing on for a work training scheme. In the Netherlands young people up to the age of 27 have their social assistance set at no more than 50 per cent of the minimum wage. Germany and Italy are raising the age at which pensions can be claimed. In Britain income support is made available only on the basis of need and after means testing of applicants.

I believe that the phenomenon of insurance induced behaviour holds the clue on why in Canada and in other countries of the world the cost of social programs has run out of control. It also provides the answer for stopping these runaway expenditures. We could do better than listen to what other countries are doing to control their problem with insurance induced behaviour.

Mr. Gar Knutson (Elgin—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge many of the fine points that the hon. member made. His description of a disincentive to work is one of the cornerstones of what is in the green book.

I would like to ask him a question. I acknowledge that unemployment insurance social benefits may raise the unemployment insurance rate. That is hard to quibble with. Some people think we should do away with unemployment insurance or lower the benefits of unemployment insurance. They often point to the Americans and say: "Look at their unemployment rate. It is much lower than Canada's and the main reason is because they have less generous unemployment insurance benefits".

Is there not going to be a cost if we toughen up the system? Many thousands of people lose their jobs through no fault of their own. They have no available work to go to. I come from a community on the north shore of Lake Erie that suffered greatly in the last recession. We lost 5,000 manufacturing jobs in a town of 30,000 people. There were no real options for those people.

(1400)

If we look at the American example we see that they do not have decent unemployment insurance programs. They have people living on the street. They have entire families living on the street. They have charities for no other purpose than to provide medical care for children of people who live on the street.

Is there not going to be a cost? We are going to have more poor people in this country. While making the system tougher will encourage some people to find jobs, there will be vast numbers of people, through no fault of their own, who will simply be put in a worse situation than they are. Crime rates will go up and all sorts of other terrible social conditions will come into the foray.

Mr. Grubel: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his thoughtful comments. Clearly this is the tradeoff we face as a society.

I can assure him that in the sixties we expected a never-ending flow of funds. People thought so what if there is some insurance induced increases in the demand for services; we can afford it. The problem is we cannot afford them any more. We are being asked what kinds of tradeoffs there will be to reduce the expenditures.

The green book is full of ideas which will hurt someone. If we are reducing expenditures, as we have to, in order to increase spending on some other worthwhile thing or to eliminate the deficit, as we would do, then somebody has to suffer.

I am suggesting that it would be a good idea to imitate what some other countries have been doing that have thought about it a lot. If some people have to suffer let it fall primarily on those who have been induced by the system to change their behaviour. Clearly there is no such thing as a free lunch. I wish there were.

Mr. Knutson: On the member's last point, he wants the cost to fall primarily on those who change their behaviour, but there is no way to distinguish them. If we toughen up the UI rules there is no way to distinguish between persons who take a longer time to look for a job than others would and persons who legitimately cannot find a job because all the factories in their towns have closed.

There is no way; the system is not that specific that we can say some persons are not looking hard enough for a job so we are going to toughen up on them.

Mr. Grubel: I fully agree and that is the dilemma. What are we going to do about it? What is the member's party going to do about it? We have no choice.

As socialists are so fond of saying, if we want to make an omelette we have to break a few eggs. If we want to bring the country from the brink of bankruptcy we are going to have to impose on some people a reduction in the proportion of replacement of earnings they will obtain. We will have to impose on some people a longer waiting period. The co-insurance deductible will have to go up in all programs.

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If we look at the green book and reinterpret some of the ideas for savings, in the light of the analytical scheme I have presented, namely how does it limit insurance induced changes in behaviour, we will see that many are directed in this way. My plea is that we recognize this explicitly and pay more attention in future debates in the House and by consultations throughout the country to this idea. I believe it underlies the problems we now have.

The first best thing society can do is to attack the problem directly rather than in some indirect way.

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, as a New Democrat the issue of social programs is one particularly close to me. Our social programs essentially came about as a result of pressure from CCF governments, CCF politicians and New Democrats across Canada to address the concerns of people in times of need.

As a social democrat I am committed to ensuring that Canada is a more compassionate country rather than a less compassionate one. I am also committed to ensuring that if a person is unable to earn sufficient resources through the traditional economic marketplace to live in dignity, we as citizens owe it to that person to ensure that his or her basic needs are met. In order to do so we have to redistribute wealth from those who have to those who do not have.

(1405)

The report we have in front of us called "Agenda: Jobs and Growth" is none of those things. It is neither an agenda nor has it anything to do with jobs nor anything to do with growth. It is a continuation of the Mulroney agenda. While that government is dead clearly its policies live on healthily with the new Liberal government. Last October we saw a government change but the bureaucrats and policies stayed essentially the same.

Those policies saw poverty numbers increase, taxes on middle and lower income Canadians increase, the deficit increase. Social programs kept for the last 10 years while tax breaks to the rich grew and while inequality in the country grew. We are now at a point where the gap between rich and poor is roughly where it was at the end of the second world war, after some gains in between. We are now heading backward to a situation of haves and have nots with an enormous gap between them.

The Liberals are continuing the same Mulroney agenda in terms of the same monetary policies, the same fiscal, economic and trade policies which have failed Canada and Canadians so completely.

Canada and Canadians support the reform of social programs. There is no doubt about that. We have a system of social programs and we have a society or an economy that is not

working well for about four million Canadians. There is support for reform. There is the political will to look at reform.

Canadians want real reform. They do not want empty words, which is what this book contains. They want to have proposals they can look at and be consulted on in a meaningful way. It is not possible to consult with Canadians if there are no specific proposals with which to discuss the issues at hand.

There are a number of general criticisms that one can make before going on to suggest what might have been done. Clearly, as I have said, there is very little in the way of specifics in this paper. It is much too vague. The government has said that it is not committed to any of the proposals that are put forward in this paper. It is difficult to consult if something is not put forward that people can get their teeth into.

Where is the leadership in this paper? What is it that the government really thinks? When will the government finally start to govern after a year in office of doing almost nothing? This has not progressed us very far along the way in actually dealing with the problems of either social programs or the economy or the deficit.

