



# House of Commons Debates

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VOLUME 133

NUMBER 174

1st SESSION

35th PARLIAMENT

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Friday, March 24, 1995**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, March 24, 1995

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### **BORROWING AUTHORITY ACT, 1995–96**

The House resumed from March 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C–73, an act to provide borrowing authority for the fiscal year beginning on April 1, 1995, be read the third time and passed.

**Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on the government's overall fiscal plan.

The budget which deals with raising money and how it is spent and the borrowing powers which make up for the shortfall in revenue go together to make up the government's fiscal plan for the coming financial year. At least that is how an economist might explain it.

In reality, there is no plan to reduce the deficit to zero allowing us to address the country's mounting debt. The budget falls short of pointing out the means by which Canada is to get to ground zero: zero deficit.

As well, the borrowing bill, which has been and is the subject of debate in this Chamber, is usually explained as necessary to make up for the shortfall in revenues, revenues being less than expenditures. In reality the money borrowed has nothing to do with the shortfall in revenues. It is the failure of the government to cut its expenditures which necessitates a borrowing bill of this size.

This is a failure that will haunt us for years to come, for if ever there was a time when the people of Canada were ready to see tough decisions made and leadership shown, it was on February 27. However, the government, afraid that its standing in the polls might suffer, took the tried and true Liberal way out. It put off tough decisions for another day. If it puts these decisions off

for more than three years, they will not be this government's decisions to make.

The budget can be compared to a bad science fiction novel or movie. It is lost in time; it is lost in space.

It is lost in time because it comes a year too late and proposes some tough measures, but even they are to start only next year and are phased in over a number of years. If they had begun this year and not been phased in they would have substantially reduced the deficit. This is a major complaint.

It is lost in the broad space or expanse of Canada because it does not meet head on the problems of our economy. It seems to be a classic case of misunderstanding the mood of the people of Canada with this budget.

The space in history, the history of making tough decisions was there for the finance minister and his merry band of followers from the finance department to enter but they declined. They chose instead to nibble around the edges of the problem rather than meet it with courage and a plan for the future.

This is not the type of budget we in the Reform Party would have brought down. This is not the type of fiscal planning the Reform Party could have entered into. It is for these fundamental reasons that I cannot support this budget or any of the bills that flow from it.

What then does the budget do? It raises taxes. The finance minister made grand gestures of self-congratulation for not raising personal income tax. Yes, he is right. He did not.

Instead, he imposed a tax increase for gasoline, a commodity consumed by Canadians rich or poor. As well, changes were made to RRSP rules so that those who receive severance packages when they leave their employment will only be able to contribute \$2,000 to an RRSP instead of the current \$8,000, harming their future plans for retirement.

(1005 )

The timing is off here as it is with the rest of the budget. Canadians are now entering an era when they are concerned that private pension plans or even the Canada pension plan will not meet their retirement needs.

The rate at which the \$40 billion Canada pension plan is deteriorating surprises even those who researched and wrote the 15th statutory actuarial report which was recently tabled in the

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House of Commons. The last such report was written and tabled five years ago. Between then and now the report author found that two of the primary reasons for the deterioration have been a doubling of the number of disability claims and a lowering of contributions because of job losses during the recent recession.

As a leading financial adviser and retirement specialist from Vancouver stated recently: "I now look at CPP in the same way that I view UI. We all pay it but many of us will never collect it".

Will the Canada pension plan still exist for baby boomers as they begin to retire 15 or 20 years from now? The chances of CPP as we know it today surviving that long are very slim. I suggest there are none. This reality caught our attention last month when the Liberal government actuarial report concluded that if CPP contributions are not increased and benefits continue as now legislated, the plan which today supposedly contains just over \$40 billion will be gone by the year 2015.

This is not only a boomer issue. The future of CPP will have a greater impact on the generation Xers who are destined to struggle in the wake of the baby boomers for at least half their job seeking and working lives.

At present five Canadian workers support each retired CPP collecting pensioner, with middle age boomers making up the majority of today's workers. However, by the time boomers start to collect CPP there will only be two to three workers to support each pensioner. Will the generation Xers, who are having it tougher economically than their boomer parents, be willing or able to pay a lot more in CPP contributions to support their parents' public pensions?

If the government had seriously addressed this year's budget and made the necessary cuts, then Canada could be on the road to recovery and the future for our future senior Canadians would not look so bleak.

Canadians were looking for a tougher budget. If over the last 25 years governments had been responsible, if thousands of dollars had not been given away in unnecessary grants which have already been talked about in this House, if new programs such as multiculturalism had not been devised to initiate help to groups of people who have always been strong enough in their feelings and respect and pride in their distinctive culture to establish and fund their own commemorative centres and festivals, if the past governments had managed the taxpayers' hard earned dollars, their tax dollars instead of mismanaging them, and if the present government would seriously look at cutting programs which drain our resources and seriously cripple the government's ability to maintain necessary seniors programs, the government would not be so desperate to raise more revenue on the backs of those very Canadians who trusted the past

Liberal and Conservative governments to spend those tax dollars wisely.

Mr. Speaker, I am beginning to think I am in front of one of the chatty classes I have had over the past 30 years.

The government had an opportunity to put in force measures which, although tough, would actually help the taxpayer and not increase taxes, or revenue in the form of more taxes. However, that is not the case.

What does the government do to collect a little more revenue? It changes the RRSP rules, another hidden tax. If we think that is bad, how about this? Lessen the payouts for unemployment insurance but not the premiums because the government wants to build up a surplus. Unemployment insurance is a payroll tax and by not reducing premiums, another hidden tax is involved. However, this tax—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Order, please. I wonder if I could ask the co-operation of the House to allow whoever might have the floor the opportunity to be heard. Certainly, I am beginning to encounter some difficulty in hearing the member.

While the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam still has two minutes remaining in her time, I wonder if she could clarify for the Chair whether in fact she will be splitting her time with a colleague.

**Mrs. Jennings:** Mr. Speaker, yes, I will be splitting my time. I should have mentioned it beforehand. Thank you for trying to bring a bit of order back to the House.

(1010)

The government has raised corporate taxes and imposed a tax on bank profits. Who does the government think will pay for these taxes? Maybe it does not know. I can tell everyone these taxes will be paid by the little guy, the consumer. Anyone who believes they will not be passed on to the consumer should immediately sign up for a reality check. There is only one taxpayer: the ordinary taxpayer like you and me.

It is my belief that the tax increases we have seen in the budget are an admission of failure by the government, failure to cut spending sufficiently. Above all, why would the government assume people are willing to go on through a tax increase, paying more for more government? Was the government not listening to the people of Canada? It cannot ignore the people for too much longer.

I am concerned about the long range effect of this budget. While the deficit reduction contained in it amounts to a first tentative step in the right direction, this reduction will be quickly eliminated if interest rates rise or the dollar does not remain strong. If we enter another economic downturn, all calculations will be off considerably.

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I am concerned the government will not follow through on its plans to reduce personnel. No matter how governments try, and many have, to reduce the size of the public service, the bureaucrats seem always to prove more resolute in keeping their jobs than politicians are in getting rid of them.

Departments disappear or are amalgamated, but is there a reduction in staff? Not usually. If it does occur, it is usually because the public servant found another public service job in another department. There is no real reduction. We will be watching the government closely to see that it meets its reduction target.

What would the Reform Party have done in these circumstances? Unlike prior opposition parties, people actually do know what we would have done. We set it out quite clearly in the taxpayers budget. The taxpayers budget sets out exactly what we would have cut as far as programs are concerned.

By not following the Reform Party's plan, over \$50 billion will be paid to service the national debt in 1996-97. The government's target of having the deficit lower than 3 per cent of the GDP is just nonsense. Either we have a deficit, or we do not. Either we believe it should be eliminated, or we do not.

We believe every effort should be made in the next three years to eliminate the deficit. Once the deficit is eliminated it allows us room to move, room to explore programs that would open up new doors for business and industry. More money would be put back into the economy.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech of the hon. member and I think that she certainly deserved our attention, as do all the other members of the House.

She spoke briefly about unemployment insurance, and it is on this subject that I would like to comment and ask a question.

In its budget, the government established a human resources development fund from the surplus that will be generated in the unemployment insurance fund. Does the hon. member not feel it would have been a much better idea to consider a quick reduction in unemployment insurance premiums so that both individuals paying their own premiums and business could enjoy the savings right away and put this money back into the economy? Does she not feel that approach would have a more immediate direct effect on employment than an artificial fund created solely to enable government to get around jurisdictions and intervene in a whole lot of areas under provincial jurisdiction?

Does all of this not strike the hon. member as a course of action that runs contrary to the federal government's fine words about really intending to reduce the size of government? Is it not actually going to increase intervention by the federal govern-

ment in areas of activity that are not in its jurisdiction and where it has proven to be ineffective?

*[English]*

**Mrs. Jennings:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question although I am surprised he heard anything I did say. I was having difficulty.

I must tell the hon. member the UI program should be exactly what it was designed for when it was first brought in. It is for temporary job loss. It should be sustained by the employees and the employers and only those people. I strongly think there should be no artificial fund. The size of government should be cut down.

(1015)

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I was listening to what the Reform member was saying, and I did not have much to add until she made her last point on the topic of the debt. Although the government is dealing with the debt, the way it is doing it is not to her liking. I agree with her. But, I have the impression that the Reform Party takes the following position: any person in debt will have to starve for the next three years.

That seems to be the case, and that is what I am having trouble understanding. Of course, we can cut year after year and try to reduce the debt, strive to reach the three per cent benchmark, but we cannot say, tomorrow, that we will stop eating. I would not be able to keep working, I would not earn very much and I would not be able to pay very much either. I would be interested in hearing how her draconian cuts would reduce over the next three years the some \$30 billion deficit we have now and which is mostly caused by the debt, and I agree with her in principle that it must be done. But I would like to know more about her starvation ideology.

*[English]*

**Mrs. Jennings:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member who raised those interesting questions; certainly questions that boggle my mind.

If he would like a real in depth explanation he can get our alternate budget and it would certainly explain it.

There have been a lot of remarks in the House suggesting that people who suggest cutting things are mean, or lean and mean, or are miserable people, or do not care about anyone. I am sick and tired of this. This is a lot of nonsense.

The only way we will ever help anyone, the only way we will sustain medical health for the country, the only way we will help those destitute, those people who need the help, is to stop those who are taking who do not need it. We have to get serious.

No one knows any more than I do. I have been through serious problems. Fortunately I had enough strength to pick up and help myself but others around me were also there to sustain me. Never did I blame anyone for what had happened. I tried my best.

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People have to be responsible. Those who cannot we have to help. The bottom line is if we do not get this deficit and debt in control the country will not be able to help anyone. We had better stop laughing about it and get serious.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today in what is a very solemn debate. We have been talking on and off about the budget since the Minister of Finance introduced it in the House. We need to begin very seriously asking questions on what is wrong and what we can do to correct it. It is time to lay aside the meaningless rhetoric and deal with reality.

One of the flaws in the thinking of governments past is they have assumed that deficit budgets are okay. In the next few minutes I would like to talk briefly about the urgency of reducing the deficit in order to stop adding to our debt.

A lot of Canadians are not well informed on the budget. A lot of Canadians are of the impression that because there are these cuts our debt is going down. That is not the case at all. Our debt is increasing.

I am not going to say we ought to stop decreasing it this year but we have a soft target which allows the debt to go on and on, even with this present plan if the government meets its stated goal, which the minister has said it will do. He has a neat little couplet which is normally not in my vocabulary. He said they will meet the budget deficit targets.

(1020)

That is great, but what after that and where are we headed in the long run? I often say that Wayne Gretzky is one of the greatest hockey players but not because he knew where the puck was, not because he knew where it was going, but he knew where it was going to be. He has an uncanny ability to be at the right place. That was because he is able to think ahead. We need to start on behalf of Canadian taxpayers seriously thinking ahead.

Peter Cook in the *Globe and Mail* just before Christmas said: "Our government problem is that we have politicians that have ignored deficits and debts for too long and even now put forward inadequate solutions. Rising rates make it less easy to postpone the inevitable. The level of government in Canada is simply too large for the private sector to support and must be cut back to what is affordable, and the sooner the better".

I ask all listening to consider what wealth is. From what do we derive our standard of living in Canada, which we all enjoy bragging about so much? If we were to ask that question we would realize that primarily our wealth derives from the transformation of our resources into goods that are saleable around the world to ourselves and also to others.

Furthermore, we have people who provide certain services. For example, when I go to the dentist, the amount of material he

uses is very small but I benefit greatly from his skill in fixing the problem I have with my teeth at the time.

We have these benefits that derive from creation of real wealth. No matter how you cut it, when we have a large burgeoning government, that is mostly a drain on the production of our wealth.

I admit there are areas where what government is doing is necessary. We have the transportation network probably most efficiently done by government. There are other things which government can do well, but it is not accurate to assume without challenge that unless government is doing it, it will not be done. I resent greatly the implication that the Reform Party's plan will make things worse for so many Canadians. That is not true. Our plan is to stop paying so much interest so that we have more money available for the things we value highly.

Why the hurry? I did a little spread sheet on our present fiscal situation and I took our current debt and I extrapolated it using a very simple assumption. This may not be accurate because we do not know what the future holds. I assumed an 8 per cent rate of interest and I assumed a 3 per cent growth in our economy, both of which are assumptions anyone can make but no one could really defend because we are not able to accurately predict the future.

Who would have ever guessed in the mid 1970s that the interest rates on mortgages would go from 6.5 per cent to 16 per cent? That was not predictable.

When we talk about our debt it is true that if the interest rates rise dramatically, we are captives. There is not a thing we can do about it; neither for our internationally held debt, nor for our domestically held debt because everybody who has lent Canada money will want it back or we will totally blow our credibility.

It is mandatory that we get our debt and deficit under control because with the government's plans, using the assumptions I have stated, 3 per cent growth, 8 per cent interest, by the year 2010, which at my age is right around the corner—when you get to be over 50 the years just fly, 15 years is nothing—our debt will have grown to one trillion dollars. Our annual interest payments, assuming interest is still then only at 8 per cent, will be \$80 billion per year. That is \$80 billion taken out of the economy just for interest. This is money that will not be available to help poor people, to provide health care and education.

(1025)

One may ask what the big deal is on this. I did a little calculation and found if our total expenditures were to be brought down rapidly we would very quickly be able to pay off the debt. In other words, if we were able to reduce the rate at which we are adding to the debt to zero, we would call that elimination of the deficit, we would simply stop borrowing. Our plan calls for doing that in three years. If we could reduce the

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debt, our interest payments would go down instead of continuing to escalate, which is so important.

We must remember it took the Liberals only 10 years approximately to increase the debt to \$100 billion in the 1970s. However, according to the plan we have before us, it will take them only three to four years to add another \$100 billion to the debt.

The plan the minister has presented will increase the debt by \$100 billion in the next three years. That is not acceptable. It is a premise we reject and it is one which I think all Canadians should be very concerned about, particularly members of the House.

I would like to quote what was said to me by a voter, a taxpayer, from Edmonton Northeast. When we were discussing these things he said to me: "Where were our leaders in the last 30 years? Surely there are experts in the Department of Finance in Ottawa. Surely there are politicians who are businessmen who could think and see what was happening when they were presuming on the future with this borrowing way back then. What was it that motivated them? Where were they? What were they thinking?"

I challenge us all to start thinking right now.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened very attentively to the comments made by my colleague from the Reform Party and I would like to tell this House that the difference between the Reform Party and the Liberal Party is that the former apparently wants to make cuts and take away from this country's middle class and low wage earners, while the latter have hesitations. They do not know whether they should make the wealthy pay more taxes. They do not dare.

During the last recess, I had the pleasure of meeting with one of my constituents, a wise old man, who told me that the rich will end up paying for the deficit because the middle class is overtaxed and the poor do not have any more money. The question I want to ask my colleague is this: Does he not believe that the time has come to collect the money from those who have benefited the most from this system in the last 30 years, namely Canadians and Quebecers who have money today and do not pay their fair share, by taxing them?

[*English*]

**Mr. Epp:** Mr. Speaker, I am going to surprise my hon. colleague by saying I agree with him, there should be a fair tax system.

The Reform Party has said all along that our taxation system should be fair. We believe in a flat rate tax. We think it is certainly reasonable that if a person makes twice as much money

he or she should pay twice as much tax. However, the real problem is one of spending.

When we look at what the Liberals have done in terms of the budget, which is what we are debating here, talk about a tax grab from the middle class, the poor and basically from everyone which is being given on the fuel. They tell us a 1.5 cent per litre tax. That is inaccurate. It is a 1.605 cent tax per litre because what we are forgetting is that on the tax is added the GST.

(1030)

The present government likes taxes on taxes. I did a little calculation. Let us say I want to buy \$1 worth of gasoline. I have to earn \$2.78 in order to buy it. When I earn \$2.78, \$1.11 is income tax, leaving me with \$1.67. Then I go to the pumps and 67 cents is needed for gasoline tax and I am then left with \$1 of gasoline.

When I buy \$1 of gasoline and pay \$1.78 in tax that is a tax rate of 178 per cent and that applies to everybody, the rich and the poor alike. Everyone who benefits from our transportation system and everyone who drives to work pays that tax. That is a tax grab on the poor as well.

We think taxes ought to be reduced in total. Income tax should be a flat rate tax which is fair. All the areas in which people can avoid paying their fair share of taxes should be reduced.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I wish my hon. colleague from the Reform Party would take the good news to his party because, for the past 15 months, all we have heard the Reform Party suggest is that we continue to deal with the deficit and debt problem on the backs of the workers, the unemployed and the disadvantaged.

As for tax fairness, I would say this is another piece of good news he could pass on to his colleagues because every initiative put forth by the Bloc Québécois at the finance committee to eliminate unfair advantages flowing from family trusts, to eliminate all those inequities in the tax system that have enabled very high income earners as well as large corporations with large profits not to pay a cent in taxes since 1991, every time we have come up with such an initiative, the Reformists have voted against our proposal.

So, before claiming that they want tax fairness, before claiming that they want to restore fairness in the tax system, I think that the hon. member should go back and check in his party what his party really wants.

[*English*]

**Mr. Epp:** Mr. Speaker, actually I do not need to check with my party. What I said today I got from my party. I think people have not been listening or have not been hearing. We promote tax fairness. We promote reduction of taxes by reducing government expenditures.

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There is an important assumption that we must challenge. I believe both members of the Bloc and the Liberals go on the assumption that if the government does not fund it then it will not be done.

If the member were to examine our proposals in detail, he would find that working people are much better off under our proposals than they are under this one. We reject the supposition that it is efficient to send half of our money to Ottawa and there allow politicians and bureaucrats to divide it up and decide who is eligible to get it back.

