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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, September 26, 1995

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, September 26, 1995

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour this morning, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), to table in both official languages a report entitled *Towards a Rapid Reaction Capability for the United Nations*.

[English]

This is a document entitled "Towards a Rapid Reaction Capability for the United Nations".

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-349, an act to amend the Criminal Code (peeping Toms).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to present this private member's bill, seconded by my colleague from Fraser Valley East.

It is very short and very simple. It has been brought to my attention by police officers and other law enforcement individuals that in the Criminal Code peeping Toms apply only at night. It is my understanding this has caused a lot of concern because it seems like the criminals are getting braver in this day and age and a lot of this is happening during daylight hours. This amendment would enable the police to lay charges against those individuals doing this activity during the day, an activity for which they are normally arrested at night.

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

NATIONAL HOUSING ACT

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-350, an act to amend the National Housing Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I received a phone call from a constituent asking why he and his family were forced from their rented house when their rent payments were all paid on time and the full amount was remitted.

When I investigated his complaint it was discovered that no warning was given to the constituent that the owner of the building was facing foreclosure and that current legislation requires vacant possession of the building before the lending institution can be paid.

This bill will amend the National Housing Act to allow a lending institution full redress without having to evict current tenants and the tenants will receive notice from the lending institution that it is proceeding with foreclosure on the building owner.

I trust the House will support this measure. It may allow Canadians the opportunity to remain in their homes and at least give them ample time to relocate.

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

* * *

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 move:

That the following members be added to the list of associate members of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs: John Cummins, Dick Harris, Elsie Wayne, Hugh Hanrahan and Jane Stewart.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

• (1010)

PETITIONS

JUSTICE

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting petitions on behalf of 819 Albertans from across the province who urge the government to make our streets safer

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for law-abiding citizens and the families of victims of convicted murderers.

They pray to allow reclassification of offenders as dangerous after sentencing. They pray also to allow the indefinite detention of dangerous offenders after warrant expiry and they pray to allow violent offenders to be ineligible for parole until the full sentence has been served. I concur with the petitioners.

TAXATION

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I present a petition which has been circulating all across Canada.

It has been signed by a number of Canadians from Alberta and British Columbia. The petitioners draw to the attention of the House that managing the family home and caring for preschool children is an honourable profession which has not been recognized for its value to our society.

They also state the Income Tax Act discriminates against families that make the choice to provide care in the home to preschool children, the disabled, the chronically ill or the aged.

The petitioners therefore pray and call on Parliament to pursue initiatives to eliminate tax discrimination against families that decide to provide care in the home for preschool children, the disabled, the chronically ill or the aged.

RIGHTS OF GRANDPARENTS

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour this morning to present petitions pursuant to Standing Order 36 on behalf of over 1,000 petitioners in their fight to get recognition in the courts for grandparents to have access to their grandchildren.

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents from Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt I present a petition calling to the attention of the House that the Bloc Québécois has publicly dedicated itself to the disloyal objective of the secession of the province of Quebec from the Canadian federation.

Therefore the petitioners call on Parliament to preserve Canadian unity and parliamentary tradition and to protect the rights of all people of Canada by prevailing on the Speaker of the

House of Commons to recognize the Reform Party as the official opposition during the remainder of the 35th Parliament.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege today to introduce more petitions along the same lines as many I received in the last session.

The first two draw to the attention of the House that the inclusion of sexual orientation in the Canadian Human Rights Act will provide certain groups with special status, rights and privileges. They call on Parliament to oppose any amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which provide for the inclusion of the phrase sexual orientation. I have two separate petitions on that.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, with an ongoing petition campaign, the undersigned citizens of Canada draw to the attention of the House that the majority of Canadians are law-abiding citizens, they respect the sanctity of life, they believe that physicians in Canada should be working to save lives, not to end them.

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

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

MANGANESE BASED FUEL ADDITIVES ACT

The House resumed from September 25 consideration of the motion that Bill C-94, an act to regulate interprovincial trade in and the importation for commercial purposes of certain manganese based substances, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mrs. Jean Payne (St. John's West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to speak on Bill C-94, the manganese based fuel act.

I will explain the bill and why we are taking action against MMT. MMT is a manganese based fuel additive used to increase the octane rating of gasoline. It has been used in Canada since 1977 as a replacement for lead in unleaded gasoline.

• (1015)

Lead was phased out of virtually all Canadian gasolines by 1990. Who uses MMT? Just about every Canadian motorist does, and that is because Canadian refiners use it. The exact amount of MMT used may vary, depending on the batch of gasoline. However, premium grade gasoline generally contains a higher dosage than regular grade gasoline. Canada is the only country that uses it. The United States, for example, banned it from unleaded gasoline in 1978.

The automobile industry is convinced that gasoline containing MMT adversely impacts the operation of sophisticated onboard diagnostic systems. These OBD systems are important because they monitor the performance of emission control components in vehicles. The auto industry has made the decision that it will not accept the risk of increased warranty repair costs caused by damage related to MMT. Some companies have even indicated that they will disconnect the OBD systems in whole or in part and may reduce Canadian vehicle warranty coverage starting with the 1996 model year if MMT continues to be used in Canadian gasoline. That means that the cost of maintaining these systems will be passed on directly to Canadian consumers.

This is where the federal government comes in. Last October the Minister of the Environment urged both industries to voluntarily resolve the issue of MMT by the end of 1994 or the government would take action. This deadline was subsequently extended until February of this year to review automobile and petroleum industry proposals. The matter was not resolved, so the federal government has had to step in. This has resulted in Bill C-94.

The MMT issue is no longer an industry dispute. Its outcome can affect the vehicle emission program we are putting into place and in the long term could negatively impact the automobile sector.

Successful solution of the MMT issue will ensure that environmental benefits are realized through the use of the most advanced emission control technologies. It will ensure that Canadians are offered the same warranty coverage as in the United States. It will also ensure that the Canadian motor vehicle emissions control programs do not diverge from those of the United States. This means that Canadians will continue to benefit from the cost and technological advantages of a North American harmonized fleet. It also means good news for Canadian jobs and the Canadian automotive sector. That of course is because diverging emissions standards and different anti-pollution equipment on Canadian cars will negatively affect the

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marketplace and decrease the competitiveness of the automotive sector.