It is clear, in spite of the government's attempts to hide this fact, that deficit reduction is a serious element or a serious component part of this so-called review. I would suggest that deficit reduction drives the social security review in the way it has been driven over the last 10 years. We are seeing an Americanization of social programs as our social programs continue under this government. There are choices, as many have indicated today and yesterday, between more people oriented social policies and those American ones the Liberals have chosen to follow.

The paper does not really deal with the problem we face. It does not deal with the job side of the equation. It does not deal with the taxation system whereby we will ensure we have both the resources to address the problems we face and the incentives to ensure that economic activity continues unabated.

Where are those issues in this whole debate? They are absolutely critical if we are going to ever appropriately reform social programs. It seems to me, and it seems to most Canadians from what I can understand, that the Liberals are continuing the attack on the deficit on the backs of the poor.

It is time we took a more balanced approach to dealing with the deficit. It is time that we did not foreclose on all those options that would require the rich to provide for their fair share of deficit reduction costs. It is time that we had a balanced approach to dealing with the deficit, not just one targeted at social programs.

(1410)

Last, as a general comment, it is pretty clear that the consultation process with the provinces has been totally inadequate. Otherwise we would not have received enormous criticism from all across the country, from all parties both within the federal

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Liberal caucus and outside, and from the leader of the Liberal Party in Ontario. We would not have had this enormous outburst of criticism of the paper had there been effective consultation with the provinces.

Clearly the process of social security reform can only take place with the close co-operation of the provinces. As long as the provinces feel they are right in that the government's main intention is to slough off the deficit on to their already difficult financial situations, they will not co-operate and they should not co-operate in the whole process.

Let us look at the words of the green book. I wonder how many different coloured books we are going to have. Its main focus appears to be that Canadians are unemployed in the numbers they are because they do not have the skills to fulfil the jobs of the new economy. We all have to support increasing training, upgrading and education for Canadians. We can only see the benefits from that. It is good to focus on these issues but, as we see from the green book, the expectations are modest. Above all, there are no jobs out there for people to take once they receive this training. We have already a serious expectation of finding people continuing to live in poverty but being a bit better educated and having a few more skills.

Until we address the real problem we will continue to attack social programs. Unless we solve the jobs problem we will continue to have more and more people flowing on to unemployment and social assistance rolls and we will continue to see pressures to address the overburdened system.

We need to ensure that the skills we have are adequate. We also need to ensure that the paper deals with the so-called disincentives to work. Those programs which make a transition into the workplace more difficult need to be addressed too.

There are some specific proposals that need some attention. Among all the words here, one proposal more specific than the others deals with changing the funding arrangements with the provinces. If all the federal government is going to do is continue to address its deficit problems, albeit not very effectively in this regard, by transferring the deficit to the provinces that have done a much better job of dealing with their deficits, we have not only the continuation of the Tory agenda but we have the continuation of the consequences that generates.

We have provinces, and I speak in particular of my own province of Saskatchewan, which have addressed the problem effectively. That particular province, under a New Democrat government, has reduced the deficit from the highest per capita in Canada to the lowest. It will balance its books in the coming year. It will be the first province to do that as a have not province, a province without enormous resources. It has done that in a balanced way while at the same time, I may add, it has increased social program spending. It is not a prerequisite of

addressing a deficit to do it on the backs of the poor. The only way to do it is in a balanced way which requires all citizens to pay a share, to make a sacrifice in dealing with this problem which affects us all.

With regard to unemployment insurance, it affects many Canadians. There are 1.6 million people on unemployment insurance at the moment. Many more who would have been had previous governments not changed the rules. However to suggest, as this paper does, that perhaps we should continue to make unemployment insurance even more difficult—

The Deputy Speaker: It is 2.14 p.m. and there was an earlier order. I wonder if there would be unanimous consent to give the member a few more minutes to finish his remarks.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, I really only need about five more minutes. I appreciate the co-operation of members.

It really is perverse for the green paper even to consider making unemployment insurance more difficult to get and indeed for the benefits to be further reduced.

(1415)

It seems bizarre that we were focused on that as a solution to the problem, again continuing to blame the unemployed for their unemployment.

We need changes that would make unemployment insurance more encompassing with about 50 per cent of the population now being self-employed. Outside that system, we need to find a way though not easy to include them within the unemployment insurance system. We also need to include those part-timers who are not now included in the unemployment system.

We need to look for creative ways to ensure that all Canadians who need assistance are provided with it. Again we are seeing the emphasis on training but training out of funds which would otherwise go to those Canadians who are unemployed who need the resources to feed their families.

We still have to ask the question: Training for what? Are we really going to successfully train four million Canadians to re-enter the work place? That is simply unrealistic.

With regard to child benefits, we have here another suggestion that perhaps we should increase child benefits. Indeed the numbers suggested are to double them.

While that is fine as far as it goes, it is obviously much better for a child to have \$2,500 to \$3,000 a year than only \$1,200, but this will basically merely delay the visits to the food bank by two or three days in a month. This will not address the problem and we cannot keep addressing problems in this band-aid way, responding to some of the symptoms of the problem.

Children are poor because they are born to poor parents. Their parents are poor because they do not have the means to feed their families simply because they do not have work.

The last point I would like to make with regard to the more specific proposals in the paper is with regard to post-secondary education. This really is a very perverse approach by the federal government. We all talk about and we all agree that a better educated, more trained, higher skilled work force is important in the new economy.

We would then anticipate if we all believe that that we will find ways to make post-secondary education more accessible and not less accessible. It really is difficult to understand how the government feels that by making tuition fees higher, perhaps five or six times as high, by increasing student loans from what are already difficult burdens for students to what would be almost insurmountable burdens and by reducing accessibility to post-secondary education, that possibly can move us toward a better trained, more educated work force. The opposition found the education community indicative of the problems with that.

Let me just close by suggesting two or three things which we really should do to address the problems that this green paper is attempting to address.

The real solution can only be to ensure that more Canadians are working, to develop the environment within the economy to ensure that good quality jobs are created and that there are enough of them to satisfy the demand. We have a long way to go on that. Other countries have been much better at that than we have. We really need a national consensus on how to move forward to ensure that all Canadians who can work will be able to work.