We are saying that we need to bring back the sense of independence and self-sufficiency which is ultimately best for everyone, particularly the working class.

[Translation]

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonnette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise when you are in the Chair. I believe I have 20 minutes. You will understand that I want to make sure that this is indeed the case.

I am pleased to participate in the debate on the borrowing authority and, consequently, on the budget. This is the second Liberal budget and we must keep in mind the truly disastrous economic context which affects the unemployed. Once again, the Minister of Finance did not provide anything for the 1.4 million jobless. This budget is particularly unfair to Quebec, primarily because no concrete decentralization measures are proposed. There is no indication of a willingness, on the part of the federal government, to transfer to the provinces fields of jurisdiction which, in many cases, the provinces would be better able to look after.

(1035)

In the case of Quebec, there is of course the issue of manpower training. As you know, there is a very strong consensus in Quebec, which includes chambers of commerce, unions, as well as the Quebec government. They all agree that Quebec would be better served if its government looked after manpower training which, as you know, is one of the links between social and education policies.

Yet, there is nothing in the budget that leads us to think that the federal government wants to fulfill the commitments it made earlier. As the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot said repeatedly, this budget is unfair. It is unfair because nothing is done about family trusts. In this issue, the government acted somewhat like Star Trek, in the sense that it announced a measure, but “beamed it up” or rather beamed it forward to some time in the future.

Indeed, it was announced in the budget that the rules governing family trusts would be reviewed; however, the changes will take effect just before the year 2000. What is a family trust? It is a despicable scheme which legally allows a number of wealthy

people to avoid paying taxes by using a truly outrageous provision. Yet, nothing is provided in this budget to tackle the problem.

It is also an unfair budget—this has been pointed out repeatedly but it does not hurt to say it again—since farmers in Quebec will lose \$32 million, especially dairy producers, a sector which has undergone major consolidation at the instigation of the various governments we have had in Quebec in the past ten years. It is an unfair budget because farmers and dairy producers will lose \$32 million, while western producers will receive an additional \$2.9 billion.

One of the worst aspects of this budget, and this is one of the areas where the Reform Party and the Bloc Québécois agree, is that it fails to provide anything in the way of tax reform. Take the banking sector. When we look at who benefited most from the 1982 recession and the subsequent recession, it is clear that the banking sector finished first. The big chartered banks in this country with their many branches across the country have made absolutely outrageous profits during the past few years. And they are the only ones that managed to emerge unscathed from the first and second recession.

Mr. Speaker, do you think the government would have had the guts and the social conscience to tax the profits and capital gains of the banks? Of course not. And that is probably the true measure of this government. A modest tax of \$100 million is peanuts. Just look at the banks' profits in 1993–94 alone: \$1.2 billion. That being said, we are convinced that the government could have asked the chartered banks in this country to contribute more.

What does the government do? It asks for a piddling \$100 million, when the Royal Bank alone, the open-minded bank, made a profit of around \$1.2 billion. The government could have asked the banks to contribute more, but it did not. Of course, one does realize there is a definite connection between the financing of certain political parties, and I am not naming any names but I am looking at them, and this timid treatment of the banks.

Another issue that gives cause for concern and which people are worried about, and no wonder, is transfer payments to the provinces.

(1040)

The issue of transfers to the provinces, as you know, Mr. Speaker, is absolutely central, because it has to do with the balance of relations between the central government and the provinces. It is therefore an absolutely vital issue. Three characteristics are identified with respect to federalism, Canadian federalism, which some of your pages are studying in political science courses across the country.

It is a two level form of government, usually with a central government and a lower level of government, which could be provinces or townships, but there are two levels of government.

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It is a system with a constitution providing that the governments are autonomous in all jurisdictions under their authority. A court, in this case the Supreme Court, acts as arbiter in these matters. Why am I saying all this? Because provincial transfers have been and remain the central government's traditional method of destabilizing provincial public finances.

How do you think individual provincial ministers of finance can manage to plan and establish coherent economic development policies, if the central government destabilizes public finances in every province by reducing transfers out of hand, unilaterally and without consultation? Allow me to give you some specific figures in this regard. The federal government will cut \$2.5 billion in transfers to the provinces in 1996-97 and \$4.5 billion in 1997-98.

These are not insignificant amounts and this will have a major impact on the provinces' ability to plan. In the case of Quebec, transfers will be cut by \$700 million in the coming year. This means that Quebec will shoulder 27.1 per cent of the total cuts, whereas it has 24 per cent of the population. Things will not improve in 1997-98, because it will then have to shoulder \$1.88 billion in cuts to transfer payments.

What is shocking in all this, and this is where the connection must be made, is that the present cuts to the provinces will obviously be on top of what has been cut since 1982. If you add up all the cuts in transfers to the provinces from 1982 to 1998, you will discover, hon. colleagues, that the provinces will be facing a shortfall of \$48 billion. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, you will understand that this way of doing things goes totally against harmony in the federal system.

In any case, and the Government of Quebec is not the one saying so, two premiers from the west who, after reading the Martin budget, declared that it was the death knell for Canada, because there is no way for the provinces to develop coherent economic development policies if the federal government keeps on shamelessly cutting transfer payments. As we all well know, transfer payments are not something theoretical, not just rhetoric; they directly affect the provinces' ability to provide health and education services, and these services are at the heart of our citizens' quality of life.

However, I will focus my speech today on the pitiful trick played on the unemployed. The history annals of Canadian federalism for the early 1990s to the year 2000 will tell the story of the slow and despicable dismantling of the unemployment insurance system. Please remember that unemployment insurance is the only social "insurance" program offered by the Canadian government, "insurance" as opposed to assistance, that is, meaning that workers and their employers share the cost of the unemployment insurance system.

(1045)

As you all know, in 1990, the Canadian government went as far as completely stopping its contributions to the unemploy-

ment insurance fund. This means that, as I speak, Canada is the only western country with an unemployment insurance system where the government does not contribute to its UI fund. This means that virtually all of the benefits paid out to workers are paid for by the work force and their employers.

We must acknowledge the fact that Canadian workers are in mourning. They have been since 1990, because from that point on Conservative and Liberal governments alike have derived a sadistic pleasure from dismantling the unemployment insurance system.

I would just like to remind you of what governments past have done, without, of course, forgetting the Chrétien government, which, led by the Minister of Finance, has disgracefully ganged up on the unemployed.

It all began in 1990 with Minister MacDougall, who dealt the first blow, who made the first attack on the unemployment insurance program. You will recall that in 1990 when the government decided that it would no longer contribute to the unemployment insurance fund, Mrs. MacDougall proposed an increase in the minimum qualifying period and a reduction in the maximum benefit period, with the overall result that, for the first time, a government reduced by 10 per cent its costs of financing the unemployment insurance program.

Not content with this initial assault on the program, in 1993 Mr. Valcourt—whom the voters, thankfully, did not re-elect—came back to the charge and lowered benefits from 60 to 57 per cent of insurable earnings. Remember that in the 1970s, benefits were at 70 per cent of insurable earnings. Now they have dropped to 57 per cent and are often below the poverty level. This is a disgrace.

What does this mean financially? Cuts in benefits of \$850 million in 1993 and \$1.6 billion the year after. The Liberals are obviously no better than their predecessors. And this is why the Bloc Québécois has always said that, red or blue in Ottawa, the future is black without the Bloc. What has the Martin budget done for unemployed Canadians in 1994? Increased the minimum qualifying period and reduced the maximum benefit period. And we are not talking about 57 per cent coverage, but about 55 per cent. In 95 per cent of cases, we can expect claimants to get 57 per cent of insurable earnings. This is the kind of social solidarity that this government has decided to have with the unemployed. Did you think that the finance minister was going to stop there? Certainly not. The budget that has just been tabled talks about cutting benefits by \$750 million in 1996 and 1.5 billion the following year.

In the early 1940s, UI was intended as a generous program on which all the provinces agreed. It was the first amendment to the Canadian Constitution. Look at what happened to unemployment insurance under the repeated attacks of the Tories and the Liberals. UI has become an exclusion program. In fact, the UI account, which posted a \$3 billion deficit in the 1990s, will show a \$5 billion surplus at the end of the fiscal year.

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One would think that this government would have done the right thing, that it would have shown enough solidarity to use this \$5 billion to create and maintain jobs for the unemployed. No, this government shamelessly attacked the unemployed. It will arrange for a surplus to be deposited in a deficit fighting reserve fund, although funding of the UI account does not have anything to do with the government's ongoing operations. The Liberal government has appropriated the Tories' shameful legacy.

(1050)

Allow me to make a final point. We would have expected the Liberals, in accordance with the red book, to put forward defence industry conversion measures. As we know, 10,000 jobs are threatened in the coming days. That is no secret; it is a well-known fact. Both the aerospace industry and the provinces demand defence conversion measures. This demand is not exclusive to Quebec. What conversion measures did the government take? It did not put forward any concrete measure.

It is unable to plan for the future and use its leverage to help workers. There is no vision. This is an attack against the unemployed. That is why we have no qualms about presenting the golden raspberry award to the Minister of Finance for all he has done.

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I realize that my hon. colleague from the official opposition would have needed more time to deal fully with the subject at hand. Nevertheless, I appreciated his hint at the government's failure to keep its word with respect to defence industry conversion. As we know, in my riding of Lévis, MIL Davie's shipyard suffered greatly from the government renegeing on its promises, with nearly 2,000 jobs lost last year.

My question will not be on this. Instead, I would like my colleague to give me his thoughts on the Minister of Finance making cuts last year to the Unemployment Insurance Program to reach the financial targets set in his budget, and using the \$2.5 billion surplus generated by these cuts to reach his targets. I would like his to tell me: is it right for the Minister of Finance to hit on the disadvantaged to reach his financial targets?

**Mr. Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, you will have noted our colleague's high degree of social concern from his question and I want to thank him for it.

I think that, if we were living in a normal country, a country committed to showing greater solidarity with the workers, the government would have taken this money and used it to implement full employment policies. What is dishonest about the government's decision is that it gives the impression that cutting UI will reduce this government's debt, when in fact, since 1990,

the government has nothing to do with UI, except for administration that it does not pay for naturally.

I think we should consider, and urge a number of organized bodies such as the labour movement, with which I understand you are rather closely associated, to consider legal action to have the courts overturn the government's decision to withdraw from the financing of UI while at the same time continuing to deprive workers of services to which they are entitled.

I think that, all together, in this House, we should try to figure out if these shameful and unacceptable measures could not be invalidated through legal action.

**Mr. Laurent Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the comments of the hon. member, who gave a good presentation on the Minister of Finance's budget, and who clearly showed that there is a world of difference between the Liberals in opposition and the Liberals in office. I am reminded in particular of Expro, a company in my riding which needs technical and financial support for its conversion. When the Liberals formed the opposition, they were adamant that conversion was the way to go, and they urged Mr. Mulroney to set up a conversion program.

(1055)

The hon. member made an in-depth review of the Martin budget, and I would appreciate his comments on the discrepancy between the budget and what the Liberals said they would do when they sat in opposition.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Before resuming debate with the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonnette, I may remind the House that members should refer to a minister by his title. For instance, we should say "the Minister of Finance, the hon. Prime Minister", without giving their last name.

**Mr. Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, some team, some question, would you agree? The opposition is in fine fettle.

That being said, I think the hon. member mentioned that the government had the perfect vehicle for setting up a defence conversion program. That vehicle is referred to in English as the DIPP.

The DIPP is the Defence Industry Productivity Program. In the eighties the program had a budget of about \$300 million. The Liberals have emasculated the program to the point that next year, its budget will be only \$21 million. Actually, the Federal Office of Regional Development, the Department of Industry and the Montreal Urban Community have set up a joint task force which is to make specific recommendations on defence conversion. With the modest sum of \$25 million, it would have been possible to conduct market surveys and help businesses

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that are involved in defence production to go the route of conversion.

In conclusion, I will say that, in the end, defence conversion is a matter of political will. Today we have the tools to make this happen. However, this government is acting in a very hypocritical way, and speaking out of both sides of its mouth.

Do not despair, the opposition will be there to remind the government of its promises, and we will keep up the pressure on this issue.

**Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, present-day Canadian federalism is a dead end sheet. In the year 2000, the cumulative deficit will be \$800 billion, and Quebec Premier Jacques Parizeau said not so long ago that it was high time for Quebec to get out of this system, and that if Quebec decided to stay, their taxes would go up.

In his presentation the hon. member gave us a very clear picture of the current situation. What he said this morning is exactly what all Quebecers are thinking.

Is it not time for Quebecers to consider getting out, to consider doing what the Premier of Quebec suggested?

**Mr. Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, I can only applaud the clairvoyance of the hon. member for Shefford who has an uncanny knack for predicting the future.

What the hon. member is saying is that in the eighties, when we went through the first referendum, scare tactics were used. Remember that at the time, the federal debt was \$75 billion. They told us: If you leave the Canadian federation, you will end up with an economy that is not viable.

So we stayed. We stayed, and now we have a debt of \$600 billion. What the hon. member is saying is that Quebec has everything it needs, together with its own economic infrastructures, to administer its own finances.

**The Speaker:** My dear colleagues, it being 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to statements by members under Standing Order 31.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### SILKEN LAUMANN

**Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Silken Laumann says it was a nightmare and that she has been harshly treated. That is an understatement.

What happened to Canada's outstanding rower at the Pan-Am Games in Argentina was unfair, unjust and uncalled for. Let us hope that she was not a pawn in an international game of politics as is perhaps indicated by the premature release of her name before the official report on the incident.

Her story is already familiar to millions around the world. Silken Laumann came down with a cough and cold. As most people do, she took medication. She was told it was an approved remedy for athletes. That was wrong. It was a banned substance. Someone had goofed and it was not Silken Laumann. For that she and her team were stripped of a gold medal.

The Canadian Olympic Association will fight the disqualification. We think it should. Justice demands that Silken Laumann's name be cleared. Ms. Laumann is an honest competitor, known for her integrity and commitment to her sport.

We want her to know that all Canadians are behind her at this difficult time.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### GREECE

**Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, tomorrow marks Greece's Independence Day. March 25, 1821 marked the start of the final lap in a long struggle against the Ottoman Empire, which led, a few months later, to the proclamation of independence in Epidaurus in January 1822.

Many people from this community now live here in Canada, and I would like to use this anniversary to briefly recall the debt we owe to the Greeks.

From Socrates to Plato, from Pythagoras to Hippocrates without forgetting Archimedes and Pericles, the Greek civilization has had such an influence on the evolution of thought that we still speak today of the Greek miracle. The Greeks provided the two pillars of modern world: science and democracy.

We offer our best wishes to all Greeks and all those who are Greek at heart on Greece's national day.

\* \* \*

[English]

### SEX OFFENDERS

**Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the people in my riding of Okanagan—Shuswap have been especially concerned about an assault committed by a previously convicted sex offender near the beautiful resort area of Malakwa.

To express this concern, Sicamous council sent a letter to the justice minister which included the following:

Whereas persons convicted of many types of sexual offences will be repeat offenders upon release unless they have been given counselling and treatment to prevent further offences, therefore be it resolved that at the end of the prison term if that person has not sought counselling or treatment, and therefore in the opinion of the national parole services or prison authorities will reoffend, that person shall not be released from prison for parole or even at the end of their full sentence until such time as they will no longer be considered a threat to society.

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I believe that local government demonstrates far greater concern for the safety of its citizens than anything demonstrated by the minister in Ottawa.

\* \* \*

#### PORT OF CHURCHILL

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, recently I had the opportunity to meet with a delegation concerning the future of the port of Churchill. It consisted of Manitoba MLAs, Saskatchewan MLAs, representatives of the city of Churchill, representative of the Hudson Bay Route Association and others.

I go on record as recommending to the government that it pay heed to the recommendations of the task force and of the delegation. Given the possibilities for the spaceport in Churchill, new possibilities perhaps for the port of Churchill as a port and a number of other things, the money that needs to be spent there would be money well spent.

I urge the government to spend the money and to see it not as spending in the pejorative sense but as an investment in the future of the Canadian north and in the future of Churchill and northern Manitoba.

\* \* \*

#### THE BEAVER

**Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to recognize the 20th anniversary of a significant day in our history. Twenty years ago today Bill C-373 received royal assent, officially proclaiming the beaver as the national Canadian symbol.

The beaver appeared on Canada's first postage stamp, on our five-cent piece and was generally considered a symbol of industry and the sovereignty of the nation.

My predecessor, Mr. Stan Darling, tells the story of a call he received 21 years ago from Kearney resident Mr. Ralph Bice. That set the ball rolling for Stan who worked diligently with Bill C-373's originator, Mr. Sean O'Sullivan, to safeguard the beaver as a Canadian symbol. As the story goes New York State was trying to beat us to it.

In the words of the originator: "There must be things to touch one's soul, heart and emotions if we are to be complete persons and a whole nation". "That", he said, "is the importance of symbols".

Please join me today in celebrating the 20th anniversary of the beaver as the national symbol.

(1105)

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, violence against women is one of the worst horrors of our world. We strive for zero tolerance in Canada and we use our international reputation to fight for the protection of women worldwide.

Sadly some people still do not get it. Some people think that the torture and imprisonment of women for not wearing a veil is no different from the requirement that men wear jackets in our parliamentary restaurant.

Some people think that Canada cannot afford to offer a haven to women who flee the practice of genital mutilation. Incredible as it seems, some people do think this and some of them actually sit in the House. Thank God they do not sit on the government side.

\* \* \*

#### HATE CRIMES

**Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York—Simcoe, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, trickle down homophobia that results in hate crimes committed against homosexuals happens when political and social leaders trash gay people, when they equate gays with pedophiles, and when they state that granting gays rights enjoyed by other Canadians is granting them special privileges.

A Reform member opposite recently stated that gays are responsible for bashing gays and that gay bashing is simply one gang going against another gang. These actions give gay bashers encouragement and justification. These politicians are equally responsible for the violence that ensues.

In spite of what the Reform member opposite thinks, hate crimes against gay men and lesbians are a harsh reality. We must take these hate motivated crimes seriously so that our streets are safe for everyone to walk, so that gay bashing and homophobia will be relics of the past.

I urge all members of the House to support Bill C-41.

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[*Translation*]

#### BURUNDI

**Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis—Hébert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Secretary of State for Latin America and Africa told the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs that a wave of massacres, the likes of which swept through Rwanda last year, could hit Burundi this year.

By saying this, the Secretary of State has aligned herself with the Bloc Québécois, which has already expressed concern about the deterioration of the political and social situation in Burundi.