We could also be faced with a situation where cars built in Canada to go south of the border could have more advanced equipment than those sold in Canada. That is clearly not acceptable.

We should be clear about the economic impact of removing MMT. It will be small for the entire petroleum industry. Estimates for the cost of MMT removal provided by the industry range from \$50 million to \$83 million per year. That means an additional increase of 0.1 to 0.24 cents per litre at the gas pump.

I would now like to take a few moments to explain some of the key highlights of the bill.

Bill C-94 will prohibit the import or interprovincial trade for a commercial purpose of MMT or anything containing MMT. It will also give the minister the power to authorize exceptions for MMT that will not be used in unleaded gasoline subject to monitoring requirements. Coverage of the act can be expanded by order in council to cover other manganese based substances.

The act is binding on all persons and entities, including the provincial and federal governments. The enforcement tools are similar to those that are in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, and the penalties are strict.

• (1020)

For the unauthorized import or interprovincial trade of MMT, the maximum penalty on summary conviction is a \$300,000 fine and/or six months in jail. On indictment, the maximum fine is \$1 million and/or three years in jail. For knowingly providing false or misleading information on the importation or interprovincial trade of MMT, the penalties are the same, but with a maximum of five years in jail instead of three on indictment. On conviction, as in CEPA, the court can also order an additional fine equal to the monetary benefits resulting from the offence, prohibit conduct that may lead to a repeat offence, and direct the offender to notify third parties about the conviction.

I believe this gives the members of the House some idea of what the government is proposing under Bill C-94.

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, as members of the House will recall, during the June session we heard the government's reasoning behind the proposed ban on MMT. According to the hon. member for Davenport, the government is proposing Bill C-94 to ban the interprovincial trade of the fuel additive MMT in order to protect human health, protect car warranties, and to take advantage of technological change.

This may sound on the surface to be reasonable. However, a closer examination of the stated reasons is certainly merited. It is my objective today to seek clarification on the purpose of Bill C-94, a trade sanction bill introduced by the Minister of the

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Environment, allegedly to protect the warranties offered customers purchasing new cars.

First, looking at the health issue, allow me to refer to the Canada health study published in late 1994. I quote: "Airborne manganese resulting from the combustion of MMT in gasoline powered vehicles is not entering the Canadian environment in quantities or under conditions that may constitute a health risk. All the analyses indicate that the combustion products of MMT in gasoline do not represent an added health risk for the Canadian population."

During our last discussions on this bill, the government produced facts from the U.S. EPA that indicated the EPA suggests tests be conducted on the potential health effects of MMT. The interesting thing is that the government appears to be predicting that the results of this testing will support its position to ban MMT, certainly a very premature action on its part. It seems ironic that the government chooses to discount scientific findings of the EPA testing programs on the impact of MMT on vehicle emission systems, the results of which clearly indicate that MMT has no adverse effect on the emission systems of cars, while speculating that the studies to be conducted on health will support its position.

One may also ask why the government wants to see EPA testing results on health impacts of MMT when its own agency, Health Canada, has clearly demonstrated that Canadians experience no adverse effects from the level of airborne manganese that results from tailpipe emissions. It appears the government is prepared to discount scientific findings in favour of speculation that the results of the EPA's proposed testing on health effects of MMT will prove to be negative.

The second reason the government offers for a ban on MMT is to protect car warranties. For those members unfamiliar with the motivation for this legislation, let me remind them of the carmakers' claim that MMT in gasoline causes problems for onboard diagnostic systems in new model cars made in the U.S. According to the industry minister, the federal government has said it wishes to ban MMT so that "Canadian consumers will be protected by ensuring that they are afforded the same warranty coverage as automobile owners in the United States". Another reason is that the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association states that it has research that indicates MMT causes failure of onboard diagnostic systems. The MVMA has elected not to make that research public, however, after a recent review of scientific evidence collected as part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency evaluation of the auto industry's claims.

• (1025)

The U.S. court of appeals stated in its judgment of April 14, 1995, that MMT would not cause or contribute to the failure of any emission control system or device. According to the U.S. EPA, and I quote: "MMT does not cause or contribute to a failure of any emission control system or device". The decision

goes further to state: "The administrators' analysis of data submitted by Ethyl was careful and searching. The American Automobile Manufacturers Association did not come close to proving that the administration's analysis of data was arbitrary or capricious."

We should also note that automobile makers have experienced significant technical difficulties complying with the onboard diagnostic requirements in the United States as well as in Canada, despite the fact that MMT is not currently used as an octane enhancer in American gasoline. In fact, difficulties with certification of onboard diagnostic systems in the United States have prompted the U.S. EPA to state in the *Federal Register* that automobile manufacturers have expressed and demonstrated difficulty in complying with every aspect of onboard diagnostic requirements and difficulty appears likely to continue in the 1996 and 1997 model years.

Despite these facts, the Canadian government appears not to have noted that vehicle manufacturers have failed to achieve onboard diagnostic certification in the U.S. for most new model cars and then chooses to conclude that those same problems in Canada are somehow attributed to MMT.

The government's third reason for the proposed ban of MMT is a desire to take advantage of technological change and to enable Canadian consumers to reap the benefits offered by onboard diagnostic systems, which the hon. member for Davenport describes as contributing to pollution prevention. Unfortunately the member for Davenport does not appear to realize that onboard diagnostic systems merely notify the driver when there is a pollution emission problem. They do not control or reduce emissions. The onboard diagnostic is in fact a light on the dashboard of the car, which when illuminated suggests difficulty has been sensed.

The problem the automakers are experiencing with the onboard diagnostic system, both here and in the United States, is that the OBD has been malfunctioning and lighting up when there is no emission problem. This is causing vehicle owners to take their cars in for service when none is required. Since most of these visits are covered under warranty, the result is that the automakers must pay for the service visit.