We also need to look at tax reform. We cannot continue to give \$15 billion worth of tax breaks to those who can invest in RRSPs while children go to food banks. It is simply not possible. We have difficult choices to make as all members have suggested. That may be a difficult choice for the economy but we can clearly ensure a reduction in the deficit and an ability to fund more effectively our social programs if we look at serious, fair and progressive tax reform.

There are many innovative things we can do within the workplace itself. We can look at shorter working hours and overtime restrictions to share the work that is there. If four million Canadians are not working and another eight million are, it does not seem to me to be very effective to ensure that those numbers can continue.

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There have been successes as we have seen in other countries with efforts to deal with that problem and indeed voluntary efforts on the part of trade unions and employers to move toward shorter working weeks. We have constantly done that. In past history people used to work seven days a week and now they work five days a week.

(1420)

In closing I think this is a debate about the quality of Canadian life, about our collective responsibility to one another, about inequality and ensuring that social policy responds to deep insecurities, changing family structures, high poverty levels and great insecurity in the work force.

We have a lot of work today and I do not think this paper takes us very far along the way.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It being approximately 2:14 p.m., the House shall now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

The House resumed from June 10 consideration of the motion That Bill C-240, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and the Criminal Code, be read the second time and referred to a Committee.

Mr. Bernard St-Laurent (Manicouagan): Mr. Speaker, in this society of ours, criminality, and particularly the kind of sexual offences Bill C-240 deals with, is a very sensitive subject. Sure, we have to talk about it, but as parliamentarians we have the moral obligation not to turn this into a circus. This is a very sensitive issue.

The death of a child is always a tragedy. Whether a child dies in a car accident, of natural causes, or whether he is abused before being killed, it is still a death.

As individual members of a society, regardless of who and where we are, we have the fundamental and legitimate duty to protect children who, after all, represent the generation for which all of us here work. Indeed, we must protect children. We must do everything we can to provide them with the best possible future in the safest possible world. However, it is wrong to want to eliminate anyone who dares get close to a child.

I want to make it clear that the Official Opposition does not take lightly a tragedy like the one referred to by the Reform Party member, in his speech to this House, on June 10. I am alluding to the case of young Christopher Stephenson who, on the evening of June 17, 1988, was kidnapped and then physically

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and sexually abused for over 24 hours by a 45-year-old individual named Joseph Fredericks.

No one in his or her right mind can tolerate tragedies like that. And I mean no one. We often hear people say that inmates are all like this or like that, but the fact is that they have their own code in detention centres. Indeed, even inmates who have committed crimes themselves do not tolerate such horrible crimes. All of us, including criminals, agree that to hurt a child is a terrible thing to do. In January 1992, some inmates in Collin's Bay penitentiary, Ontario, took justice into their own hands and Joseph Fredericks was stabbed while serving his sentence in that institution.

You know, the worst thing is that, whether they have raped, injured, killed or done all of the above, child molesters have to face the judicial system to be sent to jail. They have to go through the whole usual process to be sentenced. And then they end up behind bars.

(1425)

Once inside the penitentiary, they have to face another type of police, as I indicated earlier. That is why these individuals need the form of protection commonly referred to as inside protection, or the protect as they say.

I am not here to champion unduly the cause of such offenders, but nonetheless, if the judicial system sentenced them once, we should not keep sentencing them over and over, any time we feel like it. The main fault we find with the correctional system is this huge number of inside policies that govern the parole procedure. In other words, giving too much of a free rein to individuals who are not necessarily appointed because of their high qualifications but, in some cases, because of their party affiliation. To put it bluntly, these positions are too often filled by party hacks.

Once a person has been sentenced, members of the parole committee should not be given the authority to "retry" the convict by trying to find out whether for some reason, it would have been better to, or not to, and so forth, because there is no end to the administrative maze. If we do that, we will get into an incredible mess, a real mountain of red tape.

When a judge hands down a sentence—it was a judge who told me this, and I think all judges would agree—he does so on the basis of his assessment that by the end of the sentence, the individual will normally have served his term and realize, after going through the system and the follow-up services that are available, that he must not repeat the offence for which he was incarcerated.

Of course, if this worked every time, it would be an ideal world, and we have yet to achieve that objective.

On the other hand, when we look at cases like the one involving young Christopher Stephenson, everyone deplores the mistakes that were made and, of course, mistakes were made, unfortunately. Everyone deplores such mistakes. However, sta-

istics show—because we must look at both sides of the coin; we were not elected to act in demagogic or dramatic ways—that only 6 per cent of parolees reoffend within six months of their release. Granted, they can commit new offences after the six months are up. But even if we go up to 10 per cent, which is a large increase, it means that the current correctional system still works for 90 per cent of the people. After a period of imprisonment, 90 per cent of the people can regain the freedom to which they, like you and I, are entitled.

We live in a democratic and human system managed by human beings so, on the one hand, there will always be mistakes but, on the other hand, we must also work to improve living conditions for individuals like ourselves. That is what we call community.

There will always be marginal cases; there will always be people who take undue advantage of the system, be they insiders or outsiders. Of course some people will get away, but when a system has a success rate of 90 to 94 per cent, I think that we must start on that basis and try to improve it and not just focus on the 6 per cent and dwell on them and go after them.

Yes, there is work to be done, that is quite true, everyone agrees. But I think that letting people who are not even judges render a second judgement, as the bill would do, is going too far.

I will conclude with that. Of course there is a flaw, as everyone will agree. As I just said, the system is not perfect. Many people from all backgrounds are working on it in good faith, I think. Even people who do not always deal with the public but are in the community or are senior officials. They all work hard and listen to the people.

(1430)

Yes, we have to look for a solution, but I really doubt that we will find it in Bill C-240.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Surrey—White Rocks—South Langley for moving such an important motion. We obviously need to better protect our children against repeat violent offenders.