In fact, the ethnic make-up of the two countries is very similar, Burundian extremists have been stepping up their operations and political crises keep on erupting. In addition, there has been no improvement in the situation of Rwandans who have fled to Burundi.

The federal government, through the Minister of Foreign Affairs, must support the people and the Government of Burundi in their effort to find a lasting solution in their country. Canada cannot wait for a catastrophe to hit Burundi before acting.

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[English]

### PUBLIC SERVICE

**Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, government administration in Canada is in crisis. The federal public service must become smaller, work better and be more cost effective. If it were a private conglomerate it would be in receivership.

Public enterprise must focus on outputs, what gets done; make decisions transparent, accessible and reliable information; provide real incentives for performance and consequences for failure; establish constraints through modernized budget techniques; promote competition by enhancing consumer choice; and develop competitive benchmarks with the private sector using multiple suppliers.

Contracting out is favoured such as more non-profit organizations for social care. The federal public service can be smaller and provide services more competitively. Government must be more businesslike. We must change our expectations and let the public service concentrate on what it should do. Let it work to become smarter rather than larger.

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[Translation]

### RAIL STRIKE

**Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, why has the Bloc Quebecois decided to prevent rail workers from returning to work?

It is jeopardizing jobs across Canada. This is an irresponsible action causing jobs to be lost nation wide. The Bloc could not care less about Canadians and the Canadian economy, including that of Quebec. It is wasting public money, the money of Canadians from all regions of the country.

[English]

Its agenda is the separation of Quebec. That is its priority. Is this the kind of economic co-operation separatists want from Canada? Is this the kind of action it really believes Quebecers and Canadians want?

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[Translation]

I urge them to join forces with the government, as the New Democratic Party has done, and support the bill.

\* \* \*

(1110)

[English]

### RAIL STRIKE

**Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, another day into the rail strike is taking its toll on the Canadian economy.

In Etobicoke—Lakeshore the strike has affected activity at the food terminal, passengers using the Mimico station, and manufacturing, industrial and commercial businesses in the area.

As rail service slows so too has the export of manufactured goods, grains and natural resources. While trains sit idly in the yards so do the thousands of workers whose jobs are dependent on the rails to ship their products across the country.

The self-interest of the Bloc Quebecois in this labour dispute has resulted in the suffering of small and medium size business, commuters, and Canada's reputation as a reliable international supplier.

Since collective bargaining and government efforts to facilitate an agreement have failed so far, now is the time for all members of Parliament to unite and act in the interest of all Canadians.

\* \* \*

### RAIL STRIKE

**Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I too offer a few statistics to Bloc Quebecois members who are deliberately destroying the economies of Quebec and the other provinces by delaying an end to the railway strike.

Every morning \$200 million worth of exports to the United States are being interrupted. This week alone the delay will cost the Canadian economy \$3 billion to \$5 billion worth of productivity, all courtesy of the Bloc Quebecois.

Somehow the image of the Bloc as champions of the collective bargaining process is shattered by the fact that even Buzz Hargrove of the Canadian Auto Workers has said there is no benefit whatsoever to delaying the legislation.

The Liberals strongly believe in collective bargaining, but when it fails and results in economic turmoil the government must act in the public interest. Obviously this concept escapes the Bloc Quebecois, a party that is losing its credibility as the official opposition.

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[Translation]

### CANADIAN NATIONAL

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, with each passing day we see how carefully the federal government and Canadian National have orchestrated their campaign to attack the working conditions of their employees. Now we are seeing televised messages by Canadian National about the importance of rationalizing the company.

These messages were certainly not put together in the course of the week and are proof of CN's bad faith in these negotiations. Is it not completely unacceptable that the employer is running down its employees publicly, on the eve of the mediation-arbitration process that the federal government so prefers to what the Bloc has proposed?

If CN is so confident, it is because it knows it has the backing of the federal government, which in the end bears sole responsibility for the present labour conflict. Through its collusion with the employers and its inflexibility with respect to the special legislation, the federal government is disrupting negotiations, acting in a cowardly manner, and indicating clearly its lack of regard for the rights of workers.

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[English]

### DEATHNET

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I was recently shocked to learn that graphic step by step instructions on how to commit suicide are now widely available through Internet.

Deathnet, an on line Internet service, is based in my riding and has been offering the information to subscribers since early in the new year. The service puts at risk thousands of teenagers and others prone to suicide.

Furthermore, 4,500 individuals have already logged on to it, many of whom are teenagers. The dangers are obvious. We have heard about tragic cases such as that of Bobby Steele who committed suicide.

As a physician I have seen firsthand the tragic results of depression in society. If the service continues it would lead to an increased number of suicides among those who are most vulnerable in society.

The simple fact is that making how to kill oneself information widely available on the Internet raises some serious ethical questions that must be addressed. I for one will not sit idly by and allow the service to continue.

### MAINTENANCE OF RAILWAY OPERATIONS ACT, 1995

**Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, some rail union leaders in my riding have expressed serious concern over the rail legislation, especially clause 12.

Although there seems to be differing opinions in the membership, it is important to note that back to work legislation is far from our first choice. We prefer a negotiated settlement within the collective bargaining process but the shutdown of operations is crippling the economy.

(1115)

I would ask that the union leaders prevent this legislation by telling CN, CP and VIA that they will go back to work tomorrow with a guarantee of no work disruption for a set period of time and that CN, CP and VIA be directed by the Minister of Labour to negotiate in good faith.

After all, the best guarantee of job security is good labour relations and a strong and competitive rail industry.

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### RAIL STRIKE

**Mr. Glen McKinnon (Brandon—Souris, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the rail strike continues and the availability of goods for the service and manufacturing industries grows scarce. Grain stocks lie dormant in the elevation system throughout western Canada.

While some members opposite have seen fit to support the government in this matter and the government has great reluctance to be engaged in direct dispute settlement, there reaches a time when economic damage exceeds the right to negotiate.

I commend the minister for her timely and appropriate actions. The long term structural changes to eliminate these difficulties remains a challenge for this House. I congratulate the minister. We will support her in the future in these matters.

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### RAIL STRIKE

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, you are fully aware of the infamous Liberals copy Reform awards. Today we have the first instalment of the Bloc copy Reform awards.

We congratulate the member for Longueuil who had the courage and conviction to break party ranks and vote with the Reform Party and the government to end the multibillion dollar railway strike that hurts all Canadians from sea to sea, including Quebecers. As for the rest of the official opposition, they are living back in the times of the steam locomotive and conjure up

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the image of nothing more than cows standing on the tracks blocking the train.

We compliment the member's courage and wisdom. The political consequences of his actions will likely be re-election, unlike what his leader and his colleagues say. Putting the interest of all of Canada before self-serving political goals is what is needed this week.

It is unfortunate that the Liberals did not copy Reform ideas and suggestions two weeks ago on this issue when they had a chance to prevent this strike from happening in the first place. The Reformers saw the train coming down the track, why did the government not?

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## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

### RAIL STRIKE

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, comments made yesterday by the Minister of Transport and CN President Paul Tellier confirmed the government's strategy, which had been described by Commissioner Hope.

That strategy is obvious: for 18 months, the government and the railway companies let the situation deteriorate; for 18 months, they hinted at the possibility of special legislation; for 18 months, their only concern was to create an impasse so they could impose terms and conditions of employment.

Does the Minister of Labour realize that with this legislation, she is merely finishing the job of breaking the unions so that CN can be quickly privatized?

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, does the Bloc Québécois realize that since last Sunday it has been obstructing back-to-work legislation that has a major impact on the Canadian economy from coast to coast? Is it aware of the repercussions of its decision not to co-operate on the passage of this bill?

We had to table this bill in the House as a last resort. We did because we saw it as our duty to do so, and today, we would ask the Bloc Québécois to act accordingly.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government is to blame for blocking a settlement. If the minister is so concerned about the economic repercussions, why did she not deal with the problem on Monday, on the basis of proposals made by the Bloc Québécois which, in fact, worked very well in the case of the Port of Montreal? Employees would have been back to work five days ago if this government

had not stubbornly insisted on this indecent settlement mechanism.

(1120)

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the members of the Bloc Québécois to stop playing politics with the Canadian economy. Millions of workers are affected because the railways are not operating. Do we realize that? What does the Bloc Québécois hope to achieve by obstructing this bill? This week, we heard the Leader of the Opposition say "on with the referendum". Now, Mr. Speaker, let us get on with this bill.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, there was never any explanation from the other side of the House for refusing the solution proposed by the Bloc Québécois, which provided for a return to work on Monday. Sixty days, no strike, no lockout. Never! The only explanation given by the government was that negotiations had been dragging on for 17 months. Does the minister realize that in the Port of Montreal, negotiations had been dragging on for 25 months and that thanks to the proposal by the Bloc Québécois, work has now resumed in the Port of Montreal?

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois seems to think that it was the one who appointed a mediator in the Port of Montreal. They have a real identity problem. They really have a problem, I must say.

I decided to appoint a mediator in the Port of Montreal because the circumstances so required. I have already said that we consider each particular situation in the railways on its merits. All these discussions and negotiations have been taking place for more than a year. Unfortunately, we have reached an impasse. And at least one member of the Bloc Québécois agreed, the hon. member for Longueuil.

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### TURKEY

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

While the Turkish air force and artillery continue to pound Kurdish positions in northern Iraq, the European "troika", on a visit to Ankara, formally demanded that the Turkish army withdraw from Iraq. Otherwise, the European Parliament could block the customs union deal reached with Turkey.

Does the Canadian government, which, incidentally, is still negotiating the sale of its CF-5 fighter jets to Turkey, intend to follow in France's and Germany's footsteps by demanding that Turkey withdraw from Iraq as soon as possible?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):**

Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member that discussions with any country that is looking at the CF-5 aircraft, which I want to reiterate is a training aircraft, will be done as we always do business in these instances which is with the strictest export controls. There will be no change.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is also for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Since Turkey has clearly indicated its intention to keep troops in the border area with Iraq until a buffer zone is established, does Canada intend to submit this sensitive matter to the UN Security Council?

*[English]*

**Hon. Christine Stewart (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this issue is of great concern to the Government of Canada. At this very moment we are meeting with the ambassador of Turkey and requesting that Turkey respect the human rights of the minority group being targeted in this situation. We are asking Turkey to take a moderate stand by trying to dialogue with the group and respect their cultural rights.

At the same time, we understand the difficulties in dealing with acts of terrorism. However we are officially asking the Government of Turkey to take a moderate stand and to try to come to some form of agreement with the Kurds.

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**RAIL STRIKE**

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the week long rail stoppage has cost Canada dearly. Canada has lost over \$5 billion, of which farmers have lost \$100 million, exporters have lost \$1 billion and \$2 billion has been added to the public debt. These are just the short term costs. The total will climb even higher because our clients have lost confidence in our transportation system.

(1125)

My question is for the Minister for International Trade. What plans does the minister have to address these long term costs?

**Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure I understood the question.

The question refers to the long term impact of the current rail strike. Indeed, as the hon. member said, the impact is in a sense cumulative. Each day the situation becomes worse. Rail cars become stranded and unable to provide the necessary services and exports are hindered.

What we are intending to do in the short run is to complete the legislative process to ensure the restoration of full rail services

in Canada. Then we will accelerate in every way we can the export of Canadian goods following the restoration of the rail services.

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday the Minister of Transport said that the Government of Canada had a responsibility to maintain a rail system that is viable, competitive and affordable. Over the past week I submit that the government has failed to do all three of these things. It has failed farmers, manufacturers, consumers and commuters. Why has it failed? I believe it is because the government does not have a plan.

Why has the government not tabled a long term plan to ensure that rail stoppages are a thing of the past?

**Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is not the Government of Canada that is preventing the return of the rail services, it is the Bloc Québécois that is preventing their return.

We are making every effort on this side of the House. We will complete the process in short order to ensure the restoration of the rail services. As for the longer run, we are under the excellent leadership of our Minister of Labour who is reviewing all aspects of the relevant legislation to ensure that this sort of situation does not occur again.

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is simply not true that only the Bloc and the NDP are responsible for the damage to the Canadian economy. The government has had nearly a year to deal with this problem and to come up with some long term legislation which would prevent this sort of thing from happening.

Once back to work legislation is finally passed, will this government take legislative steps to resolve the transportation problems once and for all? After all, the team Canada approach depends on a viable rail service.

*[Translation]*

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government still believes in the collective bargaining process. If the hon. member from the Reform Party believes in a much more drastic solution, that is not our policy. We still believe in this process. Indeed, the majority of labour disputes in Canada are settled through collective agreements.

True, the normal collective bargaining process is difficult to apply in the railway industry. However, since we are currently reviewing the Canada Labour Code, we will surely have to propose solutions to this kind of problem in the future.

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**HEALTH CARE FUNDING**

**Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. The minister stated last Friday that, in spite of substantial reductions in transfer payments to the provinces, the federal government will

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keep a watchful eye on the provinces and penalize those who try to exclude essential care and services from medicare coverage.

Does the minister realize that repeated budget cuts to federal transfer payments to the provinces will force the provinces to make agonizing choices like closing thousands of beds or limiting access to costly chemotherapy treatments, at the risk of cutting back on care and services available under medicare?

(1130)

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, some things have to be made clear. The current fiscal situation must be addressed. By getting our fiscal house in order now, we will be able to preserve social programs such as health care. They will be preserved. We will make sure that every dollar we spend is well spent and that essential services are available to those who need them.

**Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, does the minister agree with the Prime Minister who stated in Regina that these budget cuts will eliminate what he called non-essential health services, such as eyeglasses, wheelchairs and ambulances, when we know that the provinces also have to close thousands of hospital beds?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there are members here who do not take seriously the very important issue of health.

But I do, and so does the Prime Minister. I can tell you that no jurisdiction in Canada is telling us that more money is what is needed. We must change the way things are done and make sure that the money we have is spent more efficiently. Even the Quebec government is looking at cutting services, including health services.

We know that certain things can be improved, and so does the Government of Quebec.

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*[English]***FISHERIES**

**Mr. John Cummins (Delta, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Notwithstanding any objection to the quotas, NAFO regulations give Canada the authority to carry out inspections on any ship in the NAFO regulatory zone. Why has Canada stopped doing these inspections while fishing is going on?

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have carried out many dozens of inspections over many years in the NAFO regulatory zone.

What those inspections tell us—this information has been made public in the past—is that there are repeated examples, in particular by the Spanish fleet, of every rule of conservation being violated by those that participate on the Grand Banks.

The reason we are not doing inspections at this time is that the Canadian patrol vessels out there have already participated in one armed seizure of a Spanish vessel. In that circumstance and given the tension that exists between those officers and the Spanish fleet, sending a couple of unarmed officers aboard at this time may not be in their personal best interest or safety.

We will do nothing that will needlessly or recklessly put our officers at risk when we know with certainty that this fleet is cheating, is not following the rules, is fishing indiscriminately. The action we need is not inspection but enforcement by Spain, enforcement by the EU or failing that, enforcement by Canada.

**Mr. John Cummins (Delta, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, this minister's record of protecting Canadian resources is not great.

NAFO regulations give inspectors the right to wait until the net is hauled in and then inspect all areas of a ship. Why, while the minister has held office, did we inspect the *Estai* at least 11 times and only issue one citation?

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to talking about records and positions of members, I assume that on 24 hours' notice, the member's position can change.

This is the member who said, and Canadians should note, on behalf of the Reform Party that he did not support the strong measures being taken by Canada to bring about enforcement with respect to the Spanish fleet.

This is the member who 24 hours later turned himself inside out in verbal gymnastics to change his mind. I will wait another day. Perhaps Monday we will know the real position.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***FIGHT AGAINST AIDS**

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

It costs an average of \$100,000 to treat each Canadian suffering from AIDS. Every year, 2,000 new cases are diagnosed and the number of AIDS patients will have doubled by the year 2000.

*Oral Questions*

(1135)

Meanwhile, the government is penny-pinching by reducing the already inadequate budgets allocated to the National AIDS Strategy, whose objectives precisely include the prevention of this terrible disease.

Considering that an amount of \$5 million was not spent and allowed to lapse last year, will the minister pledge to use all the moneys allocated to fight this disease, and will she display a greater sense of responsibility?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the fact that we maintained these budgets in spite of very difficult times confirms that we recognize the serious problem of AIDS in Canada.

Each year, we set aside \$40.7 million to fight AIDS and the HIV virus. We will also make sure that each dollar is spent in an appropriate manner.

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonnette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear: the number of AIDS patients in Canada will have doubled by the year 2000. Last year, the minister had a budget of \$40 million. Since she spent only \$35 million, the other \$5 million was allowed to lapse. This is criminal, considering the number of AIDS victims.

My question is: What will the minister do to spend all the moneys allocated to her?

[English]

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will not spend dollars just because they have been allocated. The object is to make every dollar count. I will not change the way I have operated since I became Minister of Health.

\* \* \*

**JUSTICE**

**Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, Robert Arthurson, the convicted pedophile who murdered Sarah Kelly in The Pas, Manitoba last year previously admitted to a police officer and psychologist that he fantasized about killing a child.

However, the RCMP detachment in The Pas was prohibited from informing the community about the danger posed by Arthurson's presence. RCMP headquarters in Winnipeg stated it would be against Arthurson's charter rights to reveal this information.

I ask the Solicitor General if he is satisfied with the manner in which the RCMP handled this case and if he would instruct them to act in the same manner in the future?

**Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know the specifics of the case, but I will take the question as notice. I am

convinced the minister will answer the hon. member from Alberta in due course.

**Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, just a correction. I am from the province of British Columbia, not Alberta.

**An hon. member:** Is there a difference?

**Ms. Meredith:** Quite a difference.

The charter of rights states that everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person. Sarah Kelly was deprived of this constitutional right.

Why does the government continue to give a higher priority to the charter rights of convicted sex offenders than it does to the rights of an innocent 13-year old girl?

**Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member that under no circumstances would the government ever minimize the charter rights of any Canadian. The very strength of the country is in the charter. It will continue to be supported to every extent possible by the government.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

At the Rio summit, Canada was priding itself on being in the forefront in environmental protection. Today, we realize that it has joined the ranks of the countries threatening the credibility of the convention on climate change.

Next week, in Berlin, the Minister of the Environment will be attending a meeting at which the European Union is expected to propose that levels of emission of greenhouse gases established at the Rio conference in 1992 be extended beyond the year 2000.

Would the Minister of the Environment tell this House what position her government will take with respect to this proposal?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government's position is as follows: there must be an exchange of technology between developing countries and countries like Canada. For this reason, we are going to propose an analysis of credit transfers, which will not only stabilize the greenhouse effect, but reduce it. This is our position.

(1140)

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that Canada has not met its objectives for the reduction of greenhouse gases, how can the Minister of the Environment go to Berlin with a view to taking credit for

reductions in gases achieved by Canadian companies in developing countries?