The government's confusion on the role of MMT is further exemplified by the notion that removing MMT from gasoline will contribute to pollution reduction. The member for Davenport tells us that scientists in his community have informed him that MMT in gasoline is contributing to greater pollution in the form of smog, carbon monoxide, and hydrocarbons. Again, the facts prove him wrong. All scientific studies on nitrous oxide reductions attributable to MMT in gasoline conclude the same thing: MMT in gasoline reduces emissions of nitrous oxide, a leading contributor to the formation of urban smog. In addition, the use of MMT in the refining process reduces emissions of

carbon monoxide and of hydrocarbons, not to mention emissions of benzene, which is a no-tolerance carcinogen.

We should also note that MMT is compatible for use with alternative fuels. The use of MMT enhances emission benefits of oxygenates such as ethanol and MTBE. For example, EPA test results indicate that MMT with a 10 per cent ethanol blend lowers nitrous oxide emissions by slightly more than 30 per cent and lowers ozone potential by 29 per cent. When MMT was added to an 11 per cent MTBE blend, nitrous oxide emissions were reduced by 25 per cent and ozone potential was reduced by 18 per cent. Not only does MMT contribute significantly to lower Canadian nitrous oxide emissions, but use of MMT enhances emission benefits of oxygenates.

As part of this discussion, we must consider that nitrous oxide increases resulting from the elimination of MMT from Canadian gasoline are projected to add 41,000 tonnes per year of nitrous oxide to the Canadian environment. That is a 16 per cent increase over current levels.

• (1030)

In conclusion, the government's rationale for this bill is inconsistent. It blatantly disagrees with scientific findings regarding MMT effects on health, vehicle pollution control equipment and the environment. It therefore seems to be in the best interests of all constituents that we move to disregard the proposed bill. I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "that" and substituting the following therefor:

Bill C-94, an act to regulate interprovincial trade in and the importation for commercial purposes of certain manganese based substances, be not now read a second time but that it be read a second time this day six months hence.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion of the hon. member for Kootenay West—Revelstoke will be considered as to its acceptability and the Chair will pronounce on that matter after the next speaker.

Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the privilege to speak in this Chamber on Bill C-94, the manganese based fuel additives act. Before speaking about the specific elements of Bill C-94 I would like to say a few words about some issues which affect the environment and concern me, on which the government has acted and more important what the government is intending to do.

[Translation]

Allow me to point out a few facts underlying my concerns. World population is increasing at the rate of about 90 million people every year. In the past 150 years, it has climbed from

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1 billion to 6 billion. According to projections, it will reach between 10 billion to 14 billion in the years 2000 to 2050.

Between 1960 and 1990, economic activity grew at a compound annual rate of 3.8 per cent. The growth rate in any given year exceeded in absolute terms the total economic activity in Europe in

[English]

Over the past 30 years the manufacturing activities around the globe have increased by 500 per cent, electrical production by 400 per cent and the production of automobiles by 300 per cent. Clearly at the heart of our environmental concerns lies a historic trend of unprecedented expansion and acceleration of human activity. These now threaten vital components of the earth's ecology. The major consequences include the fact that forests are vanishing at the rate of 17 million hectares per year; six million hectares of productive dry land are turning into desert every year; 140 plant and animal species become extinct every day; and air and water quality on a global scale is declining at an equally alarming rate.

The problem of inadequate distribution systems or economic considerations such as the need to maintain price of excess commodities exacerbates our environmental problems in a global context.

The bottom line of this is that the combined impacts of pollution and these other pressures I have mentioned cause environmental capacity limits to be exceeded locally, regionally and globally. It is now clear that without some major shift in policies and practices a continuation of these trends is simply ecologically unsustainable.

That is why in the red book the Prime Minister supported the development of renewable energy and initiatives which limit pollution.

[Translation]

To this end, the government has launched a variety of programs, including the national bio-ethanol program. Announced last December, this program will support the development of ethanol production through a refundable line of credit to qualified candidates who want to establish bio-ethanol fuel production plants in Canada. Managed by the Farm Credit Corporation, the program will guarantee up to \$70 million in loans between 1999 and 2005.

• (1035)

[English]

In other words the government will only assist renewable energy companies which first invest their own capital and their own strength. There will be no subsidies, no megaprojects. The government will only provide assistance once the private sector has invested its own capital for a period of five years. This is a

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fiscally responsible way to help turn wood chips, straw, grain and other biomass derived waste into energy which can be used to fuel our vehicles.

Properly blended ethanol gasoline can reduce carbon monoxide emissions which degrade urban air quality. It can reduce carbon dioxide emissions which are a primary source of greenhouse gases. It can reduce benzene emissions, a substance declared toxic under CEPA, into the atmosphere.

The program is targeted to encourage ethanol production in every region of the country. This is a sound example of the concept of sustainable development. We can deal with an environmental problem and create jobs at the same time.

Our standards for the exhaust coming out of the tailpipes of our cars and trucks are among the most stringent in the world. These standards set strict limits for nitrogen oxides which contribute to acid rain and are key components in the formation of smog. The government has also set limits on the amounts of hydrocarbons, another major contributor to smog, that cars can emit as well as limits on carbon monoxide.

Although pollution from cars and trucks has diminished—they do pollute much less than in the past—the number of vehicles has increased significantly. As a consequence they represent an important source of air pollution in Canada: 60 per cent of carbon monoxide emissions; 35 per cent of other oxide emissions; 25 per cent of hydrocarbon emissions; and 20 per cent of carbon dioxide emissions. These are all attributable to automobile tailpipes.

As a result the federal government is following a strategy for the control of motor vehicle emissions. It includes the adoption of more severe depollution standards for vehicles and requires advanced emission control technologies such as improved integrated diagnostic systems.

There remains an obstacle to the introduction in Canada of the next generation of emission control technologies which is the continued presence of MMT, an octane enhancer that is presently used in unleaded gasoline. Bill C-94 very clearly calls for a ban on the import and interprovincial trade of MMT which is not manufactured in Canada but imported from the United States. In Canada the use of MMT as an octane enhancer is allowed in unleaded gasoline up to a maximum of 18 milligrams of manganese per litre. In the United States the use of MMT in unleaded gasoline has not been allowed since 1978.