As a starting point and proof that such action is necessary, my colleague referred to the crimes committed by Joseph Fredericks. The senseless death of young Christopher Stephenson, murdered in 1988 by this chronic paedophile from Brampton reminds us, in case we need to be reminded, that we must act quickly to deal with the weaknesses of our criminal justice system and reduce the risk of similar tragedies, in future.

The federal government, the provinces and all the various areas of the criminal justice system agree that they must work together to reach this common goal. As for the federal government, he is determined to act on this issue. This is why it has already taken measures to implement several of the recommendations made in 1993 by the coroner in charge of the investigation concerning the death of young Christopher Stephenson.

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Finally, most of the federal measures recommended were implemented, which helped to improve the preparation of case management and risk assessment reports throughout the federal correctional system. We were also able to improve the exchange of information on offenders, the accountability mechanisms and the coordination of management and treatment activities for sex offenders. We have made some remarkable progress, but still have a long way to go.

This is why we will work hard to implement the few remaining recommendations. These recommendations address complex issues that cannot be resolved overnight. They require global and sustainable solutions. Bill C-45, which amends the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, is one measure that will help improve public protection. This bill, which was introduced by the Solicitor General last June, is now before the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

One of the proposed amendments would make it easier for the National Parole Board to keep sexual offenders who have a preference for children in prison until they have served their full sentence. As the Solicitor General pointed out recently, this amendment does not mean that sexual offences against children are more serious than those against adults. However, in the case of children, it happens quite often that the National Parole Board cannot keep a high risk pedophile in prison because it is difficult to prove that he has caused serious harm to the child who was the victim.

The proposal would solve this problem by eliminating the need to prove that serious harm has been caused in these cases. The Board would therefore have the legal right to keep an offender in prison until he has served his full sentence if it believes that the offender is likely to commit another offence against a child. I think this proposal would be a great help in protecting our children against sexual offenders under federal jurisdiction.

However, we must keep in mind that real reform requires more than just amending the legislation. Sooner or later, most convicts are released. This is the reason why the government has taken a number of initiatives aimed at protecting society in the long run. Improving treatment programs for sexual offenders is a case in point. If I may, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words on what we know about treating sexual offenders.

Research shows that sexual abuse has many roots and that there is more than one approach to treatment. However, clinicians agree that, in many cases, the chances of re-offending can

be considerably reduced through continuous treatment and preventing relapses.

(1435)

Preventing relapses is crucial as it helps sexual offenders control their urge when they are back in the community. In this context, the Solicitor General announced that, as part of the public security reform proposed by the government, programs for sexual offenders will be improved and reinforced.

To ensure that the corrections system makes use of the most effective means to deal with and treat sexual offenders, Correctional Service Canada undertook a complete review of its evaluation and treatment programs, last year, with a view to improve evaluation of sexual offenders' needs related to their criminal behaviour, to implement a series of treatment programs designed to meet the various needs of this group of offenders, to train corrections officers in the latest techniques for dealing with sexual offenders, and to conduct research aimed at improving the effectiveness of these approaches.

During the last five years, it made spectacular progress by increasing the number of places set aside for sexual offenders from 200 per year to over 1,800 per year.

In order to improve the national aspect of the management and treatment of sexual offenders, the Commissioner of Corrections recently announced the nomination of a senior psychologist as incumbent of a new position, that of sexual offenders program consultant. This is another example of action taken following the enquiry on the death of Christopher Stephenson.

In accordance with other recommendations made during that enquiry, the government will take measures in order to help local agencies better protect children against abuse in their communities.

The RCMP is at the forefront because it gives all police forces across Canada access to the data base of the Canadian Police Information Centre, the CPIC. Thanks to those data, the local police can determine the background of any person who applies for a job involving children and can transfer that information to local community organizations.

With these data, the organizations can make sure child molesters and sexual offenders cannot come into direct contact with children through community work.

In order that our national screening process be the best possible, some representatives of the Solicitor General, in cooperation with colleagues from Health Canada and Justice Canada, are studying possible ways of improving on the data bank of the CPIC so that the acquisition process would bring in more complete data on criminal convictions and investigations.

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For our part, we will have a much better screening system at the national level and we will be able to prevent contacts between children and paedophiles or sexual offenders.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank once again the member for Surrey—White Rock—South Langley who raised this vital issue in the House.

We have the responsibility, in memory of Christopher Stephenson and as a protection for all children and parents in Canada, to do everything in our power to protect our young people against sexual predators.

However, protection does not depend exclusively on legislation. It also depends on the design and implementation of effective treatment programs for sexual offenders, so the risk can be manageable once they re-enter society. It is only through a balanced reform of the criminal system that we will be able to build a safe society where children will not live in fear of violence or exploitation.

The initiatives I just described and the efforts we will continue to make over the next few months exemplify the commitment of our government to a better protection of our children. I am confident that all members will co-operate with us in the fulfilment of this goal.

[English]

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Bill C-240. This bill, introduced by my colleague from Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, offers important changes to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and the Criminal Code.

Once again the Reform Party has taken the initiative to ensure that dangerous offenders are not permitted to walk free and commit more deadly crimes and to threaten their victims' families. Reform policy supports tougher punishment of crime and the protection of law abiding citizens before the rights of criminals. It is unfortunate that members on the other side of the House continue to be so reluctant to introduce substantive reforms to the justice system.

(1440)

The intention of Bill C-240 is not to lock up prisoners and throw away the key. Instead this bill protects Canadians by keeping the most dangerous inmates behind bars. As my colleague stated previously in the House: "This legislation is targeting individuals who are not designated as dangerous offenders at the time of their original sentence but their behaviour subsequent to incarceration coupled with their criminal record has led Correctional Services Canada and the National Parole Board to deem them too dangerous to be released into society".

On this side of the House we have often spoken of the need for widespread criminal justice reform and Bill C-240 would do just that.

Look again at the fear that Helen Leadley and her family face daily while they await word of the date of Robert Paul Thompson's escorted temporary absence. This House is well aware of the history of this man and his criminal record dating back to 1969 and I am not going to let go of this issue.