[English]

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the federal government will be going to Berlin with a position which we believe is not only defensible but will enhance the capacity of the world to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

We will be proposing that we work together with countries like China and Brazil that are interested in Canadian technology to ensure technology transfer for credit. That will permit us to pursue our objective which is not only to stabilize greenhouse gases around the world but to reduce them.

I hope that the member would use her good offices to convince the Government of Quebec to come to the table so that we can have a Canadian position, where federal and provincial governments work together to establish not only stabilization but the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

\* \* \*

#### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

I was appalled to read that the estranged wife and children of a Canadian diplomat are living in poverty in Australia. Why? It appears the official has avoided a payment to his family ordered by the Australian court by claiming diplomatic immunity.

I would like to ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the government is doing to investigate and to correct this apparent abuse of diplomatic immunity?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, with whom I spoke shortly before coming into question period, indicated his personal outrage and the outrage of the government at the conduct of anyone who would hide behind diplomatic immunity to avoid his or her obligations to family.

He has personally ordered that this individual not only make the payments as requested by the Australian court, but that the individual be immediately recalled to Canada.

\* \* \*

#### THE BUDGET

**Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance was very excited yesterday when he learned that the province of Newfoundland balanced its budget. He even recommended it to the province of Quebec. We were excited about it as well.

#### Oral Questions

This is a remarkable accomplishment for that province when we look at the fact that there has been a collapse of the Atlantic fishery and unemployment is around 20 per cent. Newfoundland has balanced its budget through spending reductions and not an increase in taxes.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. If the province of Newfoundland can do this, why cannot the Government of Canada?

**Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I suggest the hon. member read the budget. Our budget plans are quite clear. We are reducing the deficit dramatically and we are on our way to a balanced budget.

**Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, we may be on the road to disaster as well, who knows. Nobody has put a plan together.

Newfoundland has a planned balanced budget. Alberta has a plan to balance its budget. Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island are doing the very same. They have a plan to balance their budgets.

When is the Government of Canada and the Minister of Finance going to join the club and have a plan to balance the federal budget? When can they do that?

**Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I note that Newfoundland has been successful in balancing its budget. It is the first time it has done so since 1949. It has taken a long time. The most recent government has taken several years to do so.

This government, however, is going to do it in rolling two-year targets. We are going to keep to our target and get the budget balanced much more quickly that way than by pursuing the wild dreams of the Reform Party in the budget that it put forward that had no content.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### BOVINE SOMATOTROPIN

**Mr. Michel Daviault (Ahuntsic, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, while the European Union has imposed a seven-year moratorium on the sale of somatotropin, a synthetic hormone which stimulates milk production, the federal government only agreed with the manufacturers to ban it for a one year period ending July 1.

(1145)

Out of concern for the people who have serious reservations regarding the use of this hormone, will the Minister of Health release her department's new studies on this issue within the next few days?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my people are still conducting research on this substance and have yet to recommend whether its sale and use should eventually be allowed in Canada.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Michel Daviault (Ahuntsic, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, will the minister not extend the moratorium, since farmers, the health industry and consumers oppose the availability of this hormone on the market? I will remind the minister that a survey conducted by the magazine *Protégez-vous* found that 78 per cent of all consumers are against the use of this hormone.

[*English*]

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, BST has not been approved. It will be approved only when the scientists at Health Canada make the decision that the drug is effective and safe.

The moratorium was recommended by the agriculture committee. I believe it was voluntary on the part of the production people at Monsanto.

\* \* \*

**INDIAN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday in response to a question from my colleague for Skeena the minister of Indian affairs indicated his \$5 million policy paper on self-government was not secret.

If it is not secret, will the minister tell the House why parliamentarians and Canadians have to rely on the national chief of the Assembly of First Nations to shed light on this undertaking and make the process public?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will take the question under advisement and we will reply in due course.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to see that document tabled.

The minister has been consulting with select groups for 16 months. Can the minister assure the House he will soon conclude this process so this undertaking will not become another aboriginal royal commission which is now two years overdue and \$40 million over budget?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this process is a must which will allow us to consult the various groups concerned and to hear their suggestions before setting policy.

This process will enable us to set policies which are more sensitive to the people who will eventually have to implement

them, and it is a process which we will finish as quickly as possible.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**FISHERIES**

**Mrs. Bonnie Hickey (St. John's East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

On Monday, March 27 the United Nations conference on the straddling and highly migratory fish stocks reconvenes. The recent fishing of the Spanish fleet on the nose and tail of the Grand Bank clearly shows the urgency for a binding convention to end the threat of foreign overfishing.

Can the minister tell the House what Canada hopes to achieve in these crucial meetings next week?

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for St. John's East for her question. Her interest in this matter is well known in the House and throughout the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

This conference has now been ongoing for two years. It has made very substantial progress to the point at which we now have more than 80 per cent of all of the countries participating in New York at the UN conference supporting the proposal endorsed and in some respects authored by Canada for a binding convention that would give us effective rules, transparent rules to govern the ways distant water fishing fleets behave on the high seas.

We hope for a success and a completed conference this year but even if a convention comes in 1995 it will take several years for it to gain ratification.

In the interim we must have effective means to protect those fragile and fast disappearing straddling stocks.

\* \* \*

(1150)

**IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the parliamentary secretary to minister of immigration. The minister of immigration has stated that the new \$975 right of landing fee will not discriminate against poorer immigrants and refugees because loans will be made available to them. Now we learn there is a means test and that the ability to repay the loan will be assessed before a loan is granted.

Can the parliamentary secretary tell us what will happen to refugees? I remind the government that refugees do not choose to abandon their homes, they are forced to. Can the parliamentary secretary tell us what plans the government has to assist refugees who do not meet the loan criteria?

*Oral Questions*

**Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I wish to reassure him that refugees will not be turned away because of an inability to pay.

This has been said by the minister many times. I am here to reiterate that repayable loans will be granted to refugees. As in the past, those loans will likely be paid back at a 95 per cent to a 97 per cent rate.

**Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, many of the refugees come from the poorer third world countries and do not have the means to pay the \$975 tax.

Would the government not consider removing the landing fee for refugees?

**Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member speaks in the best of faith, but I sometimes find it a little difficult to understand why well meaning people feel refugees and immigrants cannot pay their own way. That is not the history in this country. They are proud people who want to contribute to Canada. They want to take their share of the burden and they will do so.

I remind the hon. member that on the loans that have been taking place in this country to refugees since 1950 the repayment rate is over 95 per cent. I know the hon. secretary of state for financial institutions would say it is a rate bankers would envy.

We can depend on refugees to handle their debts to Canada in a fair way, as Canada handles refugees in a fair way.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**LOW LEVEL FLIGHTS**

**Mr. André Caron (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

Recently a federal environmental review panel recommended that the number of low level flights authorized annually in northern Quebec and Labrador be increased to 15,000. The panel's findings are incomplete and the populations most affected by these flights have refused to participate at hearings.

Does the Minister of the Environment acknowledge the shortcomings in the panel's report and does she intend to reject its recommendation that the number of flights be increased substantially?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I accept the fact that the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency has carried out its work in good faith. The report is now before Cabinet and a response is expected shortly.

**Mr. André Caron (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, how can the Deputy Prime Minister justify the fact that her colleague at National Defence has already begun negotiations with a view to increasing the number of low level flights, even before Cabinet has made its decision on this matter known?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence already answered this question last week. My answer is the same as his.

\* \* \*

[English]

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is very sad that 30,000 Canadians will tragically succumb to the AIDS virus over the next few years. I would like to ask the Minister of Health if she considers that a person who is HIV positive can infect another person with the HIV virus, ultimately causing them to develop AIDS and die?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, AIDS and HIV are very serious diseases. They are entirely preventable, I am told, or almost entirely preventable if people behave in an appropriate manner.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is scientific fact that tragically if one is HIV positive, one has succumbed to another virus that is infectious and can kill people.

(1155)

We test immigrants for tuberculosis and other infectious, treatable and non-fatal deceases. Being HIV positive, you are infected with a virus that will kill you, is infectious and is non-curable.

Will the Minister of Health recommend to the minister of immigration that there be mandatory HIV testing for people who wish to immigrate into Canada.

**Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to assure the hon. member that questions of health with regard to immigration and refugees are a very high priority for the minister of immigration. We have very stringent tests and the hon. member should depend on the minister of immigration to ensure that Canada and Canadians will be safeguarded.

\* \* \*

**RAIL STRIKE**

**Mrs. Marlene Cowling (Dauphin—Swan River, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the farmers in my riding of Dauphin—Swan River and across Canada are increasingly frustrated that it is taking so long to settle the rail strike. Bloc members say they are representing

*Oral Questions*

unions and the right to strike. What about farmers? Without rail transportation farmers cannot get their grain to market.

Would the minister of agriculture explain to the House what the stalling tactics of the Bloc are costing Canadian farmers?

**Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think I have to point out to the House that if it is costing the farmers one dollar needlessly it is one dollar too much. The Canadian economy is being hurt and we want to get the economy back on the rails.

Obviously the Bloc Quebecois and the NDP do not care. If they did care they would have helped us do that earlier this week and our economy would have been rolling again.

It is costing hundreds of millions of dollars and I implore the Bloc Quebecois to stop blocking the railways.

\* \* \*

**GASOLINE**

**Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. Could she confirm that she is planning to introduce legislation in the near future that would ban MMT as an octane enhancer in gasoline.

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is generally accepted that the use of higher cost alternative additives in gasoline will force the price of gasoline up.

Would the minister tell Canadians how much more they can expect to pay for a litre of gasoline after the banning of this additive?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a substance banned by the Environmental Protection Agency of the United States for the last 20 odd years, a substance currently used only in Canada and a substance under consideration for use in Bulgaria is a substance helping neither the environment nor the economy of Canada. That is why we are moving where the previous government did not, to ban its transportation.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mrs. Maud Debieu (Laval East, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade.

One of the conditions set by the Prime Minister for letting Canada join NAFTA was the negotiation with the U.S. and Mexico of improvements to the anti-dumping and subsidy regulations. These negotiations must be completed by the end of December 1995.

Since these new regulations would benefit businesses in Canada and Quebec, can the Minister for International Trade report on the progress of discussions with his American and Mexican counterparts?

[English]

**Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the discussions that were foreseen were postponed during the period when the NAFTA legislation was before the U.S. Congress. Once the legislation and the WTO were adopted by the U.S. Congress the talks proceeded.

The first consultations were held in Mexico three or four weeks ago. Further discussions are foreseen. In the first stage of the discussions the three countries are agreeing together on what the focus of their work should be in identifying the benefits of limitations on anti-dumping practices, as the member rightly says, which can bring benefit to all three countries in the NAFTA.

\* \* \*

(1200)

**RAIL STRIKE**

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade.

Many Canadians have personally felt the devastating impact the national rail stoppage has had on the national economy. Canadians know that each hour's delay in getting the rail system moving again is costing jobs and vast sums in lost production. Can the minister give some indication of how serious the economic impact really is on Canadian workers and employers?

**Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the situation is even more acute from yesterday in that there is a cumulative effect of the impact of a rail strike. The situation becomes worse hour by hour and day by day.

The disruptions in the automobile industry are already evident, with Ford reducing its production in Canada. The potential, for example, in the province of Quebec, in particular of Repap, a large Canadian paper company, having to curtail, reduce or eliminate its production if the strike continues is increasingly evident.

In general terms, the impact on the Canadian economy can be severe. It is essential that this strike be brought to a conclusion immediately.

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**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I would like to draw the attention of hon. members to a person in the gallery. I must confess, as your Speaker, that as a young man I was absolutely enthralled by this

lady. The attention of the world was on Canada when she so magnificently won in her event and began a tradition of successes in figure skating which goes on to this day. I share with you, my colleagues, one of the treasures of Canada, Miss Barbara Ann Scott.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**The Speaker:** In keeping with this, those of you who are able I invite to my chambers. I will be receiving Miss Scott in your name immediately after question period.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 13 petitions.

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### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 69th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding its order of reference from the House, dated Monday, February 7, 1994, on the taking of divisions of the House by electronic means.

[Translation]

The committee recommends that the House not go ahead with the taking of divisions by electronic means at this time. On behalf of the whole committee, I wish to thank the members of the subcommittee on this issue: the hon. member for Bellechasse, the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, who is the Chief Government Whip in the House, the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River, and the hon. member for Fraser Valley West—

[English]

—for the excellent work that those members did in putting together the report of the subcommittee, which is tabled herewith.

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### STORNOWAY

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.)** moved for leave to introduce bill C-318, an act to provide for the

### Routine Proceedings

property traditionally used as the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition to be leased out when not being used.

(1205)

He said: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that Canadians everywhere are grossly overtaxed, it gives me great pleasure to introduce this private member's bill to lease out Stornoway, the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition, when not in use.

The reason for the bill is to use it as an example for other government infrastructures that are not being used and are costing taxpayers a great deal of money while not in use. I hope we can rent out, lease or sell some of the other assets that are not in use and prevent them from being a drain on the taxpayer.

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

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### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### TRANSPORT

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have two motions to propose to the House today. The first deals with travel by committees.

I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That six members of the Standing Committee on Transport be authorized to travel to Washington, D.C. from April 3 to 4, 1995 for the purpose of holding hearings in relation to the committee's consideration of marine policy; and that the necessary staff accompany the committee.

(Motion agreed to.)

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[Translation]

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to give the official opposition the opportunity to continue to sit today to end this strike that has cost so much to Canadians and caused many of our fellow citizens to lose their jobs.

I move:

[English]

That notwithstanding any standing order, the report stage and third reading stage of Bill C-77, an act to provide for the maintenance of railway operations and subsidiary services may be taken up today, provided that no divisions requested during the aforementioned business may be deferred to another day; and provided that the House shall not adjourn today until the third reading stage of the said bill has been disposed of.

I seek the unanimous consent of the House for this motion.

## Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of information on the motion introduced by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands. Does this mean that the government is prepared to approve the Bloc's amendments? If that were the case, we would give consent. I would like this to be clarified.

**Mr. Milliken:** Mr. Speaker, there are no amendments on the Order Paper, either from the hon. member or any of his colleagues. I am unable to answer the question directly. I must, however, point out that the government does not want any changes made to the bill as it stands.

**Mr. Duceppe:** In that case, Mr. Speaker, we must inform you that we are prepared to work on Saturday and Sunday. There is no consent. Too bad for the Liberals if they thought they could get out of working on Saturday and Sunday.

[English]

**Mr. Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, a point of order. I want to make it clear that though we object to back to work legislation, we think it should be passed in all stages today. The strike has gone on long enough.

(1210)

[Translation]

**Mr. Harper (Calgary West):** Mr. Speaker, I can also clarify the position of the Reform Party. We are prepared to work on Saturday and Sunday, but we hope that railway workers will do the same.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Order. Does the House give its unanimous consent to allow the hon. parliamentary secretary to table his motion?

**Some hon. members:** Yes.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** There is not unanimous consent.

\* \* \*

[English]

## PETITIONS

## PENSIONS

**Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have two petitions to present. The first is from the war pensioners of Canada in regard to basic service pensions.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have a petition asking that Parliament not make amendments dealing with same sex relationships and sexual orientation.

## GUN CONTROL

**Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition containing some 2,000 names on the gun control bill.

The petition deals mostly with the registration aspect of the bill. The petitioners say that if they fail to register their guns they will end up with a criminal record the same as a real criminal who has committed a real crime with a gun. This is extremely unfair, to say the least.

Therefore, it is my duty to present this petition to the House with the hope that the minister will listen.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Murray Calder (Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have five petitions to present today that are all similar in nature.

The first two contain 33 and 48 signatures respectively, calling on Parliament to oppose any amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Canadian Charter of Rights which provides for the inclusion of the phrase sexual orientation.

The third and fourth petitions contain 42 and 80 signatures, requesting that Parliament not amend the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that would in any way indicate societal approval of same sex relationships, prohibit discrimination or include the phrase sexual orientation.

## THE FAMILY

**Mr. Murray Calder (Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the final petition contains 50 signatures and requests that Parliament oppose any legislation that would directly or indirectly redefine the commonly understood definition of family, including the provision of marriage or the extension of benefits.

## VIOLENCE

**Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the petitioners believe that violence and abuse in our society is a growing concern.

They also believe that violence and abuse in all forms in the media is something that has to be checked. They are particularly concerned about the way in which it might affect young children.

The petitioners ask the government to ensure that the CRTC do what it can to minimize and reduce unnecessary violence and abuse in the media. They point out that very often what is seen, heard and read is counter to what people try to do to raise their children.

At the same time they point out that certain gains have been made and they appreciate the recent efforts of the CRTC in this regard.

*Routine Proceedings*

## GUN CONTROL

**Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the pleasure to present a petition.

The petitioners request that the Parliament of Canada enact legislation that will strictly control the sale, possession and use of all firearms and ammunition, ban military weapons and severely restrict access to handguns.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise once again in the House pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present a petition on behalf of the constituents of Surrey, B.C.

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.

(1215)

*[Translation]*

## VOICE MAIL

**Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to act as the spokesperson for the hundreds of residents in my riding who signed a petition asking the government to reconsider its decision to install voice mail systems in some departments. As you know, elderly people are the first ones to be affected by this new technology. I am pleased to table this petition, which I support, on their behalf.

## SOCIAL SECURITY

**Mr. André Caron (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting a petition signed by 585 people in my riding, who are asking Parliament to maintain the existing social security net.

This petition is in addition to the one on the same issue, which was signed by 11,000 people from my region, at the initiative of Solidarité populaire Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, and which I forwarded to the Department of Human Resources Development.

*[English]*

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it gives me pleasure to present a petition from my riding of Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca where the people request the government not pass Bill C-41 as it is presently written to include the phrase sexual orientation, as the behaviour people engage in does not warrant special consideration under the law.

## GUN CONTROL

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present two petitions today.

The first calls on Parliament to refrain from passing any more firearms related laws which serve to restrict the rights, freedoms and ownership of law-abiding citizens. It further calls on Parliament to substantially strengthen Criminal Code punishment for those who are convicted of unlawful weapons offences.

## GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from the residents of Kootenay West—Revelstoke. Notwithstanding the presentation of the budget, the problems carry on. They call on Parliament to reduce government spending instead of increasing taxes. This petition is signed by over 2,000 residents of my riding.

## JUSTICE

**Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present again another petition on this course of action undertaken on behalf of Canadians who wish to halt the early release from prison of Robert Paul Thompson.

The petitioners are concerned about making our streets safer. They are opposed to the current practice of the early release of violent offenders prior to serving the full extent of their sentences.

The petitioners pray our streets will be made safer for law-abiding citizens and the families of the victims of convicted murderers.

## GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising in the House today to present four petitions all on the same subject.

The first is signed by 90 residents of North Vancouver, headed up by Betty Clowers. The second is signed by Richard Miller of North Vancouver and 78 others. The third is signed by Mr. Rudolph DeVente and 220 others in North Vancouver. The fourth is signed by 52 employees of Chemetics International in Vancouver.

All of these petitioners pray and request that Parliament reduce government spending instead of increasing taxes and implement a taxpayer protection act to limit federal spending.

I would like to mention on this subject that the Deputy Prime Minister promised to resign if the GST had not gone in one year and she still has not done it.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Charles Hubbard (Miramichi, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have two petitions, one signed by the residents of Boiestown and the second by residents of Miramichi city.

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These two petitions 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 homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**BORROWING AUTHORITY ACT, 1995-96**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-73, an act to provide borrowing authority for the fiscal year beginning on April 1, 1995, be read the third time and passed.

(1220)

**Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have been listening with great interest over the last number of weeks to the debate on the budget while I waited for my opportunity to participate. I have been truly amazed with the disregard the government is showing for the intelligence of the Canadian public.

The budget represents a betrayal of the red book or election platform on which the government was elected; also the betrayal the dishonesty and the deceitfulness of the rhetoric surrounding the cuts that must inevitably come if we are some day to reach a balanced budget.

Canadians were told by the Liberals during the 1993 election platform that the Liberals could solve the deficit problem through economic stimulation and job creation. Today unemployment is still unacceptably high and the deficit is still out of control.

Canadians were also told by the Deputy Prime Minister during the 1993 election that they would eliminate the GST in one year or she would resign. To my knowledge she is still a member of the House.

Another inconsistency the Liberals told during the 1993 election campaign was that they would never cut the civil service. Upon making this promise they were viewed as the friends of the civil service, unlike the Tories. We must wonder what these same civil servants are now thinking with 45,000 of them being shown the door.

Canadians who voted for the Liberals in 1993 believed they would never cut transfers to the provinces in support of health care, education or social services. All seniors believed the Liberal Party would never cut old age security. Lo and behold only a year and a half later the Liberal government has done a total flip-flop on these and other election commitments.

Are Canadians to believe the Liberals really believed these commitments to be realistic or was it really the old political strategy of telling the people what would get them elected because a long time ago Canadians gave up holding politicians accountable for election promises.

I do not think Canadians will forgive so easily. I will do my best to see they do not forget. I will remind Canadians the Prime Minister's red book commitment to rebuild respect and integrity in government was simply more empty political rhetoric.

During the 1993 election campaign the Reform Party presented a plan to balance the budget in three years and the Liberals labelled us the slash and burn party, the destroyers of health care and old age security. Now only one and a half years later in the budget the government has implemented many of the zero in three cuts and even went further than that zero in three plan, not because it would choose to do so but because as we predicted there was no alternative.

This year again Reform put forward a budget and a plan to balance the budget in three years and again the Liberals riled and rave about the proposed programs and put their spin doctors to work to sell their own deceitful budget and hide the reality of what must inevitably come.

They continue to hide the realities in rhetoric like the following: "By consolidating our existing resources into one human investment we can then sit down with the provinces as we are doing now on issues of child care and literacy and work out new partnerships and new arrangements with the provinces and municipalities and private sector partners. It gives us the flexibility we need now to engage in a new generation of social programming that really fits both the reality and the changed circumstances that the country finds itself in".

This is the best example I could find of the dishonesty of the rhetoric being thrown at us. I will leave members opposite to surmise which member might have spewed that gem on us.

The truth must be told and we must face the music now as painful as that may be because if we postpone balancing the budget to somewhere in the future, say the year 2000, the debt could then be approaching \$800 billion and the cost of interest on the debt will have risen to the point at which we can no longer

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sustain even the core of our social safety net programs which have made Canada the most desirable country in the world to live in.

I have heard the howls of disbelief from the members opposite. They say they are a caring and compassionate government. They say what about the human deficit.

(1225)

I listened carefully and the arrogant hypocrisy makes me very angry. Who do these people think they are that only they have compassion or care about people? The single most important reason I joined what is now the least respected profession in Canada, at least outside of this place, is my concern for the future of this country and what 30 years of Liberal and Tory governments have done to the future of my children and grandchildren.

What this government is doing to future generations of Canadians is not caring or compassionate, it is greed and selfishness; it is the me generation saying: "I am not going to live within my means and the next generation cannot only pay for my greed but can no longer enjoy the benefits and the standard of living this me generation has had".

The best example of this greed is the refusal of the Liberal caucus power brokers to give up their gold plated pension plan. As long as I am a member of the House I will do everything within my power to see that the first pensioners who do not receive an old age security pension check because the country is broke will be the same greedy politicians who mismanaged this country to the point we are at today.

The examples of mismanagement are everywhere. A few examples lie within my portfolio as natural resources critic. Petro-Canada is one of my favourites. Every budget since 1984 has promised to privatize Petro-Canada. Canada's window on the energy industry was created by the Liberal government at a cost of over \$5 billion. Petro-Canada has never provided any benefit to Canadians that could not have been provided by the private sector. Governments since have never had the courage to admit to Canadians they will only be able to recover less than \$2 billion of the \$5 billion it cost to create Petro-Canada. Although this is the second Liberal budget that has promised to privatize Petro-Canada, I doubt very much if it will happen soon.

Let us have a look at how this budget and this government in past budgets have squandered Canada's natural advantage in the world marketplace. Gasoline, a favourite cash cow for governments, has always been a cheap source of energy. It has allowed compensation for Canadians for the great distances we must move our produce and our people compared with other countries.

Governments have gone back to the well so often that in the last 10 years taxes on gasoline have risen by over 500 per cent if one includes the 1.5 cent increase in this budget. Almost 25

cents of every 50 cent litre of gasoline is tax. At the same time the government is moving to eliminate transportation subsidies across the country. Long gone is our natural advantage. The U.S. is importing Canadian crude oil with a \$1.40 dollar, refining that oil and selling the same gasoline at almost half of what we are paying in Canada.

The final example is the elimination of the income tax transfer on privately owned utility companies. The finance minister stated in his budget that if government does not need to run something, it should not and in the future it will not.

How many provincially owned utility companies will ever consider privatizing under these circumstances? In spite of vowing to prevent discriminatory taxation against Alberta during the election campaign, the Minister of Natural Resources remains totally silent on this issue in the House.

I could go on endlessly but time does not permit. The budget does, however, represent a dramatic reversal in Liberal philosophy which the reform Party can take some credit for. That shift is so dramatic that even some of the Liberal dinosaurs in the Liberal caucus have threatened to withdraw support for the budget.

As dramatic as this change might be, it does not go far enough to break the back of the deficit. If in the next three years the government cuts \$12 billion from spending and the interest costs rise by \$12.7 billion, I hardly think the monster has been mortally wounded and I am sure after a short respite it will be back to threaten to destroy our economy.

(1230)

Already the real agenda begins to leak out in well planned trial balloons. The Prime Minister says our health care system will be reduced to the provisions of 50 years ago. Liberal members are suggesting that the minimum pensionable age will have to be raised to 67.

These adjustments to our social safety net may indeed be necessary, but who knows? This government clearly has no plan to balance the budget in the foreseeable future.

One fact is indisputable. By postponing the balancing of the budget to the year 2000 or beyond, the cuts that will have to be made will be far more destructive and devastating than those proposed in our taxpayers budget. This is where the deceit and the dishonesty in the Liberal budget lie.

I think the Prime Minister and the finance minister would do well to heed the words of a very wise man, F. J. Clark, when he said: "A politician thinks only of the next election. A statesman thinks of the next generation".

**Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to point out one item of reference in the hon. member's remarks and then ask him a question.

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I suppose it was primarily rhetorical in his remarks but he did refer to a deceitful budget. I am sure he and his colleagues recognize that a budget is a budget is a budget. Canadians can add and subtract. They can assess the wording in the statements of the Minister of Finance, the positions of the government and the Prime Minister and at the end of the day Canadians will make up their minds.

I do not think Canadians believe that they have been seduced or have been dealt with deceitfully in any way or that they even see deceit as part of the intent of the government. I hope the hon. member will accept the comment that the deceit referred to by him is purely rhetorical and not helpful in analysing the budget. He is certainly entitled to his views.

In an economy like Canada's when the measured overspending in the economy runs up to \$25 billion or even up to \$40 billion, a material proportion of overspending, if we were to simply stop or reduce the federal spending by approximately 20 or 25 per cent, if the overspending was that great, there would be a serious negative macroeconomic impact. This would put the country again in recession and would defeat the kind of economic growth that permits the country to build its way out of the recession and the overspending at the same time. Would the member not agree?

**Mr. Chatters:** Mr. Speaker, the deceit that I speak about is not in the figures in the budget. It is the failure to tell Canadians honestly and truthfully the measures that will inevitably have to be made. We have no alternative but to cut another \$25 billion from government spending or increase taxes to reach a balanced budget. That is where the dishonesty and the deceit lie in this budget.

To answer the question, I do not think the hon. member is correct in the assumption that those kinds of cuts would have a destructive effect on the economy. Certainly that has not been the case demonstrated in Alberta where government costs over a three year period have been reduced by 20 per cent. In fact, the exact opposite has been true. Those cuts have had a stimulative effect in the private sector and unemployment continues to drop.

**Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to speak for my constituents about Liberal fiscal policy.

(1235)

On March 10 I held a town hall meeting in New Westminster—Burnaby. I heard firsthand how the budget is viewed. I regularly consult with my constituents about what they want in fiscal behaviour from this government. There are usually a variety of views expressed but there is one theme that is clear.

Our constituents may not be sophisticated economists or financial analysts, but they know in their hearts that the country is in deep financial trouble. They know that the economy is performing well below its potential.

When they ponder a little bit about what is wrong, they very quickly mention all the taxes they give to the government that are being frittered away in unproductive interest payments instead of being applied to social development and basic services. It is a simple concept for my constituents to grasp.

They also do not like the cutbacks that will be necessary to get the fiscal house in order. They ask: How did it get out of hand? Why are we planning to waste 50.7 billion tax dollars in interest to service past debt? That money could be spent on so many needy things or much of it should be left in the hands of the taxpayers for them to invest for their needs under their own control.

My constituents do not buy it when the finance minister says that everything is okay, government is on target and that they should trust it. My constituents know that each week when they go to the grocery store it costs a lot more to fill the shopping cart.

Some of my constituents know what it is like to line up at the food bank or to search hopelessly for a job. Some of my constituents suffer directly from the fortunes of the economy. I do not blame them if they get a little cynical and radical in their language when they express how the economy is not working for them.

If the finance minister keeps promising that some day a better employment picture will be there for them, make it clear that consistent deficit financing kills the economy. Government annual borrowing beyond the capacity of the economy to support the debt really hurts people. This government is hurting people.

Governments cannot create lasting jobs but they sure can affect the climate of private commerce where jobs are created. Governments can very easily mess things up through misguided intentions and mistaken assumptions.

The message I give to the Prime Minister is this: Your policy is callously hurting the Canadian people. The uncaring arrogance of pursuing discredited deficit targets is immoral. Three per cent of GDP is a scandal. The verbosity of the finance minister that reflects the bankrupt Liberals' social philosophy is a cruel hoax upon those on the margins of the economy: the poor and those who are helpless dependents on the social safety net.

Successive deficit financing kills the economy. Deficit financing eats the heart out of the social safety net. This Liberal budget plans only for more deficits. It is a plan that admits defeat in all its projections and then expects praise for the capitulation.

Chronic unemployment hurts the soul. Folk in my riding want a job. They also want hope. They want hope that there is light at the end of the tunnel, and hope that someone in government has set a course to a new Canada.

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My constituents are willing to pay their fair share of taxes. However they get very angry about the conspicuous waste of this government, especially in view of the finance minister insincerely usurping the Reform Party pledge to have a government that lives within its means. Then he delivers budget numbers that betray that pledge.

I am standing here in this Chamber today on behalf of my constituents to say what they want me to say for them. Their message is clear. It is a message of two words, just two words, two elusive words which I prophesy will never be grasped by these Liberals. The two words are: balanced budget. One can be a little disappointed that those words are so easy to say and so easy to contemplate, but sadly never to be obtained by this group of old-fashioned Liberals, the tired system defenders.

What is the government planning for us in its wisdom that it says we need? A deficit. A deficit of \$24.3 billion in 1996-97. The sad part is that the finance minister says he is proud of this. He is a blind system defender instead of an agent for change, hope and renewal.

I know the minister listened closely to the leader of the Reform Party when the taxpayers budget was presented on February 21. The plan proposed to lower the deficit to zero in three years. The numbers are all there in black and white. It is a wise and reasonable target and a pragmatic plan. However, the minister simply did not have the courage.

People expect governments to do the right thing. They expect governments to keep spending under control. They expect governments to always keep their financial house in order, for it all is in a trust relationship on behalf of the citizens.

(1240)

What has this budget done to prove to the public that the government is on the path to solving this fiscal crisis? It is clear to me is that the only way we go after the accumulated debt is to first go after the annual deficit.

Last month was the finance minister's chance to really make a difference. The political mood in the country was there, but no resolve was taken by the minister. Canadians will surely suffer because of this irresponsibility of the government. It is a legacy of missed opportunity.

With this budget the debt is going nowhere but up. As a percentage of GDP, the net public debt for 1993-94 was 71.4 per cent. For 1994-95 the prediction is 73.2 per cent. For 1995-96 the prediction is 73.5 per cent. For 1996-97 the prediction is 73.4 per cent.

The minister boasts of his deficit as a percentage of GDP. Well, what about the debt percentage? What a pitiful shame. We are getting nowhere. Even more significantly, the overall real debt that must be served by this one Canadian economy and our

one group of Canadian taxpayers is more like \$1.7 trillion, if all factors are considered for our population of 28 million.

The Reform Party has shown with the taxpayers budget that it is serious about moving forward and manifesting substantial innovation. Should the Liberals follow through on their election promise to be more innovative with economic policies, may I suggest that they take a closer look at the Reform Party's taxpayers budget. Just in case members opposite do not know what this is called, I remind them that it is simply called leadership by example.

In his speech the finance minister said that the budget must focus on cutting spending, not raising taxes. I think I have missed something here because when I was driving to the Vancouver airport this past week I noticed that the gasoline prices have really jumped. I thought the minister said he was not raising taxes. I heard one Liberal member say that at least there were no personal tax increases. Well, the last time I filled my car with fuel, I used my cash to pay for it and that makes it a personal tax.

South African author Nadine Gordimer summed it up best: The truth is not always beauty, but the hunger for it is. Canadians want the truth and they rightly deserve it. They want a government that bases its principles on honesty and integrity.

The budget of the finance minister puts the best face on a sad situation and yet he smiles. The minister is a well meaning gentleman who does not take kindly to my words about him being cruel to Canadians, but his face is covered over with his Liberal social philosophy. The captain of the *Titanic* was also well meaning. Former British Prime Minister Chamberlain kept hoping beyond hope in face of dark storm clouds, a nice individual.

We need a dramatic course correction. We do not need to hit the berg. We need a reality check against false hopes. We need to take immediate remedial action.

I call on the finance minister to table a plan that will balance the budget and save social programs. Table a plan that begins to wind us out of the national debt trap and lowers taxes so the economy can take off again and produce those badly needed permanent jobs.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I have a message for the Minister of Finance: We know you are only a Liberal, but take courage and Reformers will help you. Save this country and lead us responsibly. Lead us by example with true fiscal responsibility.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the speech of the Reform member and I must admit that there was some truth in it when he said that, whatever happens, Canadians will have to deal with a huge global debt in the future. Some people ask how Quebecers will ever pay their part of the federal debt if they choose to form a

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sovereign state. We can say for sure that if they remain within Canada, they will definitely have to deal with that debt.

Does the hon. member not agree that this colossal and uncontrollable debt is not so much the result of inefficiency on the part of individuals—although there might have been some of that—as the result of an unhealthy competition between various levels of government? Were we not overly greedy for visibility and did we not try to make sure that provincial and federal levels would invest equal amounts in any project on the map? Sometimes we announced projects which were not entirely realistic, the investment in Hibernia for example, just to make up for the weaknesses of the economic policies implemented by the central government.

(1245)

Did we not also lose control over the budget largely because of the confusion of jurisdictions? We never know who is responsible for a specific issue, the federal government or the provinces. Does the hon. member not believe that the solution lies in a major change in that area so that each level will know perfectly what are its own responsibilities and what it will have to deal with in the future?

[English]

**Mr. Forseth:** Mr. Speaker, the member talked about unnecessary duplication between provincial and federal governments. I remind the Bloc member that a lot of the duplication found in Quebec is because the Quebec government, with its independent mind, wanted to unnecessarily duplicate federal services.

He should also bring the message to Quebecers that under the Reform Party plan Quebec could truly be master of its own house and provide some of the services they have talked about. A Reform Party government would find that vision. That is the message that we want to get through to Quebecers.

On the other issue of deficit financing, is he suggesting that if Quebec leaves Confederation it will abandon its social responsibility and abandon the debt created in its name? Studies have shown that although Quebec represents about 25 per cent of the population, consistently over time it has received about 30 per cent of government spending.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, thanks to some now well known communication technology, the minister of finance had organized the release of his 1995–96 Budget so that the Canadian public would be prepared for the worse.

The medias took part in this, and we could hear or read comments from reporters, analysts and doomwatchers predicting, before the fateful day, that the Budget would really hurt. So

we had to take advantage of these last moments before the axe would fall.

On the said day, everyone was almost unanimous. It was not so bad after all. Only the opposition members were criticizing. And criticisms from Bloc members and Reform members are normal, since that is their job. That is why they are here.

So, instant relief replaced the anxiety of the day before. And the ink that was used to print that budget had hardly dried before that the relief was replaced with concern. Why? Because several of the cuts announced will once again affect the poorest of our society, or the middle class which, ultimately, pays more than its fair share. Because several government decisions were put off indefinitely.

Subsidies to transportation in the East were eliminated. The federal government will now have to agree with the Quebec government on what to do about the \$80 million, or \$15 million a year, needed to compensate for the loss of subsidies in transportation. There is some uncertainty about whether that money will be used to build many kilometres of highways or to create permanent jobs.

Are we going to be bright enough to devote only a small part of these millions to asphalt and the major part to an investment fund to promote the creation of lasting jobs in eastern Quebec?

Changes in unemployment insurance rules, but the reform is shelved for now.

As for old age pensions, the universality principle is questioned due to the introduction of a family income principle which, when implemented, will be detrimental to many women who will be deprived of their pensions because their husbands have high incomes.