The automobile industry is convinced that MMT adversely affects the operation of these advanced emissions control technologies. All the domestic manufacturers and automobile importers agree that MMT adversely affects their sophisticated onboard diagnostic systems.

It is clear that reducing automobile pollution demands combined action on two fronts: on the one hand improving technology to control automobile emissions such as integrated diagnostic systems and on the other hand improvements in the composition and the properties of the fuels which motors use.

This bill is about the health of the environment. It is about the health of Canadians. It is also about the sound management of government. Canadians, whether they live in Quebec, British Columbia, the Yukon or New Brunswick deserve a federal government that projects their common interests, a government that can rapidly act for the benefit of all.

To echo what the Deputy Prime Minister said, we can wait no longer; we must act now. Any further delay will pose a serious threat to federal emissions control programs.

• (1040)

In conclusion, this bill works for consumers, it works for business and it works for the environment. For those reasons I ask all colleagues to join me in supporting it.

The Deputy Speaker: Colleagues, the amendment proposed is receivable. The debate is now on the amendment.

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of the amendment to hoist the bill for a six-month period simply because there is pending in the U.S. a ruling by the appeal court whether or not to allow the use of MMT in the United States after an 18-year absence.

A member opposite this morning and the Minister of Industry some time ago spoke about the urgency of uniformity in gasoline blends in the North American market. The member this morning spoke of how unacceptable it would be to have one standard in the U.S. and a different standard in Canada for automobile emissions, gasolines, warranties and so on. I agree with that.

In the interests of achieving uniformity in the North American market we should wait until the ruling comes down in the United States. Industry analysts tell me that the likelihood of a positive ruling which would allow MMT to return to the United States is in the neighbourhood of 70 per cent. It seems unacceptable to me that Canada would move to ban MMT two months before it is again accepted for use in the United States.

We have heard a lot of rhetoric on both sides of the argument. The previous speaker said that the bill is about the environment and air quality in Canada. He also said that the bill is about the health of Canadians. That is rubbish. The bill is about whether MMT affects the onboard diagnostic systems in new vehicles in Canada and the United States. The claims that it affects the environment and the health of Canadians have been proven not

to be true without question both here and in the U.S. Those issues are simply red herrings.

The matter of the onboard diagnostic computer systems is another issue. It is a fact that in the U.S. onboard diagnostic systems have been failing and are unreliable. The technology has not been developed to the point where it is reliable. In fact the EPA in the United States had to lower the standards for certification of automobile diagnostic systems simply because the technology could not meet the required standards. That is the problem. It is not MMT.

In the United States the issue has been studied to death and it has been proven that MMT is not the villain. The technology simply is not developed to the point where it can be reliable. We have to focus on the issue rather than going off on tangents on the side.

Ethanol is another example. We hear time and time again that it is a product which is available to replace MMT and that it will produce cleaner air. Again it is hogwash. People from the refineries tell me that ethanol is not a substitute for MMT. It will not replace MMT when MMT is banned. Gasolines will simply be further refined to reach the octane rating that can now be obtained with MMT. Further refining will cause higher pollution and higher costs both for the consumer and for the refining industry.

• (1045)

Let us keep the debate where it belongs. What is taking place here, as far as I can see at least, is a payback for those who supported the Liberal Party's return to power after nine years in purgatory.

The facts that have been brought out in the debate on the MMT issue simply do not support the action the government is taking. The only reliable reason I can see for the government to push this matter, in spite of all the evidence before it, is simply that it is responding to the masters who supported that political party and its subsequent election to the Government of Canada.

Let us keep it in perspective but let us also, for once in the House, make a decision based on reasonable evidence and on what is good for the Canadian taxpayer and the Canadian consumer. Let us look at the facts, judge the facts and make a decision based on them instead of make a decision based on what is politically good.

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to stand to speak at second reading of Bill C-94, the Manganese based Fuel Additives Act, the legislation designed to take MMT out of unleaded fuels.

If the federal government is given an opportunity to protect jobs, protect the environment, protect consumers and keep Canada on the leading edge of automotive technology all at the same time, should it take that opportunity? I would say that it

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should. The government will seize a chance to support technology which will help us improve fuel economy and meet our climate change objectives. We will do what we can to reduce air pollution and smog.

That is why we are taking action to remove MMT from Canadian unleaded gasoline. That is why I am proud to speak on the legislation today.

[*Translation*]

This bill will prohibit interprovincial trade in and importation of MMT, a manganese based fuel additive made in the U.S. The proposed bill will come into effect 60 days after receiving royal assent. Canada is the only country in the world where MMT is used in unleaded gas. The U.S. banned it from their unleaded fuels in 1978. Bulgaria and Argentina are the only two other countries still showing some interest in its use.

Why is MMT not used by more countries? Because it hinders the operation of anti-pollution devices found in today's cars and trucks.

[*English*]

Environment Canada has received and reviewed study after study after study of the effects of MMT on onboard automobile equipment. I agree with the Minister of the Environment and with Ford, Chrysler, General Motors, Toyota, Honda, Subaru, Nissan, Mazda, Mercedes, BMW, Volkswagen and Volvo.

Mr. Chatters: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe we are debating a Reform motion to hoist the bill until we get a ruling from the U.S. court of appeal. The member opposite seems to be debating the bill on second reading. It is our motion that is being debated here.

• (1050)

The Deputy Speaker: There is very little restriction on what one might say in reply to the question of hoisting the bill for six months. I do not believe that is a point of order.

Mr. Adams: Mr. Speaker, I understand the point of the member opposite. In fact to show that the legislation is worth while is to debate the amendment Reform members have put.

I was just saying that these various corporations support the legislation and the evidence we are putting forward. Then there is Lada, Jaguar, Land Rover and Hyundai. They all say that MMT adversely affects the sophisticated onboard diagnostic systems where the pollution control equipment of automobiles is found.

These systems are extremely important for the environment. They are responsible for monitoring the vehicle's emission controls and for alerting the driver to malfunctions. They ensure the cleaner burning of the engines of today and tomorrow. They

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ensure that automobiles are properly maintained, resulting in decreased tailpipe emissions and improved fuel economy.