By 1983 Robert Paul Thompson had served time for aggravated assault on a former girlfriend and was incarcerated for two hit and run incidents. Even then with his record of criminal activity and violence he was issued a day pass from prison. While on this day pass Thompson went to the home of his former common law spouse, Brenda Fitzgerald. He tried to kill Brenda's male friend by beating him with a hammer and stabbing him. He then brutally stabbed Brenda Fitzgerald to death. How stupid, how irresponsible that he was issued this day pass.

For this brutal murder and attempted murder Thompson plea bargained and pleaded guilty to second degree murder. He was never classified as a dangerous offender. He was sentenced to life which made him eligible for parole in the spring of 1995. Is that not a flagrant contradiction in terms: sentenced to life yet eligible for parole.

The case does not end with Thompson's conviction and sentencing. Two and a half years later Thompson stabbed two prison guards and took a 63-year old prison nurse hostage. During the hostage situation it took 10 guards to restrain Thompson. For these subsequent attacks Thompson received a sentence of 11 years to be served concurrent to his original sentence with parole eligibility still in April 1995.

Even after these violent offences Thompson was still not classified as a dangerous offender. What does it take? What does it take for such a violent criminal to be considered a dangerous offender? The parole board recently approved an ETA for Thompson. His brother has a non-life threatening illness and is in hospital. Thompson wishes to visit him for two hours.

It was an irresponsible decision to grant this man a day pass in 1983. It is even more reprehensible that the parole board has elected yet again to grant this ETA. Despite the pleas of his victim's family who live in fear of this man, despite the fact that I have spoken in this House on this matter four times now asking that this man not be released on an ETA, despite all of this, the Solicitor General has chosen to ignore these requests. Apparently the parole board, correctional services and the Solicitor General do not consider Thompson's proclivity for violence to be sufficient to keep him safely locked away.

A member of the parole board in New Brunswick admitted that about 70 per cent of parole requests are granted and stated publicly: "Honestly, we would like to see 100 per cent". Vengeance is not part of the mandate of the board. Does the parole board not have a moral obligation to prevent vengeance against the victims and their families? That is what this is all

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about. Thompson has been able to reach beyond his prison walls and terrorize Brenda Fitzgerald's mother. My colleagues and I are fighting daily to ensure that victims' rights are not compromised for the rights of the convicted.

The parole system allows offenders such as Thompson to serve only one-third to one-half of their sentences. The board even admits that fully one out of three violent offenders will re-offend, yet classifying an offender as dangerous can only occur at the time of sentencing. Even then current legislation only allows the correctional service to keep dangerous offenders in prison until the last day of their sentence. Then they must be released back into society.

Convicted serial rapist Larry Fisher served his entire 23 year sentence never once taking any rehabilitation program and he is now free to offend again.

(1445)

Bill C-240 would put a process into place that would permit the re-evaluation of an inmate's release. Bill C-240 would allow the crown attorney to apply the dangerous offender provisions when recommended by correctional authorities.

When the evaluation of an offender suggests the likelihood of reoffending, the offender would face continued detention. The option for continued detention would include the imposition of a definite or indefinite sentence or long term intensive supervision of up to 10 years. Provisions such as these would permit the detention of offenders beyond their sentence for those who demonstrate their continued violent tendencies even while imprisoned.

Canadians are frustrated at the government's lack of real action to make criminals more accountable for their actions. They are growing tired of watching the government tinker with the edges and not make real changes. They are beginning to question the government's ability to keep Canadians safe on their streets.

This weekend is Thanksgiving. I find it appalling that the corrections system would choose today as the date to decide on Robert Thompson's ETA. It hardly seems fair that Brenda Fitzgerald's family will have nothing to be thankful for, while her murderer celebrates the holiday.

Bill C-240 introduced by my colleague introduces real changes to the corrections system. It is time the Solicitor General re-establishes some credibility and supports this bill. I will not let this rest. Thompson's parole comes up in April 1995 and I will be back.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on debate at second reading of Bill C-240, an act

to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and the Criminal Code.

Sexual offending is an issue of great public concern. The Coroner of Ontario has used a series of inquests to focus public attention on heinous acts committed by individuals. The reaction generated by such cases often implies that there are no current provisions for dealing with such persons or that the mechanisms available are entirely inadequate.

The Criminal Code of Canada currently has extensive provisions regarding dangerous offenders. These provisions have evolved significantly over the years. In 1948 criminal sexual psychopath legislation was introduced, which permitted the court to determine that person was a criminal sexual psychopath if he had been convicted of an offence such as rape, carnal knowledge, indecent assault, buggery, bestiality or gross indecency, or an attempt at any of those offences.

If the court found the offender to be a criminal sexual psychopath it could impose a specific term of imprisonment for the substantive offence and an indeterminate period of preventive detention to begin after the initial sentence had been served.

The concept of criminal sexual psychopath was modified subsequently to specify habitual criminals and dangerous sexual offenders. There was particular concern to distinguish between dangerous sexual offenders and petty offenders. The Criminal Code was amended in 1969 and the concept of a fixed term sentence was removed from the dangerous sexual offender legislation, leaving only the indeterminate sentence. The Oimet committee considered dangerous sexual offenders and recommended creating a new category entitled simply dangerous offender.

Dangerous offender legislation was enacted in 1977 to replace former provisions for habitual offenders and dangerous sexual offenders. The current law is described in the Criminal Code in part 24. In that part the definition of serious personal injury offence is given in section 752 and the practical definition of the nature of behaviours covered is given in section 753.

This section is applicable to offenders who constitute a threat to the life, safety, or physical or mental well-being of other persons. This threat can be established on four different bases. The first is that the offender has demonstrated a pattern of repetitive behaviour showing a failure to restrain his behaviour and a likelihood of his causing death or injury to other persons, or inflicting severe psychological damage through failure to restrain his behaviour.

(1450)

The second is a pattern of persistent, aggressive behaviour showing substantial indifference on the part of the offender for the consequences of his behaviour.

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The third is any behaviour by the offender that is of such a brutal nature as to compel the conclusion that his behaviour in the future is unlikely to be inhibited by normal standards of behavioural restraint.

The final category relates to any conduct by the offender in a sexual matter where the offender has shown failure to control his sexual impulses, and a likelihood of causing injury, pain or other evil to persons through a failure to control his sexual impulses.