Transfer payments to provinces are being reduced through the creation of what the hon. member for Outremont called the NCST. I hope it is not a venereal disease, although it might be just as bad.

Post-secondary education financing and the loan and grant system for students are being modified.

The defence budget was not cut enough.

Family trusts will remain unchanged until 1999.

Taxpayers are the only ones to foot the bill through increases in the price of cigarettes and gas.

(1250)

The lobbying by banks and large corporations worked well, their tax increases were so insignificant that we are almost justified in saying that the rich were spared by the last budget. The poor, the unemployed will pay about 120 times more than these large corporations. Yet, the banks had profits of \$5 billion last year, which was not the case of the unemployed.

Now that we are over the sigh of relief that followed the budget, we have to face reality. Several reforms will wait until after the referendum. Liberals are asking the people of Quebec to vote no. Yet, if we believe the recommendations of the C.D. Howe Institute, voting no means saying yes to hard times. The federal government is offloading its problems onto the provinces and there is no doubt that Quebec and Ontario are the hardest hit.

The deficit is still too high and the budget is doing nothing to deal with the debt. How is all this going to affect Canada's famous credit rating? There is still a lot of suspense regarding this budget, and we do not yet know its complete aftermath. Already, some of those who, at first, gave it the benefit of the doubt, are getting disillusioned. This budget does not stand up to a serious analysis. Tomorrow might be too late.

While we are waiting for the government's real agenda to be exposed, let us have a closer look at the Department of Canadian Heritage budget. Although the CRTC is holding hearings on the information highway, even though the department has already recognized the critical role of information in the economy of today and tomorrow, the budget makes further cuts in the so-called cultural industries.

Conservative and Liberal budgets come and go and are almost identical, but for the fact that Grit cuts are going to be more drastic than Tory cuts, without solving the issues of the deficit or the debt. Therefore, one must wonder who really benefits from this budget. Certainly not the CBC since, in spite of the stubborn denial on the part of the Canadian heritage minister, the announced cuts from parliamentary appropriations will indeed amount to \$350 million over the next three years. We never saw the likes of this under the Conservatives who at least had the decency to keep up appearances.

Important cuts were made to Telefilm and the National Film Board which stand to lose \$17 million in 1995-1996 alone, and that is over and above the more than \$100 million they have lost since the Mazankowski reduction plan went under way.

The budget also indicates that the department intends to order a review of the mandate of these three agencies and to readjust their funding accordingly. Some people are concerned about this operation, and rightly so, given the importance of the presence of Quebec and Canada in this North-American sea of English.

The publishing industry will also be hard hit. For example, we expect over the next three years a 24 per cent cut in the mail subsidy program which is considered a direct subsidy to help Canadian magazines pay part of their mailing charges. These charges will now be offloaded onto the subscribers. So, for us, this will mean another indirect tax.

Indeed, following the program review process, Heritage Canada will lose over three years around \$676 million, almost 25 per cent of its total budget. At this time, we have no further

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information on how these cuts will be made. We only have concerns.

We also know that some programs relating to our Canadian identity are doing fine. For example, lieutenant-governors will be awarded a pay increase next year. Why are these individuals not subject to the same rules as the rest of the public service, and members of Parliament and senators, whose wages have been frozen for three years?

(1255)

Why are lieutenants-governors an exception to the rule?

**Mr. Loubier:** It is a disgrace.

**Mrs. Tremblay:** You said it.

The Council for national unity will continue to benefit from Ottawa's generosity. It will receive over \$800,000 from the Open House Canada Program, which allows young people from the middle and upper class to travel across Canada, learning to love their country through official propaganda. The overall budget of this program is \$2.2 million.

We also have to add to the Canadian identity budget the expenses that will be incurred for the six trips that the royal family will make to Canada during the year, at our expense of course.

Meanwhile, the government announces a 21 per cent cut in the arts program, a 13 per cent cut in the heritage programs, a 24 per cent cut in the cultural industries program, a 20 per cent cut in the official languages support program, the major part of which will be passed on to the provinces through cuts in second language training funding. It also announces a 20 per cent cut in amateur sport just one year before the Olympics in Atlanta even though, when interviewed by the CBC in Lillehammer, the Minister of Canadian Heritage had promised the world to our athletes. This promise has changed into a 10 per cent cut in funding.

At the same time, the increase in corporate management services spending will be 13 per cent. Thirteen per cent more to manage a department whose minister never has any clear idea of what he should be doing. I hope that he will at least take advantage of those 130 extra jobs in his department to answer our questions.

Fortunately, the cultural affairs budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs will remain unchanged, at \$4.7 million, although there has been a change of policy and the emphasis is on the NAFTA countries, and Europe is left out. That way, Quebecers will have no more visitors from the Francophonie. Are we to understand that some ministers wield more influence than others?

Most of my remarks have been on cuts in the cultural sector and what I consider frivolous spending subsidized by the department. While in times of austerity and financial difficulty it is normal for the government to try to rationalize its expenditures, it should establish a set of priorities to do so. The priority

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for the Department of Canadian Heritage should be cultural products. Even in times of budget restraint, cultural products should be protected from cuts, since they are the key to the future. The government should invest more in this area.

We can readily support our cultural industries and find money for research and development in artistic creation with cuts to departmental expenditures and by eliminating empty programs like the campaign promoting the Canadian flag, raises to the lieutenant-governors and grants to federalist organizations, without naming any, to enable them to do their propaganda work during the referendum.

The minister is sacrificing the production of cultural works for programs that attempt to promote an empty, artificial identity aimed at imposing a national identity on everyone and denying ours. The situation at present in cultural and communications matters clearly indicates that the head of the department cannot give us what we need to go forward.

Worse, if the present is an indication of the future, we will see that the minister is more inclined to protect programs promoting Canadian identity, like promoting the flag, than programs that provide for investment in cultural products as such, something that would be more in keeping with the requirements of our historical context.

Heritage Canada still sees culture in folkloric garb, when it long ago moved into the age of telecommunications and the information highway.

As we live through the technological revolution, it is vital that we have a Minister of Canadian Heritage who is credible and capable of defending cultural interests in cabinet. We are therefore asking Mr. Chrétien to act accordingly.

(1300)

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I think that the Heritage critic did a good job of demonstrating how inefficient the Department of Canadian Heritage is.

I would like to comment on transportation subsidies in particular. For decades now, certain businesses in the east of Canada and in Quebec as far east as Lévis or La Beauce have received financial assistance to transport their products.

The government decided to cut these subsidies. I do not think that people strongly disagree with this decision, but the regions affected would have wanted the government to do an impact study first. Instead, the regions are facing radical cuts, the short-term economic impact of which is hard to predict. The decision will affect each industry differently, some favourably, some extremely unfavourably.

The hon. member for Rimouski—Témiscouata's speech contained some novel ideas and some interesting suggestions on which I would like her to elaborate. In particular, will she specify how we can ensure that the money invested in the compensation fund will have lasting effects? How can we avoid finding ourselves saddled with investments that we will be forced to abandon five years down the road? Will she propose a solution which will guarantee that the money invested will have a lasting impact and enable the economy of eastern Quebec to turn the tables around and, once and for all, enable it to harness its strengths, skills and its bountiful natural resources and break free from the central system?

**Mrs. Tremblay:** Mr. Speaker, I will certainly not make myself very popular by replying with my usual frankness, but there is, I believe, in our region, a politician who has built his career on the Cacouna—Rimouski highway. I think that it would be a monumental error to invest the whole \$80 million in asphalt. In five years, the few companies that laid the asphalt would have benefited financially, and in another five the road would be full of holes again and there would be no money to pay for more asphalt.

I think that it is important to use some of the money—say 25 per cent—to do some resurfacing if necessary, widen the highway in spots, bypass a few towns, do some grading. There is work to be done. But I think that the greater part of the \$80 million, around 75 per cent, should most definitely be put in an investment fund for the development of eastern Quebec, to create sustainable jobs. Eastern Quebec needs jobs if people are to stay.

When we have a highway and everyone has gone to Montreal, we will need something more to interest tourists in visiting the Gaspé. And that something is people, development, infrastructure. We need an investment fund if we are to succeed, money that would be loaned to companies and that they would have to pay back.

This would ensure a long term fund that would continue over 20 or 30 years, because those who left would pay us back and we would always have money for job creation in Eastern Quebec.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate my hon. colleague from Rimouski—Témiscouata, who, with his well-known verve and oratorical skills, demonstrated that this budget is even more conservative than the one the Tories dared to table when they were in power.

She put her finger on one of the government's shortcomings by saying that there was no one to defend culture on the government side. On hearing that there was no one to defend culture, I wondered who, in the last year and a half, has been defending the most disadvantaged as well as students, seniors,

middle-income earners and workers? They have shown how trigger-happy they are in their handling of the rail dispute.

(1305)

The Liberals are knuckling under. They even knuckle under history when we ask them to correct it. Last night, I felt sick when the Liberals on the other side of the House refused to correct history regarding the high treason charges against Louis Riel. They even refused to refer the matter to a committee of the House. I was appalled.

So there is no one to defend the most disadvantaged, to defend culture, to defend students, middle-income earners and workers, to defend history. What has happened to the Liberals since the election campaign, when they presented us with a red book full of humanitarian and social democratic principles as well as promises to defend the most disadvantaged? What has happened since then? I am putting the question to my colleague.

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata):** This is an excellent question, Mr. Speaker. I must say that, as usual, the question was planted and I am stuck. Anyhow, as far as knowing what happened to the red book is concerned, I say it is at the National Archives. That is what happened to it.

**Some hon. members:** Ha, ha!

**An hon. member:** They are in the red.

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata):** The Minister of Canadian Heritage runs his department so well that he must have hidden the book carefully, or in the National Archives. Or perhaps it is in the waste basket.

I think, dear colleague, that you have drawn the essence of what I wanted to convey in my remarks: this budget is worse than any budget tabled by the Conservatives. The Liberals are making cuts that are more severe, in a way. They boast left and right that they want to manage properly their great Canada, the best, the number one country in the world, and so on. But they are forgetting one thing: they are not getting money from those who have it. This way, those who keep sending them money during their fund raising campaigns instead of spending it on taxes will be able to continue supporting them. So, the wheel turns and traditional parties are maintained in power because of this.

We are often accused of having our motherhouse, or head office, in Quebec City, but it is well known that theirs is Power Corporation. Just take the piece on satellite television published in *La Presse*. They sought the opinion of the public, but on the corporate side, they only sought that of Power Corporation, while this a very widely known issue. They could have met with

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officials from Cancom, Expressvu and others, but no, Power Corporation of Canada managed to get exclusive coverage in *La Presse*, to show off. Everything else was left out.

It is all in the family and it is clear that they failed to check their red book carefully before preparing their budget.

**Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few moments to compliment the hon. member on her excellent speech. I think it hurts the government to hear the truth, to hear what is really in this budget. My question will be very brief. I know that the hon. member is a formidable defender of the status of women. I would like to hear from the hon. member what this budget has to offer women in the way of unemployment insurance and wage equity, for instance.

**Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata):** Mr. Speaker, very quickly, because I do not have much time left, I think that as far as women are concerned, the budget is again a total loss. The government wants to apply the principle of family income to unemployment insurance and in so doing will put women at a disadvantage. The government transferred the equal opportunities for women program from the Department of Human Resources Development to the Department of Canadian Heritage, but funding was reduced. Since this was discretionary funding that could be used for political purposes, the program was transferred to the Department of Canadian Heritage. How much are they going to give?

The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the only agency that did research on the status of women, was shut down. It is no more. So this government has chosen to ignore women, youth, the poor, the elderly, gays, and just about everyone, except the rich who line the party's coffers.

(1310)

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Duceppe:** Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate it if you would give me one minute's notice before the end of the period for government orders so that we can proceed as agreed with respect to the division on this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Does the official opposition Whip also wish to take part in the debate?

**Mr. Duceppe:** Yes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** In that case, the hon. member has 20 minutes, and I will interrupt his speech at 1.29 p.m.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak to this bill, and I

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have the impression that what I say could be used next year, since most of the decisions will not come into force until then.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Duceppe:** This will be two speeches rolled into one.

**An hon. member:** Save on words.

**Mr. Bonin:** In that case, take only ten minutes.

**Mr. Duceppe:** No, I will take all the time allocated to me. You will learn something. People can learn something at any age, even on the other side of the House.

The government talks about decentralizing but the only thing they have decentralized is the deficit. They have shipped it out to the provinces, and this is pretty obvious in the case of Ontario and Quebec, where these provinces will assume 71 per cent of the cost of transfers that will no longer be made. There is nothing for jobs in this budget either. They campaigned on the slogan: jobs, jobs, jobs. There were two "jobs" too many. The infrastructures project lasted a year. However, it is now being extended to get ready for the next election, and then they will extend it again. This is like politicians who promise a bridge during every campaign, even when there was no river.

This budget also maintains the privileges of the wealthy. I am thinking of family trusts. The government says it did something about family trusts, and oddly enough, that something will kick in in 1999. The government is giving these people plenty of time to get ready. It is saying: watch out, we are coming, but not right away, there are still plenty of tax loopholes. I suppose the government even points them out. Meanwhile, it claims that it has done something about family trusts.

The same applies to flags of convenience. This is a rare occurrence. Not often do you see senior government officials who own companies. Of course they declare those interests; they do not manage their companies while they are cabinet ministers. However, some companies use flags of convenience, including Canada Steamship Lines, which belongs to the Minister of Finance and whose ships fly a Panamanian flag. This is unusual indeed. The example comes from the top. Taxpayers are told: make an effort, pay your taxes, but this does not apply to me. K.C. Irving also used convenience flags.

**Mr. Bellehumeur:** Great Canadians.

**Mr. Duceppe:** Great Canadians. Mr. Irving also received the Order of Canada, while in the Bahamas.

Is this the ferocious attack against the wealthy? As long as the example will not come from the top, do not expect people to make efforts and to see black market activities stop.

Take Canadian Pacific. The company made profits of \$422 million last year but did not pay taxes. The teller at the Royal

Bank pays more taxes than the Royal Bank itself. This is incredible.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Duceppe:** We are told that banks will have to pay \$100 million in new taxes over a two-year period. Yet, the Royal Bank, and let me check to make sure I am not mistaken, made profits of \$1.2 billion last year, and we are told that all the banks together made—

**Mrs. Tremblay:** Five billion.

**Mr. Duceppe:** Five billion dollars. And we are told that all the banks together will have to pay \$100 million in new taxes over a two-year period, in addition to being able to take advantage of all the existing tax loopholes. If this is the government's effort to make the wealthy pay some taxes, what would it be like if the government did not do anything?

In the meantime, the government targets the public service. I agree that some cuts must be made and the Bloc Québécois can propose ways of achieving this.

(1315)

However, who is this budget going after? The public servants, not Paul Tellier. Paul Tellier gets an annual salary of \$345,000, plus approximately \$50,000 in expenses and has an interest free loan of \$400,000 at the Royal Bank, a "friendly" arrangement. I feel so sorry for these kinds of people. These are the people with the gall to say: "Let us get to work. Do not exaggerate; we have to tighten our belts".

We do not touch these people, but we hit the poor public servants. Eliminating 45,000 jobs in the public service represents 14 per cent of public servants. In Montreal, there are 21,000 public servants, more than in Hull, where there are 20,000. Montreal has the second largest pool of public servants next to Ottawa-Hull, which has 104,000. Since we know that there are 20,000 in Hull, that leaves 84,000 in Ottawa. As luck would have it, yet again.

**An hon. member:** Luck has a hand in a lot of things.

**Mr. Duceppe:** It is like the research centres that are on the other side of the river as well. It is a pretty tricky business.

So, for Montreal, this means 9 per cent of all public servants. Taking a look at the main departments and the cuts likely to be made in Montreal, it is clear the cuts will be huge ones, especially when we know there are no measures to soften the blow. No measures are planned.

If a total of 45,000 positions are cut nationwide, the total number that Montreal would lose of the 20,000 or 21,000 currently located there would be 2,730. That is a huge number! They are unionized jobs, generally well paid. It is a question of 2,730. But that is not all. Canadian National employs approximately 7,000 people in Montreal. We know that they want to

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privatize. The Canada Post Corporation is also a big employer. The CBC employs 3,723 people. Everybody at the CBC in Montreal knows this, only the French section of course, and when I say everybody, I mean everybody except the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

The people who watch the news on Radio-Canada, which probably does not include the Minister of Canadian Heritage, know that 750 positions will be cut. I see my colleague, the government whip, gesture that, yes indeed, he knows that 750 positions will be cut.

**Mr. Bellehumeur:** He is nodding yes.

**An hon. member:** He agrees.

**Mr. Duceppe:** He would make a much better Minister of Canadian Heritage than the person currently occupying the position.

**Some hon. members:** Oh yes, oh yes, oh yes.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Bellehumeur:** It is true that almost anybody else could do a better job.

**Mr. Duceppe:** Mr. Speaker, I concede that that is not much of a compliment because there are many people out there who could be a better minister.

**Some hon. members:** Ha! Ha!

**Mr. Duceppe:** Those 750 positions at the CBC are also worrisome, quite worrisome. A Franco-Ontarian colleague who is here knows that this attack on the French section of the CBC will reduce the flow of information which is supposed to reach francophones outside Quebec, and I suppose that he is rather concerned about the government's decision, although the heritage minister is not. I would imagine that the government could function without the heritage minister.

Therefore, we could say that there are lots and lots of cuts. Cuts in the semi-public sector. I mentioned the Canadian National, we can see what is happening now. The rail strike was prepared jointly by companies, with the complicity of government, and this was very clear yesterday in the presentation of Paul Tellier. He said that he believed that people were making too much money, and that salaries and work conditions would have to be lowered; not his thought. He is a wise man. He knows that charity begins at home.

They want to privatize, to reduce the number of jobs, the way they did it at the Angus yard, not far from my riding. At one time it had 8,000 employees. It is closed now, completely closed. People were promised the best job security plan, but today the railways are renegeing on this promise.

These are major job losses at the Canadian National, major job losses at the CBC. If we add it all up, we are talking about 6,500 jobs that will be lost in the Montreal area within two

years. I recall the excellent document prepared by the present Minister of Finance, when his party was in opposition, which proposed a strategic plan for Montreal. It received very good coverage in the press. There were two or three very good articles about it.

**Mr. Bonin:** You were against it?

**Mr. Duceppe:** No, we were for it. The economist who prepared this plan for the Minister of Finance was Pierre-Paul Proulx. When he realized that the Minister of Finance was dropping these principles, the man who was writing the speeches of the Minister of Finance joined the Bloc Québécois, saying: It is hopeless. He was fed up and that is what he did.