In short, these important onboard systems are the basis of anti-pollution control measures across the continent and of reduced fuel consumption in our vehicles. Therefore this onboard technology is very important technology. It is extremely important once it is installed that it works, that it does its job. The legislation is designed to make sure that technology works effectively.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, this government will not allow MMT to prevent the Canadian automotive industry from designing vehicles that do not pollute nearly as much. Canada's environment and Canadian consumers have the right to enjoy the best anti-pollution devices.

The federal government has been waiting since 1985 for the automotive and oil industries to address this situation on their own. Last October, it urged the two industries to resolve this issue between themselves before the end of 1994; otherwise, the government would be forced to intervene. The two industries, however, did not succeed in solving the problem.

We then pushed back the deadline to February 1995. Again, the problem was not solved. Well, we have been waiting long enough. The time has come for the government to take action.

[*English*]

If we do not act now, the federal government's vehicle emission reduction programs will be in jeopardy. We will risk missing out on major reductions in smog, carbon monoxide and hydro carbons.

If we do not act now, Canadian consumers will be prevented from taking advantage of state of the art emission reduction technologies simply because they do not have access to MMT-free gasoline.

If we do not act now, we could face the situation where automakers will be forced to turn off the onboard diagnostic systems scheduled for 1996 models because of the damage MMT causes. General Motors is already bringing models off the assembly line with some of the onboard diagnostic functions disconnected. General Motors, like the others, is no longer prepared to assume the increased warranty risks for damage caused to anti-pollution equipment. As we have said, MMT damages this delicate, expensive and very important onboard equipment.

In the end it is the Canadian motorist who will have to pay more to have his or her car maintained because of this kind of industry action. We will not let this happen. We will not allow the buck to be passed to the Canadian consumer. We will not allow anti-pollution equipment in Canada to be less effective than anti-pollution equipment in the United States.

We will not allow the competitiveness of our auto industry to be threatened. We will not allow investment and the thousands of Canadian jobs which depend on that investment to be put in jeopardy.

• (1055)

[*Translation*]

Resolving the MMT problem will have positive environmental effects through the use of the most sophisticated emission control technologies. This will also give Canadians the same guarantee as that enjoyed by U.S. car owners and ensure that Canadian vehicle emission control programs are in line with U.S. programs.

This means that Canadians will continue to enjoy the economic and technological benefits of a harmonized North American car pool. It also means that the Canadian automotive industry will remain competitive.

[*English*]

Let us be clear. The job of reducing motor vehicle pollution can no longer be addressed by just the auto industry or by just the petroleum industry or the government. Progress at reducing vehicle pollution demands action by all.

The petroleum industry needs to keep making improvements in the composition and properties of the fuels the engines burn. The auto industry needs to keep making improvements in vehicle emission control technologies such as those offered through onboard diagnostic systems.

[*Translation*]

As for the government, it must act to reduce automobile air pollution. This is what we are doing with Bill C-94. We are taking action by putting in place a global vehicle emission control strategy including the adoption of tougher standards for exhaust systems.

To meet these standards, we are relying on state of the art emission control technologies and on the types of fuel they require. We need new anti-emission technologies such as onboard diagnostic systems to help us reduce smog as well as carbon monoxide and hydrocarbon emissions. We must reduce these kinds of emissions, which have a major effect on urban air quality and contribute to the greenhouse effect.

[*English*]

Preventive action means producing goods more cleanly. It means using less energy and conserving our natural resources. It means developing and using the latest green technologies like the emission reduction technologies in today's cars and trucks.

The bill before the House is one important measure of prevention. The bill is pro-environment, pro-consumer and pro-business. Eighteen of Canada's automobile companies think that what we are doing is right. Canadians think that what

we are doing is right. MMT can no longer stand in the way of the progress we continue to make in emission controls.

Let us protect jobs. Let us protect the environment. Let us vote for the legislation.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to enter the debate about what is called a six-month hoist. The motion reads: "That this bill not be read a second time but that it be read a second time this day six months hence". The reason that our party would propose a motion like that is that we have serious questions about the suitability or the legitimacy of the government's argument for banning MMT.

There is some requirement to go through briefly some of the arguments or non-arguments on the government side about why MMT should be banned. Its first argument is that MMT is a health risk and that is why the environment minister is dealing with it. Or, should it have been the health minister? Regardless, the environment minister brought it in because of the so-called tremendous health risk.

• (1100)

When I look through the documents I see a study performed by Health Canada, not the minister's own department. It carried out the risk assessment for the combustion products of MMT in gasoline. This study showed MMT poses no health risk to Canadians. The report stated: "All analyses indicate that the combustion products of MMT in gasoline do not represent an added health risk to the Canadian population".

We are not talking about health. Health has nothing to do with this ban, which is why the health minister cannot ban it legally. The environment minister cannot ban it. All she can do is prevent the importation and interprovincial trade of MMT. If the people who make MMT wanted to set up a separate plant in each province we could continue to have MMT and there would be virtually nothing the minister could do about it. There is no scientific or medical reason MMT should not be allowed.

They say MMT is bad for the onboard diagnostic systems of 1996 automobiles. It is interesting the minister has not commissioned a study to prove that. The studies she quotes at length are by different automobile manufacturers. Interesting enough, when she was speaking the other day she quoted at length study after study that claim MMT is harmful to onboard diagnostics.

We asked her to table those reports in the House. Many of us would be interested to see how those tests were conducted, whether they were done scientifically and objectively, whether they started off with a premise and tried to prove it or what the case was. The environment minister would not table one of those reports in the House.

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Time and again members of the government side say all these tests prove the case for MMT being bad for onboard diagnostics but they will not table any of the proof. They are corporate secrets and the government cannot do it. I guess they would be corporate secrets to people who are part of the automobile association. Naturally they are out to prove their case and naturally they do not want that information in the public domain. At least the government has yet to table that information for us.

The other report we have access to is from the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States, hardly a lapdog of any industry. It decided from its own studies that MMT does not harm onboard diagnostic systems. An independent study indicates there appears to be no harm done to the computers. That is the only one we have access to because the minister will not table anything else.