If the court finds an offender to be a dangerous offender it may impose an indeterminate sentence on the offender instead of any other sentence that might have been appropriate.

I raise the history of the development of this section and the definitions in it to bring to the attention of the House that various governments over an extensive period of time have been involved in wrestling with the problem of dangerous offenders. The current provisions have been tested at the Supreme Court of Canada and have been found to meet appropriate legal standards.

The possibility of changes to the current provisions has been the subject of consultations with the provinces who administer the provisions and the result is that there is general satisfaction with the current state of the law among those required to apply it.

The issue of the potential danger of charter invalidation, which has been raised in respect to the content of Bill C-240, has been addressed by other speakers and I will not repeat those points at this time.

The important issue which has to be addressed here is whether it is good policy to consider amendments such as those proposed in Bill C-240 which carry a significant risk of invalidation, when we already have comprehensive and effective measures to deal with the criminal aspect of dealing with dangerous offenders. Federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for justice have recognized that there are other important areas that need to be considered. There are jurisdictional difficulties which need to be addressed through greater and more effective collaboration between jurisdictions. Federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for justice will be meeting with their health counterparts to address these concerns.

The identification and effective prosecution of individuals using the dangerous offender provisions is also a matter which has been recognized. A process to track high risk violent offenders and make information about these high risk individuals available to crown attorneys for subsequent prosecution is another important undertaking for dealing with these offenders.

In closing, it is important to reiterate that the current state of our law and practice is the result of a long evolution. It seems clear that the informed opinion among criminal justice profes-

sionals who administer provisions respecting dangerous offenders is that the Criminal Code is an effective vehicle for dealing with dangerous offenders.

The proposals in Bill C-240 present a significant risk of invalidation to a system that has evolved over a long period of time. We are much better served over both the short and the long term by improvements in inter-jurisdictional collaboration, and by administrative and procedural improvements than we are by proposals carrying excessive legal risks.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take the floor on Bill C-240, an Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and the Criminal Code.

If this bill, introduced by the hon. member for Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, were passed, authorities would be able to review, while it is being served, the sentence of an inmate guilty of a serious and violent crime, if they believed he would reoffend upon his release.

Bill C-240 would even allow an inmate to be kept in jail for an indeterminate period of time if he were to be considered beyond rehabilitation.

(1455)

As one can see, the judicial system would be given significant powers. Before I explain my reservations about this bill, I would like to clarify a few points to avoid any misunderstanding.

Like most Canadians and Quebecers, I am absolutely not in favour of releasing under probation offenders who are dangerous for society. I agree that violent offenders who are obviously not rehabilitated should be punished and serve their sentence. We must keep them behind bars as long as they are a threat to our society, and they should serve their full sentence. It is a matter of public security, and that position is generally accepted.

In a system based on the rule of law, the judicial system, the law enforcement agencies and the political institutions should make sure criminals serve their sentence and law-abiding citizens can lead a normal life. That is the basis of the social contract binding the citizens and the State.

We know that if we do not have clear rules and adequate penalties for those who break the law, we run the risk of anarchy.

The bill before us, if passed unamended, would seriously undermine fundamental rights and rules of justice we want to protect at all costs. Let me explain.

As I said previously, we live in a free and democratic society based on the respect of fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. In the field of criminal justice, that means the inalienable right of every individual to be presumed innocent until proven guilty. This is a rule of law that we inherited from the British

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common law and which still remains a basic foundation of our legal system.

Also, under these principles, an individual can only be punished once for the crime that he or she was found guilty of. In other words, no one can be tried and condemned twice for the same offence. Trying to forego this fundamental principle of justice would amount to unduly suspend the civil rights of the individual and to use the rule of the arbitrary. Obviously, this kind of situation is unacceptable in a society such as ours.

The bill before us contains, in clause 25, a provision which would allow a court to keep an individual in prison despite the fact that they served their time. This situation would result of the fact that, in view of new evidence which had not been or could not be produced at the time of the trial, the individual is considered dangerous and should be kept in prison.

From my interpretation of this bill, evidence that was not produced at the time of the trial against the accused could be introduced in court in order to keep them longer in prison. This provision, I think, would seriously undermine the fundamental rights of that person.

I remind you that since it was enshrined in the 1982 Constitution, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms has been the best means of protection available to Canadians against otherwise absolute powers of the modern state. The Charter provides a list of rules and principles intended to protect the fundamental rights of an individual. In this regard and for the purposes of the debate, section 11 of the Charter clearly states that: "Any person charged with an offence has the right (—) if finally acquitted of the offence, not to be tried or punished for it again and, if finally found guilty and punished for the offence, not to be tried or punished for it again". In other words, under the Charter, a person cannot be punished twice for the same offence in Canada. This is a fundamental right entrenched in the Constitution.

To me, some provisions in this bill clearly violate this principle, as we could, from now on, convict for a second time someone who has already served his sentence if a court finds that the offender still represents a danger for society. Clearly, we would have to wait for a Supreme Court judgment to determine if this bill could overrule the principles set forth in the Charter. And I think that the Supreme Court would declare the bill unconstitutional.

For the purposes of the debate, we must also consider that the Criminal Code of Canada already includes provisions for continued detention of dangerous criminals, even after their sentences are served.

(1500)

Indeed, we know that the courts have the power to declare that these people are "dangerous offenders" who should be sentenced accordingly. But—and this is absolutely fundamental—the Crown attorney must make the point during the trial and not

a few years later when the accused is about to be released, as would be allowed with Bill C-240.

Why should we pass new legislation to protect society against dangerous criminals while the Criminal Code provides us with all necessary tools to that end? Either we let the Crown attorney do his or her job, or we, as legislators, tighten the definition of a criminal offender.

Finally, according to this proposal, it would be the responsibility of the National Parole Board to inquire and determine if there is enough evidence to proceed to another trial and, ultimately, to extend the sentence. I think this would substantially increase the Board's case load, with all the additional delays and costs. Besides, this is not its jurisdiction in the first place.