(1320)

I believe that the finance minister himself understood that had he been elected in Calgary, he might have implemented the plan for Montreal, which, I must admit, he knows well. But, because he preferred to be a minister with all the accompanying trappings, rather than being true to his ideas, he gave them up. Six thousand seven hundred jobs were cut in Montreal and nothing was done about it.

And yet there were groups in Montreal, organizations working to get the economy going again. I am thinking of community and economic development corporations or CDECs which work with community groups, employers, labour, and municipal, federal and provincial governments.

This is what we call partnership. During the 1993 election campaign, the Liberals promised the moon to these groups, giving them specific examples. Especially the minister responsible for Quebec regional development, who can still deal with community and economic development corporations, though he is prevented from dealing with other types of corporations. Such is the case of shipyards he can no longer be involved with since he has an interest in them. The same is true of trucking, and air transport, in both of which he also has an interest. He has lots of interests, but little time or no availability to get involved since he would be in conflict of interest. And yet, he still is responsible for regional development. These corporations came and still come under Human Resources Development.

The province and the federal government accepted to extend the agreements for three years and Human Resources Development for six months. For now, the development of these corporations has come to a standstill. We are told in confidence that the CDECs are expected to no longer come under the Department of Human Resources Development, but rather under the Federal Office of Regional Development. Considering the tripartite agreement that was reached, why not give immediate approval for another three years? The government is jeopardizing not only the very existence of these corporations, but most importantly all the work they carry out. This is crucial to the current situation in Montreal, because employment in this area will be affected not only by government cuts, but also by the lack of

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measures to help workers and private corporations to adjust to NAFTA.

We were promised these measures by the government during the last election campaign. What good did they do? Hitachi is leaving; Northern Telecom is leaving. They are all leaving Montreal. Now I have heard some Liberals tell us: Yes, they are leaving the Montreal area. But why? Because of political instability. Of course. Now that the sovereignists are in office in Quebec, private companies are fleeing to settle in a more stable environment.

This is incredible. What about the stability in the country they have chosen to settle in, Mexico. The former president has fled the country, because his brother is charged with killing another candidate, with an assistant charged with killing two people. There is the rebellion in Chiapas. What a stable country. These people have the nerve to tell us that they are leaving Quebec to settle in a stable country, Mexico. That reminds me of Laurent Beaudoin, of Bombardier Inc., who stated in 1992 that investors are not interested in politically unstable countries. It made the headlines. And all the federalist politicians started saying the same thing without really trying to understand. If Beaudoin says it, it must be true because he is our friend, he pays. We help him and we have only nice things to say about him.

However, in the same week, there was a meeting at Bombardier and Beaudoin told us that the company's largest international investment at that time was the purchase of North Corporation. I do not want to frighten you, but North Corporation is in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Does it ring a bell? These kinds of arguments are worthless. We have to get back to this budget. Let us look at unemployment insurance.

**An hon. member:** It bothers them.

**Mr. Duceppe:** There would be a lot to say on this, my friend. It is the Liberal's turn. If you want to speak, just rise. If you do not have anything to say, then stop. The unemployment insurance fund will suffer a 10 per cent cut again.

(1325)

We are being told that there are fewer unemployed workers in Canada. It is just like a physician saying that there are fewer sick people in the hospital because they are all dead. People who are no longer on unemployment insurance are now on welfare. And the government is proud to have reduced unemployment.

How can unemployment be reduced? By creating employment or by reducing access to unemployment. The Liberals thought that it would be easier to reduce access to unemployment. They look at the statistics and say that there are fewer unemployed workers. They are magicians. Choquette, the famous magician, looks like an amateur compared to them.

They can make unemployed workers disappear in an instant; they just reduce access to unemployment insurance. No unemployment insurance, no unemployed; no unemployed, no unemployment. Easy. Again, it will cost Montreal millions of dollars, because there are more unemployed people in that city than in the four Maritime provinces combined. That is terrible.

They take on the unemployed, not unemployment. Yet, how often did the Liberals talk about this when they were the opposition? In Montreal, 29 per cent of families live below the poverty level. I suppose that in the next budget they will decide to reduce that to 15 per cent: the poverty level now being set at \$20,000, they will drop it to \$10,000 so that there will be fewer people living below the poverty level. That is Liberal magic. This is a hocus pocus government.

The red book contained a hidden promise: Vote for us and you will be in the red. That is exactly what we see happening. I have to say that it is a promise well kept, no doubt about it.

The Biosphere and the St. Lawrence Centre plan come to mind. What is happening with this plan? Two or three press conferences were held about it. Actually, under the Liberal strategy, nothing happens before it has been announced ten times in press conferences. Therefore, it will be announced regularly over the next few months and then it will get under way.

**Mr. Bonin:** We have to make repeated announcements, so that you can understand.

**Mr. Duceppe:** Yes, and all the announcements are patterned after the original, to repeat the same message. And the Liberals are happy about that.

The design and fashion industry support program also comes to mind: we have heard nothing yet about it. I am reminded of all those programs like the National Film Board and Telefilm Canada that will be affected. One has to have a lot of nerve to make all those promises during an election campaign and go on and on about Montreal, only to come up with such meagre results. However, we have to wonder if the government, during the 1995 referendum campaign—

**Mr. Bonin:** When?

**Mr. Duceppe:** In 1995, my friend. There are twelve months in a year. I see that my time is up. We will soon continue the debate about Montreal in greater detail.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** All those in favour will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Under Standing Order 45, the recorded division stands deferred to Saturday, March 25, 1995, at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

**Mr. Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent to have the recorded division deferred until next Tuesday, at 5.30 p.m., instead of Saturday.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** It being 1.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

### AGRICULTURE

The House resumed from February 13 consideration of the motion.

**Mrs. Marlene Cowling (Dauphin—Swan River, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Motion No. 314.

When we debated the motion last month the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food told the House that the federal government had been taking steps for some time to reduce overlap and duplication and that we had been doing so in close co-operation with provincial and municipal governments and the private sector.

I will not go into detail about the initiatives we discussed in the House at that time, initiatives that clearly demonstrate the ongoing efforts of the federal government to reduce both overlap and duplication among the various governments.

However I should like to remind members of some of them. They include in depth discussions among the federal govern-

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ment, the provinces and the private sector regarding the implementation of a Canadian inspection plan, a federal-provincial protocol for the development of trade and the promotion of new markets, and talks we are holding with the provinces aimed at increasing the efficiency of the delivery of financial services to the agri-food sector.

As far as the last point is concerned, the Farm Credit Corporation and interested provinces are discussing strategies to reduce duplication of government services in the sector. As part of the process the FCC has acquired the \$37.4 million portfolio of the New Brunswick Agricultural Development Board. We are also attempting to combine the lending services of the Farm Credit Corporation and the Alberta Financial Services Corporation into a single delivery point. Needless to say the initiative is exactly what is needed.

I could go on at length about the federal government's initiative to reduce overlap and duplication but I am limited by time constraints. Today I will focus on the content of Motion No. 314 and certain key aspects of the discussion on the motion, the basis of which I find puzzling.

The motion attempts to provide a starting point for negotiations based on the following three questions. First, what does it mean to reconfederate agriculture and why do we need to do it now? Second, what role should government play in agriculture? Third, what role should the agri-food industry play?

If the motion were adopted, the federal government would have jurisdiction over trade policy, trade distortion adjustment support, whole farm income stabilization programs, health and safety standards, and macrophysical monetary and taxation policy.

The provinces would be responsible for human and material resources, while the private sector would be responsible for all aspects of the business plan, from design to the sale of goods and services.

While all the reforms put forward in the motion may at first glance seem clear cut, a number of points are far from clear. Let us begin with the transfer of responsibility for all income stabilization programs to the federal government.

Such a measure is inconsistent with the significant progress recently made by the federal government and the provinces together, in the interest of Canadian producers. As a result of their concerted efforts, much progress has been made in this area.

We can think back to the situation that existed in Canada in the area of the income stabilization programs in the late 1960s and the early 1970s. The federal and provincial governments had their own completely independent rival income stabilization programs which distorted market signals to some extent.

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(1335)

In December 1994 after extensive discussions with the provinces we reached a federal-provincial consensus aimed at developing a renewed national whole farm income stabilization program. The program is an example of close co-operation between the government and is more in line with the interests of the sector.

In addition, as announced in the federal budget brought down on February 27, the \$600 million allocated to the annual costs of the new whole farm safety net program will be increased by a contribution from the provinces and from the federal government, bringing total annual government support to producers to \$1 billion.

A rational and effective national delivery system is what Canadian producers including the producers of my constituency of Dauphin—Swan River wanted. That is what we are attempting to give them.

It is in the interests of both federal and provincial governments as partners to play an active part in becoming financially responsible because their common goal is to contribute to a stable economy that will benefit all producers, in fact all Canadians.

A second point in Motion No. 314 that puzzles me concerns the proposed trade adjustment assistance program designed to counter the export subsidies imposed by the United States and the European Union. It seems clear to me that the cost of the proposal would be exorbitant and that it is largely inconsistent with our commitments under GATT and the World Trade Organization.

Adopting Motion No. 314 would be a large step backward. Given the current trade regime, no producer, processor or government can afford to lose 15 or 20 years of partnership, close co-operation and dialogue.

We owe it to Canadians including the people of my constituency of Dauphin—Swan River to move forward with the current policies and to build, to be innovative and to demonstrate ingenuity. The government has already initiated serious discussions on the issue with the provinces and the private sector. It has also launched many initiatives that have allowed it to transform itself into an innovative, flexible organization that is ready to face today's market and the market of tomorrow.

Therefore I feel I must defend the interests of a sector that is so important to me. Consequently I urge the members of the House to reject Motion No. 314.

**Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I rise in the House today in support of the motion of my colleague and friend, the member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre.

I do not think I need to spend a lot of time explaining why overlap and duplication are not good. We talk about that all the time in the House. My colleagues have dealt with or will deal with various issues concerning jurisdictional problems that exist in the agricultural industry at this time. However there is one aspect of the matter that I want to discuss in the time allotted to me today, that is the general thrust of the bill.

Members of the House have heard me refer on many occasions to the recent observation by the Auditor General that there is widespread failure in our national government to carry out proper evaluation of legislation. We see a problem; we pass a law. We see another problem; we pass another law and so on. We never ask ourselves whether the problems we see are the sorts of things that can be solved by legislation at all. Often they are not. Nor do we really ask ourselves whether it is the right piece of legislation. Often it is not. The old line parties all too often fail to ask whether many of our problems are not the result of legislation in the first place and not a lack of legislation.

During the debate on any given bill the government says it is a good bill and the oppositions say it is not a good bill. However the government, having more members, will make sure that it passes in the House. The government keeps on saying it is a good bill and the opposition keeps on saying it is bad. Neither of them says how it should be measured.

When another election comes along both sides promise a lot more laws to solve a lot more problems, real or imaginary. However how often do they say they will get rid of a law? I leave aside the promises of current government members to abrogate NAFTA or eliminate the GST because by now everybody knows they were just kidding. That is what I am supposed to say.

(1340)

The result is that we keep getting more laws. We do not revisit them. Government bills on the whole ought to contain sunset clauses. Every law should have a sunset clause that would require it to cease to exist after five years unless it was specifically reauthorized. That would mean that Parliament would spend a lot less time passing new laws because it would be too busy re-passing old ones.

It would be good because it would be much easier for government to get rid of a law that had been a mistake if it could just quietly not re-pass it. It would be a lot easier than having to stand and say: "Gee, we goofed. We are sorry", which is what it would have to do now. I am in favour of a sunset clause because I do not believe that we need a whole horde of laws, certainly not a whole horde of new ones. We need to get rid of some old ones.

For instance, we were saved forever from scary guns that go bang by drastic gun controls in the 1970s. Now we are considering even more drastic gun control legislation. Should we instead be pondering whether to bother re-enacting the old law or whether the whole enterprise should be scrapped? Maybe we

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should stop measuring political success by the number of laws passed and start measuring it by their quality.

American humorist P. J. O'Rourke talked about this point in his book entitled "Parliament of Whores". After quoting the purposes of the U.S. constitution, which are "to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of a liberty to ourselves and our posterity", he asks: "Are we done yet? When can we quit passing laws and raising taxes? When can we say of our political system let's stick a fork in it and see if it is done?"

Our federal government exists to provide peace, order and good government. That is a bit of circle, a government that exists to produce good government. When can we stick a fork in the government and say stop passing laws; we have enough and they are the right ones? The essential first step would be to stop passing new laws all the time and start spending some of our time evaluating the old ones.

I urge the House to support Motion No. 314. Let us stick a fork in our agricultural policy and ask whether it is done. If it is not thoroughly cooked, let us ask if it is even cooking. Let us make sure we have not put a roast in a shoe box instead of an oven. Let us start evaluating our laws to see if they are working and abolish or replace old ones that do not work before we pass new ones. Let us start right here with this motion.

**Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a few comments on Motion No. 314 sponsored by the member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre.

I will use my time in the debate to discuss how the federal government has been working closely with the provinces, municipalities and industry to develop a new Canadian food inspection system responsive to consumers and industry.

We set out to achieve common standards in legislation and delivery for food safety and quality at all levels of government. At the same time we are committed to maintaining the high safety standards Canadians have come to expect. Our high national standards and systems have ensured that Canadians from coast to coast enjoy a food supply among the safest in the world.

The standards earn Canada a quality reputation that often provides Canadian industry with a competitive advantage in international markets. Our current food inspection systems involve all levels of government and their regulatory organizations. As a result, there is some evidence of duplication of inspection services.

(1345)

For someone in the food industry there is nothing more irritating than to be visited by two or three inspectors from different levels of government, and worse still from different departments of the same government.

This is what the federal and provincial governments, in conjunction with industry, are trying to correct with the Canadian food inspection system.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has already entered into pilot projects for sharing inspection responsibilities with a number of provinces. The department is negotiating with other provinces, and arrangements will provide for one agency to be responsible for inspection in any given plan.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Health Canada and other federal departments involved in food inspection are working with provincial agriculture and health officials, representatives of municipal authorities and agri-food industry representatives to develop a new Canadian food inspection system, a system with common approaches and standards and an emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness.

The benefits of a Canada food inspection system would be to streamline delivery of inspection services and to enhance market performance and industry competitiveness. Progress is being made in eliminating duplication in food inspection and we expect to have a fully integrated system in place in the near future.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Before we resume debate, I note that the hon. member for Jonquière would have liked to participate. But we must go back to the opening statements on Motion M-314, on February 13, 1995. The hon. member for Lotbinière asked for unanimous consent and said: "I will be the only speaker during the three-hour debate". I then replied: "—as the only spokesperson from the Bloc Québécois on this bill—"

There might have been some confusion, but since the House gave its unanimous consent to the hon. member for Lotbinière, in all justice, I must also request unanimous consent to allow the hon. member for Jonquière to participate in this debate.

Are there any questions? At this time, I clearly state that I must ask the question to the House and obtain unanimous consent before I grant leave the hon. member for Jonquière to participate. There had been a commitment and the House had given its unanimous consent.

If I may explain more clearly, for government members, unanimous consent was requested by a Bloc Québécois member who had prepared a twenty-minute speech and wanted to deliver it in full, even though the time limit was ten minutes. The House

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gave its unanimous consent to the Bloc member and, at the same time, according to me, the hon. member for Lotbinière stated clearly that he would be the only member to participate in the three-hour debate on that motion.

Therefore, the House must give unanimous consent for the hon. member for Jonquière to participate in this debate today. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** The hon. member for Jonquière.

**Mr. André Caron (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be part of the debate on the motion introduced by the hon. member for Moose Jaw—Lake Center and to support it.

The hon. member suggests in his motion that the government immediately pursue negotiations with the provinces in order to re-assign jurisdictional responsibilities in agriculture and eliminate overlap. I support the motion because since I have been in politics, I have always been very critical of overlap in various areas in Canada.

The Reform member has realized that overlap is harmful to agriculture and probably to the whole Canadian economy, then I am happy to see that he has woken up, at least in that area.

(1350)

On the other side, it is ironic that a member of the Reform Party—which often claims to support Canadian federalism and refuses to see that there is an urgent need for a change in federalism, if it were possible—would introduce such a proposal. This is the kind of speech we have heard for a long time in Quebec, whether in the 1950s under Mr. Duplessis, in the 1960s under Mr. Lesage, and Mr. Lévesque who was a minister under the Liberal administration of Mr. Lesage in the 1970s. All nationalists in Quebec have opposed jurisdictional overlap in Canada and have used that argument to defend the idea that Quebec should become sovereign. Jurisdiction would then be clear and everyone would know exactly who is responsible for what.

I find ironic that a member of the Reform Party, which stands as a supporter of Canadian federalism, would present such a motion. Perhaps it means that it is possible that the Reform Party can one day reassess Canadian federalism. At the same time, I think it shows the Reform members' naivety. We have learned from experience in Quebec that, in matters of jurisdiction, the federal government never gives in.

During the 1960s and 1970s—I am not going back to the turn of the century here—, at a time of intense discussions on jurisdiction, the federal government was asked to get out of jurisdictions which are clearly the provinces'. It always refused because it views constitutional matters from its perspective of imperialistic federalism.

The federal government is held, by federalists, to be responsible for everything that goes on in Canada, to be entitled to intervene in any field where Canadians may have interests, no matter who has jurisdiction or what the constitution says. Every time that the Quebec government or Quebecers have addressed the federal government to point out that its jurisdiction had clearly been violated, the federal government, without denying that the Canadian constitution does not give it jurisdiction in a given sector, has relied on its spending power to intervene.

So, it uses its spending power to intervene in education, health, agriculture, manpower, in all fields about which provinces have protested, because Quebec is not alone in protesting against the central government's encroachments. Over the years, various provinces in Canada have defended their rights with the same results. It is always under its spending power that the federal government has intervened in provincial fields of jurisdiction.

In a sense, this was to be expected. Canada was built on a duality, on the fact that there are two peoples in Canada. Over the years, the federal government has grown. Other provinces were created and, in 1982, we found ourselves with a Canada made up of ten provinces, all of them having the same rights. Of course, Quebec rejected this unilateral change in the rules of the game. But the federal government, supported by the Supreme Court, proceeded to revamp the constitution. At that point, Quebec was, I would say, morally excluded from Canadian federalism.

(1355)

That is why my support for the Reform Party's proposal is in line with the demands and philosophy of the nationalists in Quebec. At one time, in the nineteenth century, many Quebecers saw a future in Canadian federalism based to some extent on national duality. They were disappointed. We saw the federal government encroach on our jurisdictions. We saw Canada define itself without us. And this year, we fully intend to act accordingly.