To summarize, there is no health risk and there is no proof, at least none tabled, that the onboard diagnostics are harmed. The first two reasons are debunked.

The third thing the government is prone to talk about is that it is necessary in order to improve the environment. I heard more nonsense in the last debate on this. As if it is restating the obvious, "I love the environment. I love clean air. Clean water is great. Green space is lovely. Biodiversity is good. Apples pie is wonderful and motherhood is okay". Where do we stop? Those are all obvious statements.

Removing MMT from gasoline will increase noxious emissions from automobiles. That is one of the reasons MMT is in unleaded fuel now. Removing it will have the effect of increasing the auto emissions that create ground level ozone by up to 20 per cent, which is not insignificant. As far as using ethanol as a substitute for MMT, if it can be produced and sold without subsidy as Mohawk already does, that is good. However, if we cannot prove scientifically what is wrong with MMT then the decision to ban it is wrong.

• (1105)

The other day I mentioned another title for the Minister of the Environment should perhaps be the minister of gas with the gas fumes and the increase in those fumes because of the banning of MMT.

I read an article entitled: "Sheila Copps: Minister of Smog" in the *Globe and Mail*, not exactly a fly by night outfit. The author, Terence Corcoran, goes through the argument about what is happening. He asks why the minister is pushing this now. Why can she not wait the six months that we have asked which would give us time to do either an independent study by the National Research Council, more studies and rulings by the United States for this common market in gasoline and more time

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to study it in committee if required? A six-month hoist is not the end of the world.

The author states: "The sole purpose of the legislation, which is being forced through the Liberal legislative sausage machine, is to remove a gasoline additive". He wonders why when the main benefit will be to increase ground level ozone by up to 20 per cent. Why would the minister do this?

This article says what I have already said, that there is no scientific independent study that shows why. There is no health risk. Why would they do that? It further states: "Enter the auto giants. For reasons of their own, they have mounted a campaign against MMT because they cannot meet the emissions control standards set out for the 1996 model year".

Mr. Gouk: They cannot make it in the United States either.

Mr. Strahl: My hon. colleague mentions they cannot make it in the United States where MMT is already banned. However, still they enter into the fray and say MMT must be banned.

The article continues: "Not much else is happening within the environment department apart from downsizing, leaving the MMT ban as the high point of Ms. Copps' reign as minister". This is it. We are seeing the high point of the environmental agenda for 1995. This is as good as it gets. We cannot do the *Irving Whale*. We cannot do anything of substance so we will get on the MMT bandwagon.

The conclusion of the article states MMT might be approved in the United States later this year. My hon. colleague from Athabasca mentioned it is now 70 per cent likely that this will occur. The article reads: "Ms. Copps' ban could become a major embarrassment. It will be even more of an embarrassment if she goes down in history as the environment minister who introduced legislation that increased ground level ozone layers".

What is happening here? What is the motivation here? I walked to work this morning with a member from the government side. I mentioned that in opposition certain members seem to rise to a level of rhetorical flights of fancy, kind of a high octane, wild spree. However when they get on the government side they become a tremendous disappointment. They do not seem to have a handle on their portfolio. They do not seem to take initiatives. They do not seem to have the gumption to step forward and be bold in their initiatives. Near as I can tell that is what has happened.

We have had nothing of substance from the environment minister. The few things she has ventured into she has blundered into rather than gone through them on a scientific basis. She seems to be intent on somehow raising her profile, which has been pitifully low. If we waited six months our arguments would be proved out. If not, she could reintroduce it at that time.

I certainly concur with this motion and ask that the government wait six months so that we can have a proper scientific study.

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Kootenay West—Revelstoke for moving the motion to suspend this legislation for six months.

It would be a rather smart move on the government's part to put this bill on the side and allow an independent tester to see if MMT is really hazardous to these onboard diagnostic systems in 1996 automobiles. So far there is no conclusive evidence or data that MMT ruins the idiot lights on the dashboards of cars.

● (1110)

We have debated the bill for some time now. I think the bill was first debated on June 19, 1995. I have heard all the discussion from both sides of the House and we still come to the same conclusion. It is not clear that MMT is hazardous to our health, our air or automobiles.

In the debate last week the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell stated: "The product in question has been known to have effects which are offensive to the health of people". The member presents the broken ideology of the entire Liberal Party: make a statement, substantiated or not, so long as it scares people into thinking it is right. In this case the member was making an inaccurate statement. I guess he has not read his own government's reports and is simply shooting from the hip.

Canadians have a right to hear the truth and have government pronouncements backed up by real data. In the December 6, 1994 Health Canada report "Risk Assessment for the Combustive Products of MMT", all analysis indicate the combustive products of MMT in gasoline do not represent an added health risk to the Canadian population.

The member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell cannot dispute a study of his own government. What the member does not realize is that if MMT were so hazardous to the health of Canadians his colleague, the Minister of the Environment, could have easily added it to the schedule under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. She cannot and so she has gone through the back door only to find a few snags along the way. These snags are raising questions from some within her own party and yet she refuses to listen.

The Minister of Natural Resources has strong reservations which the environment minister is ignoring. Why? The Minister of the Environment is being pressured by auto manufacturers who have told her that if the product is not banned maybe they will close some plants and maybe lay off some workers. Instead of listening to reason, the minister went ahead and proceeded

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with the bill banning the trade of this substance so it would not be uneconomical to use in Canada.

There seems to be considerable concern about what type of replacement for MMT will adequately address the increase in NOx emissions. We know ethanol will not reduce NOx very much. We know MTBE is a very expensive alternative, especially for the refineries.

Another major concern I have heard from those who have an interest in the legislation concerns the main rationale for the bill. What is it? The minister has told us the MVMA has evidence to prove MMT causes failures in its onboard diagnostic systems. However, it has not elected to make that research public in order for third party independent groups to evaluate it.

The minister has stood in the House on several occasions and listed every car manufacturer under the sun and said they have all done studies which prove without a doubt that MMT is hazardous to OBDs. Several members of the Reform Party have asked her for those studies but she refuses to table them in the House.

The minister knows these studies do not exist and she carries on as if they do. What a shame the country has an environment minister who is perhaps full of steam or vapour.