To conclude, I want to reiterate my firm belief that fundamental human rights are inalienable and should not be suspended. Sure, we can present some foul crimes in such a light that people will think that, given special circumstances, fundamental rights should be disregarded. But I do not think this is justifiable, because as legislators we must uphold certain principles.

If Bill C-240 is adopted in its present form, it would be possible, I repeat, for the courts to detain individuals for longer than their original sentences, under the pretext that they still represented a danger to society. In other words, they could be punished for longer than their original sentences. It is obvious that this is unjustifiable.

Citizens must not be deprived of their fundamental rights under the pretext that society or the correctional system can find no other way to protect the public against dangerous criminals. This solution does not resolve the problem of dangerous offenders, who can pose a serious threat to society.

In conclusion, I would like to say that once society begins to make exceptions to the fundamental rights of the person, its members have every reason to believe that society is becoming dangerously intolerant and that, in the long term, their personal freedom is at risk.

[English]

Mr. Ian Murray (Lanark—Carleton): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-240 seeks to address concerns about the incidence of offenders repeating violent offences, particularly sexual offences.

The focus of the bill is upon the identification and further detention of a select group of offenders who are identified after sentencing during their period of incarceration as presenting a continuing and substantial threat of harm to the physical or mental well-being of other persons.

Predicting violent behaviour is undeniably a highly valued goal in terms of achieving community safety. Attaining this goal is very elusive. Other speakers have addressed the wide variety of measures which have been tried or which are currently under way to deal with the protection of society from dangerous offenders.

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There are, however, a number of obstacles to effectively carry out this highly laudable goal. Approximately 10 per cent of all crime can be called violent. The base rate for violent behaviour is therefore quite low. For example, given the fact that only 10 per cent of all crime is violent, if we were to predict that no one would behave violently we would be correct about 90 per cent of the time.

The crux of our problem is that no one is satisfied with even a 90 per cent rate of prediction. Research over the past decade has made significant strides in the prediction of violent behaviour.

Correctional Service Canada has been working hard at developing risk assessment instruments and has developed one of the better assessment and prediction tools in the world.

The major predictors of criminal and violent behaviour have been reasonably well identified in research. These predictors include criminal companions, a history of anti-social behaviour, anti-social attitudes, family problems, cognitive dysfunction and low educational and vocational achievement. Some of the items in this list can be assessed relatively easily through extensive and detailed individual histories. Some, such as cognitive dysfunctions, require sophisticated testing.

(1505)

One of the better predictors relates to assessment of psychopathy which comprises many traits including callousness, manipulation, dishonesty, irresponsibility and persistent anti-social conduct.

There are childhood predictors of violent recidivism associated with difficulties in pregnancy, especially the addiction of mother to alcohol or drugs, early childhood problems such as temper tantrums, and being the victim of or witnessing abuse or parental conflict.

Various conduct disorders characterized by stealing, lying, fire setting, truancy, sexual aggression, violence, cruelty and running away from home are strongly related to violent recidivism.

The research seemed to suggest that there is an increasing ability to predict dangerous behaviour. Accurate identification of the highest risk offenders can be achieved by combining measures of psychopathic traits, demographic variables and criminal histories.

Although using such tools will optimize the accuracy of predictions, it will not unfortunately identify all persons who will commit violent crime after release from custody.

Attempts to refine the predictions even further will result in high numbers of people wrongly identified as dangerous persons. It will greatly increase the costs of such measures and will

impinge upon the rights of the many individuals improperly identified.

One of the striking things about the predictive factors which have been associated with violent recidivism is that virtually all of them occurred years before the violent offence for which we are concerned. They were known or could have been known at the time of sentencing.

The Criminal Code contains extensive provisions for dealing with dangerous offenders. The definitions in these sections have evolved over time and have survived or have been modified by a variety of legal challenges. Since we are increasingly able to predict dangerous offenders, the tools for managing the kind of problem being addressed in Bill C-240 already exist within the Criminal Code.

What is needed to address the kinds of cases leading to the current expressions of public concern is better early identification and prosecution of the most dangerous offenders. The various jurisdictions involved in administering criminal justice need to carefully scrutinize cases of violent and dangerous offenders to ensure that the appropriate use of existing dangerous offender provisions are made.

Finding ways to identify and track high risk offenders from as early as possible in their contacts with the criminal justice system throughout their involvement with the law will enable prosecutors to better apply the dangerous offender provisions of the Criminal Code. Finally it must be recognized that some offenders will slip through the net of criminal justice prosecution.

For these individuals, better co-operation and co-ordination at the policy level, at the level of prosecutions, in the correctional domain and, most important, with mental health can provide effective solutions to dealing with high risk offenders without exposing our current, effective and tested tools to the risk of invalidation on charter grounds.

In closing it is important to recognize an unpleasant reality. It is ultimately impossible to identify in advance all those individuals who will commit heinous acts. Our long term interests are better served by more effective crime prevention.

I quote from the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General entitled "Crime Prevention in Canada: Toward a National Strategy":

The Committee accepts that crime will always be with us in one form or another and will require police, court and correctional interventions.

At the same time, it believes that our collective response to crime must shift to crime prevention efforts that reduce opportunities for crime and focus increasingly on at-risk young people and on the underlying social and economic factors associated with crime and criminality.

This comprehensive approach involves partnerships between governments, criminal justice organizations, and community agencies and groups.

And it situates the crime problem in a community context and sees its solution as a social question.

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to speak on Bill C-240, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and the Criminal Code.

This is a private member's bill and we are debating it at second reading with the hope that it will be sent off to the justice and legal affairs committee of the House. Private Members' Business is one of the few opportunities members who are not in cabinet have to bring forward ideas in the form of bills or motions. They are debated and on some occasions are even put to a vote by members of this House.

(1510)

I mention this because it was not so long ago that my private member's motion on relaxation of the confidence convention thus allowing freer voting in the House came forward for debate. It was a votable motion. Due to the support this motion found among members opposite it passed.