We want to become a sovereign country, to ensure that our rights are defended as they should be, and that the Quebec government is able to intervene in all areas, in our best interests. In the longer term, we want the people of Quebec who have been around for centuries in Canada, who tried Canadian federalism and were disappointed, we want the people of Quebec to continue as such for centuries to come, to preserve their identity and take their place among the nations of this world.

Proposals like the Reform Party's motion confirm that our analysis of Canadian federalism is the right one, and we are increasingly convinced that the option we have proposed, which is to establish in North America a sovereign, French-speaking state, will mark the end of all these constitutional squabbles that are so counterproductive in Canada and Quebec and create a

political and economic situation that is not in the best interests of the people.

[*English*]

**Mr. John O'Reilly (Victoria—Haliburton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the motion of the hon. member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre on jurisdictional responsibilities in agriculture.

The federal government shares the view of the hon. member that we must constantly strive to eliminate overlap and duplication between areas of government jurisdiction. We must also ensure the public sector is directing its resources appropriately and for the greatest possible benefit to Canadian taxpayers.

These are priorities for our government. As my colleagues pointed out during debate on this motion in February, we have been working to these ends since the day we took office.

Given the tight fiscal restraints facing all levels of government it is quite clear that the key to the continued success of those and other efforts to support our agriculture and agri-food section will be co-operation; all stakeholders in the agri-food section working together toward common goals. It sounds like a dream in this Parliament but we will try.

We must first define a shared long term vision for the sector. We can then determine the appropriate role for each partner in making these goals a reality and adjust our programs and policies accordingly. That is exactly what the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food has done.

Last September the minister put forward a vision for the future of Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector, where we want to be in the years 2000, 2005, 2010 and beyond. He has invited all agri-food stakeholders to help refine that vision and develop a business plan to bring it to reality.

The vision which has been well supported by agri-food stakeholders across the country is for a growing, competitive, market oriented agriculture and agri-food sector; a sector that is profitable and responds to the changing food and non-food needs of domestic and international customers; one generally less dependent on government financial support and helps sustain a good quality of life in rural communities; a sector founded on farm financial security, environmental sustainability and a safe, high quality food supply. The federal government has built further on that vision in the 1995 federal budget while also ensuring that the agri-food programs and policies are consistent with current fiscal realities.

(1400)

Under the budget the government will change the western grain transportation system to encourage greater efficiency and

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more market responsiveness; diminish transportation and other subsidies that distort production and marketing decisions; re-vamp the safety net system so farmers are less dependent on government dollars for their incomes and so we are not open to countervail by Canada's international trading partners.

We must emphasize adaptation, trade, marketing and rural development to ensure continued growth in all regions of the country. We must involve the private sector more directly in government research and inspection activities.

In addition, as a result of the recent budget decisions, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's budget will be reduced from \$2.1 billion in this fiscal year to \$1.7 billion over the next three years, a net reduction of 19 per cent.

The department will be implementing new ways of organizing activities to improve efficiency and maintain the level of service to the public. It will amalgamate and privatize a range of programs to save costs and improve efficiency. The department's workforce will decline by about 18 per cent over the next three years, a reduction of over 2,000 positions.

The staff reductions to be carried out at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada are substantial. It is very important to make sure they are viewed in the proper perspective.

In introducing Motion No. 314 last month, the member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre stated that in Canada at this time there is one public sector employee working in agriculture for every 14 farms, or one person on the public payroll for every 19 farm operators.

I would not argue with the hon. member's arithmetic, but it is important to note that the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food is not solely devoted to supporting Canada's primary agriculture sector. The department and its employees are involved in nearly all aspects of agri-food business, from farm inputs such as machinery and fertilizer to processing and packaging to inspect and retail.

This is an extremely large and complex industry, accounting for some 18 per cent of Canada's GDP and directly and indirectly employing 1.8 million people, or some 15 per cent of the Canadian workforce. All 27 million Canadians benefit from our inspection systems to ensure the safety of the food we eat.

In considering the future, I do not think it is useful to compare apples and oranges or to consider one sector of the industry in isolation from others.

It is critically important that we ensure that the changes ahead help build toward our overall vision for the agriculture and agri-food sector. Industry stakeholders must move forward together in a co-ordinated and co-operative manner so that we

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can take full advantage of our unique strengths and we do not waste our limited resources by duplicating each others efforts.

To those ends, the Department of Agriculture and Agri-food has extensive consultations planned or already under way in areas such as marketing, safety nets, grain transportation and the use of the new adaptation funds announced in the budget.

We will also be continuing our efforts with the provinces to amalgamate services in areas such as farm lending, trade and market development, inspection and industry adaptation.

The conclusion of the new GATT agreement last year and the announcement in last month's budget have resolved many longstanding uncertainties for Canada's agri-food sector and have helped to set a more definitive course for its future. As well the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food has been working to develop shared long term goals for the sector and a plan for how to achieve them.

It is moving ahead with those efforts in a co-operative, forward manner and not by initiating a new process to completely reshuffle the jurisdictional deck, as proposed by the hon. member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre, that we can best ensure the future growth and security in the agri-food sector and the most effective use of taxpayers' dollars.

For those reasons I must vote against this motion and encourage other members to do the same.

(1405)

**Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, we are debating a motion that should be addressed by every natural resource in Canada, how to eliminate the overlap among three major forces, namely industry, and provincial and federal governments.

I have given this matter considerable thought due to my role as forestry critic for the Reform Party of Canada. Today I want to address my remarks primarily to what I believe should be the federal government's unique role regarding agriculture.

Agriculture is important in my riding of Okanagan—Shuswap, employing nearly 6 per cent of the workforce in the north Okanagan regional district and 4.5 per cent in the Columbia Shuswap regional district.

Central and northern Okanagan has 2,252 farms, producing last year 21,000 pigs, plus 3.46 million chickens and 2.3 million dozens of eggs.

In addition to B.C. cattlemen, we have dairymen producing milk from some 5,850 dairy cows. Part of the milk goes to the major brand name cheese in my neighbouring town of Armstrong. Chicken processing is also important with Colonial Farms handling five million chickens in 1994. We also have local hatcheries, seed companies and feed mills.

Small scale and home business suppliers are becoming the mainstay of farmers' markets like the one at Vernon with 180 members drawing big crowds every Tuesday and Thursday, excluding the winter months.

Perhaps the most obvious agricultural aspect of life in the Okanagan and our entire region of British Columbia are the 2,000 tree fruit growers that employ over 5,000 people on farms plus 2,500 in packing houses and support industries. Direct returns to the B.C. fruit industry include annual sales exceeding \$140 million, generating over \$700 million in B.C. economic activity. Even at the north end of the commercial tree fruit activity, the Vernon area has 3,270 acres of orchards, mostly in McIntosh and Spartan apples.

Those orchards of blooming trees every spring transform the rolling hills of the 200-kilometre long Okanagan valley into a kind of beauty one must see to believe. It is a big tourist draw.

In round figures, the Okanagan valley supplies 100 per cent of Canada's apricots, 39 per cent of its plums and prunes, 38 per cent of its sweet and sour cherries and 34 per cent its apples.

Of course Canadian consumers also buy fruit originating outside Canada. On the west coast during Christmas holidays people eat tons of Japanese oranges. That was one of the surprises of my coming to Ottawa, finding Christmas oranges called Clementines coming from Spain and Morocco.

I mention these points to lead into the fact that agriculture today is experiencing an earthquake in changes regarding the very foundations of trade.

The Minister for International Trade gave a speech March 14 in Australia. He mentioned the many recent developments, including the birth of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the World Trade Organization.

The Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation Forum has agreed to reach free trade among its developed economies by the year 2010 and free trade among its developing economies 10 years later. The countries of the entire western hemisphere have set the year 2005 as their target for free trade. Therefore 10 to 15 years from now, Canadian farmers will be marketing their products in a totally free trade environment.

When the movement of goods, of capital and ideas was limited to the speed of a sailing ship or a camel caravan, individual rulers could hope to run their countries in whatever fashion their local people would tolerate. Today, technological innovations are rebuilding the world of trade from the bottom up. Children in our schools are logging on to the Internet and learning to communicate almost instantly with people all across the planet.

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(1410)

If a supplier cannot get the desired product quickly, reliably and at a reasonable price from one farmer, he not only can ask the neighbouring farm, he can even phone or fax the neighbouring country or even the neighbouring continent.

As an illustration of what is happening in international trade, the March 10 issue of "Export News" listed some coming agricultural events: Foodaworld '95, the third international food processing systems fair; the 11th international ice cream show; the third international bakery show. None of these international events in agriculture or in agri-food is taking place either here, in Europe or North America. China, Turkey and Argentina are the places.

International trade in agriculture is a far cry from the day when Sir Walter Raleigh told Queen Elizabeth I of England that natives in the new world were growing a peculiar leaf so they could roll it up and smoke it.

The Reform Party supports free trade and has supported it for many years. However, we also demand that free trade mean fair trade. The federal government must work for a level playing field.

During these transition years there will be many international disputes involving natural resources; some because of short supply like the current fish war with Spain. Many other trade disputes will involve claims like the apple dumping dispute last year in which many Canadian growers faced bankruptcy because the dispute settlement mechanisms involved a delay far too long for something as fragile as apples.

No body but the federal government can straighten out these international trade disputes and ensure that dispute settlement mechanisms built into all our free trade agreements provide adequate protection for Canadian growers.

The federal government must assign top quality people to handle all agricultural trade disputes which certainly lie ahead for our nation.

I see this international trade expansion as being the primary and permanent role of the federal government regarding agriculture.

A second federal role derives from the first one. In recent years the dismantling of the Berlin wall has become a symbol of what will happen to our farm marketing boards. Quotas, tariffs and subsidies to farmers will certainly soon become as rare as grand-daddy's pocket watch. International free trade will require them to come apart brick by brick just like the Berlin wall.

Farmers must be assisted in making the transition from Canada's old supply managed economy to the fast paced world of free trade. Farmers' voices must be the ones heard when

government asks how to proceed. Monopolistic and non-democratic groups made up of government appointees such as the Canadian Wheat Board will become as outdated as the old steam thresher parked at Three Valley Gap's ghost town in my riding of Okanagan—Shuswap.

Therefore, the federal government must not only negotiate well to start with, it also must provide gradually reducing income support for farmers being hit by these changes.

It has been the position of the Reform Party that Canada must move to free and fair trade and that policies and programs to support the agricultural sector during this transition must be developed by the federal government.

A third role for the federal government in agriculture flows from the unpleasant probability that worldwide free trade may reduce suppliers to the least common denominator. By that I mean that if agricultural workers in any one nation can be forced to handle toxic agri-chemicals, agricultural workers around the world will suffer.

It is a sad fact that agricultural workers in the United States today suffer from the highest incidence of skin cancer in North America. They have the highest exposure to toxic industrial chemicals used as herbicides and pesticides. Agricultural workers need protection. Treaties must be negotiated to ban toxic agri-chemicals and encourage environmentally safer controls. Therefore, the federal government must do essential testing, precommercial research and regulating regarding chemicals.

Consumers around the world also must be protected regarding honest labels accurately listing all agri-food ingredients. Therefore, the Canadian government and all national governments must strive to achieve international agreements about safety in the agricultural workplace as well as consumer protection standards and enact the needed regulations to support the treaties.

These areas should summarize the federal government's long term role in agriculture: negotiating treaties and settling conflicts arising from the movement toward worldwide free trade; negotiating and legislating necessary protection both in the agricultural workplace and in the production facilities, advertising and labelling for agri-food.

(1415)

I see a temporary role for federal income support for farmers and growers. It would assist them in adjusting to moving away from the supply managed protectionist kind of trading, and I do mean temporary.

First and foremost, according to the Constitution natural resources fall under provincial jurisdiction. My personal wish would be to greatly downsize the federal role in all natural

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resources and therefore reduce the burden on the people caused by excessive regulation and taxation.

**Mr. Ian Murray (Lanark—Carleton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to speak against Motion No. 314.

Let me begin by reminding members of this House that according to the hon. member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre, and I quote: “Motion No. 314 is based on the premise that it is time to examine not only how government works but also what government does”. I agree with him because our budget of February 27 represents perhaps the most fundamental rethinking of how government can work better for Canadians.

The motion presented to the House also proposes that the government pursue negotiations with the provinces and the agri-food industry in order to reassign jurisdictional responsibilities in agriculture and eliminate overlap and duplication. I also agree with that. I agree with him because the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food has in fact worked effectively with his provincial colleagues over the past 16 months to reduce overlap and duplication in the inspection and financial services for the agri-food sector. Those are just two examples among many others.

It is ironic that the proposals in Motion No. 314 to reduce overlap and duplication themselves duplicate to a certain extent the work this government has already initiated since it took office. If the hon. member's proposals were to be implemented, federal spending would be increasingly directed to price support and income stabilization.

While the government recognizes that stabilization is very important to Canadian producers, spending on research and market development have been shown to generate significantly higher returns on investment. We have clearly demonstrated in the last few months and with the 1995 budget that this is the road we have taken and intend to follow for the benefit of Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector.

Stabilization measures are important to agriculture, but we are finding that stabilization is most effectively done in a cost sharing partnership with the provinces, not by one level of government alone. It has not resulted in overlap and duplication but instead has led to a co-operative approach which better meets the needs of producers.

Thus, I strongly believe that Motion No. 314 is irrelevant at this time. I must urge the members of this House to reject it. It would only duplicate what this government, the provincial authorities and the industry are already doing together.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to address the motion before us by my colleague, the hon. member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre. Before I get into

the things I plan to say, I would like to take a few seconds to address my hon. colleagues, particularly those in the Bloc party.

I listened with interest to the speech given by the member for Jonquière. He expressed surprise that the Reform Party was promoting a motion such as this. I assure him this should come as no surprise.

I believe the issue we are facing with respect to the federal government in Ottawa is probably very similar for three groups: those in the west where the Reform Party is now the strongest; those in the province of Quebec; and those farther east. Because of their geographical location and special circumstances, they feel somehow left out of the federal government except when the federal government intrudes where we do not want it to intrude.

I say to all members and particularly those from the province of Quebec and the people they represent that the difference is that they have given up on federalism. I am so sad about that. They have decided that Canada is no longer a place where they are welcome and they want out. That is the message I think I hear correctly from them. The difference between them and us is that we want in. We want to be part of the Canadian federation, but we do want it to work better.

(1420)

During the 1993 election campaign a number of people in my area were sporting bumper stickers on their cars which read: My Canada includes Quebec. We think of the people across this entire country as our fellow citizens, as our brothers and sisters. We invite them to try once again to make Confederation work, to work together with us rather than trying to separate and divide the country.

In this regard, I had a short conversation with a person not long ago who asked: “What is the matter with those people in Quebec?” I told him that the problem was not Quebec, but that the problem was Ottawa. After talking about it for a bit we decided that was probably true.

The federal government, by overly utilizing its spending power has intruded on areas of provincial jurisdiction. Members here are focusing on a problem that we really do need to address and solve.

Getting back to what we are here for, this private member's motion addresses this question. It says that we want to represent Canadian people in the very best way.

Once again, if I can indulge in a short analysis, I look at it in the following way: We have around 28 to 29 million Canadians. Many Canadians, over 250,000, are farmers. We have a relationship between farmers and the rest of Canadians. Strictly speaking, neither the farmers nor other Canadians are terribly interested in which level of government is regulating their lives, controlling their actions and reducing their freedom.

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I get the message over and over again that Canadians want a devolution of power nearer to the people. Too many people feel disenfranchised. They feel powerless to have anybody hear them on any issue. That ranges all the way from taxation, which keeps going up, up, up even with this government, to gun control, which is a very important issue in our area, to agriculture, where the federal government intrudes into an area where there is no jurisdictional warrant for it.

This does not need to be said. We all know how important it is that we have a strong agricultural industry. All one needs to do is to read some history to recognize that any country which becomes dependent upon outsiders for its food supply is extremely vulnerable.

We could all live for a minute or so without air. I agree with the environmentalists who say we should keep our air clean. We could live for maybe a week or so without water. I agree with the environmentalists who say we should keep our water clean and safe.

Depending on who the individual is, I am sure some members here would only live for a week or so without food, but some of us with larger bank accounts might last a little longer. We need to have a safe food supply and that is one thing we can have. It is such a privilege to live in this country where we have a plentiful and safe food supply. That comes from our agriculture and agri-food industry.

(1425)

If there is anything worth preserving in this country it is the strength of that industry because our very lives depend on it. Our freedom and our independence from other countries depend on it.

How can we best arrange our affairs between the supplier, the producer, the farmer and the consumer, those other citizens who are eating the food being produced? We ought to reconsider and probably reject the premise that the federal government has to have a lot of involvement in it.

The nearer one gets the regulation, the nearer one gets the subsidization if there is that, the nearer one gets the controls to the actual producers and consumers and the further one gets it away from Ottawa the better it is for the industry as a whole.

That is not to say the federal government has nothing to do. That is the purpose of the bill. It asks us to carefully examine the areas where the federal government has a role, and there are some.

To my hon. colleagues from Quebec, their separation is not in any way going to alter the necessity of having a relationship with the rest of North America. They have often said they would like to use our currency and have free movement across our

borders. They have even mentioned they would like to use our passports. All they are saying is they recognize the need in our world to live together. They will have to live together in one system or another which will require working together which will solve this.

I am simply submitting in the most emphatic way I can that we need to return to provincial governments those areas of jurisdiction which are best served there. We need to retain in the federal area things like international trade, the rules of trade and the barriers toward movement of agricultural goods back and forth. Those are going to apply whether there is a different government there or not. There is an overriding government which will have to apply to these relationships.

My appeal to the members is to support the bill because it would require us to look at those areas which should be devolved to provincial levels and to the private sector.

One of the large weaknesses or hindrances of our present economy is there has been too much movement toward regulation by government away from the business people. This is very important.

To quote the bumper sticker on my farmer brother's half-ton: "When you complain about farmers, don't talk with your mouth full".

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the private member's bill presented by my colleague from the Reform Party is one we in the farm community feel very strongly about. It is an idea whose time has come.

The federal government over the long haul has been in many areas of duplicity. Some of the areas the provincial government could probably handle better are agriculture, forestry and mining. This bill deals with agriculture but the principles involved would also apply to those other areas.

As my colleague has said, there is also some sentiment in the Bloc for this division of powers and a little less power in our central government. This motion is very worthy of consideration of all of the House. I encourage members opposite to look very closely at this motion and to consider very strongly their support for it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

[Translation]

It being 2.30 p.m., pursuant to order adopted on Thursday, March 23, 1995, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. on Saturday, March 25, 1995.

(The House adjourned at 2.30 p.m.)

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