I understand General Motors is currently conducting a testing program to evaluate the effects of MMT on OBD systems. Why is GM initiating a test again when the minister claims it has already done a conclusive test? Clearly there are some inconsistencies. It is time the minister set the record straight.

On several occasions the Minister of the Environment has gone on that the United States has banned MMT since 1978 and that Canada is simply following suit. In 1978 the Environmental Protection Agency did not approve MMT because of its view that it might affect the health of Americans. However, the EPA's research was reviewed by the U.S. court of appeals and based on the findings the EPA was instructed to grant the manufacturers of MMT a waiver which will allow the reintroduction of MMT into the American market.

The minister might have egg on her face if she goes through with the bill at this time while a reversal is being made in the United States. At that time will the minister want to conduct further studies in Canada? She may even ask for an independent test to be done. We have been asking for that. This would not be the first time the minister has completed a 180 degree turnabout.

This past summer off the coast of P.E.I. the government had plans to raise the *Irving Whale* oil barge, sunk for over two decades. Despite the presence of the PCBs on board the vessel the minister went ahead. I questioned the minister in the House on that one and she reassured Canadians that all appropriate testing had been done and that the Canadian Coast Guard was more than prepared to make it a safe lift. The lift did not occur

due to bad weather and was therefore scratched for this year. As a result there was a court that was convinced there had been inadequate study of the considerations of the PCB factor. The result was an injunction against the action of raising the barge. We have now discovered that the minister wants to undergo further testing on the presence of PCBs on board the *Irving Whale*.

• (1115)

I am discussing a pattern of the minister, ministerial responsibility, accountability. First she tells Canadians that everything is a go and there is no hazard at all. Then she says they must do more testing. The minister does not seem to be able to make up her mind. The same is going to happen if the United States lifts the ban on MMT later this year. Will the minister organize independent testing then? Perhaps she will be forced to.

The minister has a chance to save face and vote in favour of the motion that was moved. If she waits for six months she will have the opportunity to see what the U.S. courts will instruct. However, if Bill C-94 passes and the U.S. courts reverse the decision forbidding MMT to be sold again, the minister will have to bring forward another bill that would reverse Bill C-94. This would not only be an added cost to the taxpayer but it would also be a travesty of our parliamentary system.

Does the Minister of the Environment want to really make the taxpayers dig into their pocketbooks just because she is pressured by her political supporters? What about this pressure? The MVMA threatened that if the government does not ban MMT it will void the warranties. In a copy of the fuel section of the owner's manual of for example the 1996 Buick Regal, it bears no mention of a lack of warranty coverage.

General Motors certainly knows how to disclaim warranty responsibility since the 1996 owner's manual contains a disclaimer regarding the use of methanol in the vehicle. The manual goes on to state that the service light on the instrument panel may turn on with the use of certain fuels, not in Canada and the United States, but elsewhere because of a lack of grade of refining. If this occurs the owner should simply contact the retailer for service. What it means is they would want to clean the sensor. This certainly does not disclaim warranty responsibility so those threats that were mentioned in this House do not bear fruit.

If the auto industry has not carried through on its threat to void warranties in instances where MMT is used in gasoline, then why is the government trying to rush this legislation through the House? This bill has been political from the outset. It is the responsibility of the Ministry of the Environment to do what is best for the country and our environment and not what is best politically. The minister is becoming Canada's best non-environmental minister and this in itself is hazardous to the health of Canadians.

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We should reflect on the gamesmanship and the deal making related to this bill. It is becoming another instance where the government's political concerns in its own mistaken view have taken precedence over what is good for the country. This bill has nothing to do with helping the environment. In fact, it is said that the result is equivalent to adding thousands of cars immediately to the exhaust load of the air if this bill is passed. It is not good for Canada that we rush into banning trade in a commodity which could very shortly be used in the United States.

I was sitting here listening to the member for Peterborough who claims that the banning of MMT will save jobs. The MVMA threatened the environment minister to ban MMT or else workers would be laid off. The minister has denied that the MVMA threatened her with this. Now the member across the way has admitted that jobs might be lost, or at least that was the threat anyway and he is peddling this as an argument. We now have an admission that contradicts the minister.

This is all scare tactics and puffery in the absence of scientific evidence. What seems the most appropriate course in this instance is to use our motion, the six month hoist, so that we will have sufficient time to review all the scientific evidence and make a fair and considered evaluation of the rationale for Bill C-94.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Yes.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1120)

And the bells having rung:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a), the division on the question now before the House stands deferred until

5 p.m. this afternoon, at which time the bells to call in the members will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

* * *

[*English*]

OCEANS ACT

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.) moved that Bill C-98, an act respecting the oceans of Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to lead off the second reading debate of the oceans act. We on this side of the House believe that with the introduction of this legislation today we are coming to the successful conclusion of a long and at times dramatic chapter in Canada's maritime history. With this legislation we are at the beginning of a new and even more vital chapter in that history.

The oceans act will define for Canada—and for many Canadians this will come as a surprise—for the first time in legislation, an exclusive economic zone covering almost five million square kilometres of the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic oceans. With the passage of the oceans act, Canada will effectively increase the area over which we in Parliament have jurisdiction by nearly one-half, as the area covered by Canadian law will increase quite dramatically.

Today Canada has the world's largest coastline measuring nearly 244,000 kilometres. Much of it of course is formed by islands in the Pacific, Atlantic and Arctic oceans, as I have said. The Great Lakes coastlines add another 9,500 kilometres.

With the passage of this bill we should think of Canada and the area over which it has jurisdiction as not just encompassing the prairies, not just encompassing the coastline of the great province of British Columbia, our north and northern territories, east and west, the great provinces of Ontario and Quebec, and of course Atlantic Canada including Newfoundland. We need to think as well about that tremendous area covered by Canada's three oceans and notwithstanding recent problems, the tremendous wealth represented by both the living and non-living resources of the oceans.

As Canadians we have worked diligently over many years to stake our claim and to establish our rights to control our ocean areas. With this bill that struggle which has been undertaken by successive generations of Canadians and by successive governments of every political stripe is finally coming to an end.