I mention this now because I believe it is important in the period called Private Members' Business that we as members should be able to use our own best judgment when determining how to vote on a particular matter. The whip should not be on for any vote in Private Members' Business. Members should be able to study the legislation on its own merits, not on the basis of its origin. That is the suggestion that all bills introduced by the government are good and must be supported and all bills and motions proposed by the opposition are bad and by definition should be defeated.

This idea is not conducive to allow parliamentarians to do their job which is to listen to the people of Canada. It prevents members of this House from truly working together in the best interests of our country's government and in the best interests of all our constituents, the Canadian people.

I remind members that this House did approve the motion I sponsored which endorsed freer voting. I hope members opposite as well as members of the Bloc will find this bill worthy of their support.

On the law and order issue which is being debated across this great country, there is no question where the Reform Party stands. It stands squarely in favour of law and order. That is why this bill is coming forward at this time.

Bill C-240 is one more initiative by Reform members to bring the necessary changes to our justice system to protect Canadians. It is a response to a need in our society, a need which has been eloquently expressed by those who are the friends and

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relatives of persons killed by criminals who are being let out of prison and who we all know will commit violent crimes again.

My hon. colleague from Calgary Southeast spoke a few minutes earlier about the need to retain such criminals as Robert Paul Thompson who murdered Brenda Fitzgerald in 1983 while out on a day pass. This offender has been sentenced to life and is eligible for parole in the spring of 1995. Such a bill as C-240 would allow corrections to keep dangerous criminals such as Robert Paul Thompson in prison.

As my colleague from Surrey—White Rock—South Langley has mentioned, under current legislation corrections officials have the power to keep dangerous criminals in prison until the expiration of their sentence. However, there is no legislation in place to allow the federal corrections system to keep high risk offenders in prison upon the expiration of their sentence.

At present there are high risk offenders who still retain violent intentions toward society but will be released on the Canadian public. The need for change is also expressed by families of murder victims and by those few who have survived brutal attacks by criminals who should have been kept behind bars for the rest of their lives.

This bill is similar to a bill that was introduced in the last Parliament and seems to be similar to proposals now being put forward for discussion by the present government. If that is the case, then why would any of us oppose it?

Let me take the time now to deal with two criticisms that have been raised. First, the government proposal is that public discussion and action on this matter should wait for the conclusions of this consultative process.

My riding has provincial institutions such as the Fraser River Correctional Centre, Alouette River Correctional Centre, Boulder Bay and Stave Lake Camp. It has federal institutions as well, such as Mission Institution and Ferndale Minimum Security.

Between the riding of Mission—Coquitlam and adjacent ridings we have provincial institutions such as Surrey Pre Trial, Ford Mountain, Mount Thurston, Centre Creek (Youth) and Chilliwack Community Correctional Centre. There are also federal institutions such as Matsqui, Kent, Elbow Lake, Mountain, Regional Psychiatric Facility and Harrison Mills. That is a lot of prison institutions.

The people of my riding and the surrounding ridings know of whence they talk. The people who work and live in the cities and towns found in Mission—Coquitlam want this type of legislation put in place immediately. They do not want violent offenders who have caused sufficient trouble in prison and therefore have been required to serve their complete sentence getting out and living unsupervised in the community. This bill only applies to the most potentially violent of incarcerated prisoners. I am sure the people in my riding would much prefer that such offenders stay in jail.

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(1515)

My householder contains a questionnaire to my constituents with questions relating to reform of the criminal justice system. I received what I believe is a very good return, over 6 per cent, on questions relating to criminal justice reform, particularly 87 per cent and 95 per cent who wanted changes to respective criminal justice reforms.

What is even more interesting is in the top concern in the general comments, over 76 per cent commented on changes to the Young Offenders Act, to sentencing, the parole system, victims' rights and it goes on and on.

Canadians want change.

Listening to my constituents is all the consultation I need to convince myself that this is a necessary piece of legislation. Moreover, with whom is the government going to consult if it asks the person in jail what to do as part of the consultation process? It is quite likely the response would be that that legislation is not needed.

If government consults with the friends and relatives of those who have died at the hands of recently released offenders I am sure the response would be that legislation is needed.

In her speech on this bill presented to the House on June 10, 1994, my friend from Surrey—White Rock—South Langley eloquently pleaded the case in support of her bill by giving us details of the murder of an 11-year old boy at the hands of such an offender. I believe his parents would support this bill. Therefore I believe the people with whom the government is going to be carrying on discussions have already spoken and spoken eloquently in favour of this bill.

The second criticism raised against this bill is that it might contravene the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Yes, I suppose a bill which deals in a harsh manner with dangerous offenders could be found in contravention of some section of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms but is it? The charter has a saving clause, clause 1. By virtue of clause 1 the charter may be

violated by a statute but if such a statute would be acceptable in a free and democratic society then that statute is valid.

This is one of the compromises that went into the charter when it was drafted and I believe it is helpful in relation to Bill C-240.

I submit that in a free and democratic society that it would be unacceptable to deal in the way proposed by Bill C-240 with society's most dangerous offenders.

My Liberal friends will say that such treatment violates the convicted person's individual rights. That would be the classic argument raised by Liberals but is it not time that we looked at the rights of the community as a whole? Is this not a case where the greater good for the greater number of people in our society should win out over the rights of an individual, the rights of a person who is so dangerous to society?

I believe in cases such as this the rights of society as a whole should be protected and, yes, protected at the expense of the rights of a very few to whom this bill would apply.

I endorse what my colleague from Surrey—White Rock—South Langley said when she first spoke in support of this bill, that if this bill can save even one life it is worth it.

I believe the time to act on this matter is now. There is no point in consultation on this matter. People are demanding that we deal in a tough straightforward manner with society's most dangerous offenders. I urge all hon. members to look carefully at the purpose of private members business and if they believe this bill is necessary then vote for it, regardless of the party whips.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to address this important matter for the safety of all Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Colleagues, I think we will call it the end of the day. The member for Churchill would have 30 seconds or something to speak, if that is acceptable to the member for Churchill.

It being 3.20 p.m. the House stands adjourned until Monday, October 17, 1994, pursuant to Standing Orders 22 and 24.

(The House adjourned at 3.20 p.m.)

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