The oceans act expands our notion of Canada as a country. The oceans management strategy increases the priority that we place as a society upon the wise development of our ocean waters. The bill before Parliament will put in place the means for the government to exercise Canada's new ocean responsibilities.

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The oceans act will give our country the framework for building a new oceans management strategy. Canadians will have to work very hard together to ensure that we achieve the economic opportunities while at the same time sustaining the environment and the living resources of our oceans. Over the years but in particular in the last two years since the election of this government, we have successfully asserted our rights. Now we have to assume our obligations.

• (1125)

Canada's ocean heritage stretches back to the very opening up of our nation. The oceans enabled our ancestors, explorers and pioneers to establish the basis of modern Canada. The roots of Canada lie in aboriginal peoples finding their sustenance in the Arctic ice and waters and the waters off both coasts and the courageous crossings over the Atlantic Ocean by John Cabot in 1497, nearly 500 years ago.

Coming first to the teeming waters off the new found land Cabot encountered not silver, gold, oil, minerals or other kinds of resources that captured his imagination. Rather he encountered teeming waters full of groundfish, a multiplicity of species, all of which gave rise to the drive to colonize, to capture the new found land, the new continent.

Of course Cabot was followed by Cartier in 1534 and Champlain in 1603, together building the new land. For generation upon generation immigrants came to Canada, wave literally upon wave, building this country. With the oceans act today we salute the historic voyages of Cabot, Cartier and Champlain. We continue with confidence their work and their vision when they founded this new land.

Canada's commerce was founded on ocean trading. Ocean transport, communications, fishing, tourism and recreation have helped forge our national identity. The oceans are as much a part of Canada's soul, how we see ourselves, how we define ourselves, as are the Rockies, the prairies and the Canadian shield.

Canadians have always cared deeply and passionately about our oceans. For the past few decades that passion has been directed toward securing international recognition of Canada's jurisdiction over those waters and their resources. Canadians have been of one voice in pushing for strong international binding agreement on ocean management rules. We have been of one mind as a nation when we have had to be in taking direct measures and yes, sometimes bold measures, sometimes unprecedented and unilateral measures to assert jurisdiction to protect our ocean resources and the marine environment upon which they depend.

In 1958 Canada took a leadership position at the first United Nations conference on the oceans. Since 1967, our centennial year,

Canadians have spearheaded discussions which led after many years to a UN convention on the law of the sea.

Of course Canada again was in the forefront over the last several years at the UN convention on highly migratory species and straddling stocks which concluded last August 4 in New York with a new binding convention. Members of this House from all parties participated in that process. Members of this House from all parties worked together united in building and protecting those ocean resources, not only for this generation, not only for Canadians but for citizens of the world.

The kind of influence that we in Canada, a middle power, exercised was only possible because we were able to go to the United Nations and speak with one united voice. We were able to speak with a vision that was greater than the concerns as measured or identified by our own backyards.

• (1130)

That is why we were successful. That is why Canadians in every province today, without exception, can take pride in the work successive governments have done and in the successes we have achieved by working together.

Over the years we have sometimes been confronted with challenges to our jurisdiction and challenges to our determination. Members may recall that in 1969 the U.S. owned *Manhattan* sailed through Canada's Northwest Passage without prior approval from Canada. There was a tremendous public response. That is the polite way of putting it. That response led to speedy passage of the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act.

I recall the minister of the day who had the responsibility of shepherding that act, the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act, was none other than the current Prime Minister of Canada. It was an act by which Canada extended out to 100 miles its jurisdiction, its responsibility, and made clear its authority to manage the important and fragile Arctic waters. It was the present Prime Minister who presented that bill to Parliament. It was a bill that was supported by members on every side of the House.

In 1970 Canada declared a 12-mile nautical territorial sea. On January 1, 1977 we declared a 200-nautical mile fishing zone. I am pleased to note that it was the minister of foreign affairs of the day who had a very large hand in seeing Canada make progress in this regard, the hon. Don Jamieson, member of Parliament for then Burin—St. George's in Newfoundland. He was, I will not say assisted, in full partnership with the current Governor General of Canada, the Hon. Romeo Leblanc, who was then Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. These two gentlemen stood side by side and with the co-operation of all the members of the House and Canadians everywhere claimed Canada's 200-mile fishing zone.

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I should note that it was only last year that members of this place in every party of Parliament—the Conservative Party, the New Democratic Party, the Reform Party, the Bloc Québécois together with the Liberal Party—gave unprecedented and speedy full passage within two sitting days in both Chambers to Bill C-29, an act to amend the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act.

It was that legislation which enabled Canada to take action to protect important fish stocks on the high seas that straddle Canada's 200-mile limit. It was clear that the national interest was at stake. When the needs and the interests of those who live in coastal Canada beyond the reaches of most of us, beyond the experience of most of us, beyond the direct knowledge of most of us, are confronted with the notion that straddling stocks which sustained hundreds of communities for 500 years were being decimated, and we were concerned with flag of convenience vessels, Parliament was able to respond. It was able to rise to the challenge and Canada, because its focus was clear, because its cause was just and because its sense of nationhood was strong, was able to respond. We passed Bill C-29 and we literally moved the flag of convenience vessels off our continental shelf. We protected those resources for Canadians and for the world.

The oceans act is the final major piece of legislation to make all these efforts over so many years by Canada and by Canadians complete and worth while. The act will formally establish Canada's jurisdiction as a coastal state over its ocean areas and over our resources.

The legislation before Parliament is completely compatible with the law of the sea convention and with new global rules on the management of ocean resources and the marine environment.

• (1135)

This bill defines our national maritime zones as consisting of Canada's internal waters, the territorial sea, the contiguous zone, the exclusive economic zone and Canada's continental shelf.

The legislation incorporates all relevant existing law that Canada has, covering our full rights and jurisdiction over internal waters; our fishing zones off the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Arctic, including the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the Bay of Fundy, Queen Charlotte Sound and Dixon Entrance; and our rights with respect to the continental shelf. Canada has rights to living organisms belonging to sedentary species in or on the shelf and jurisdiction over the exploration and exploitation of minerals and non-living resources of the seabed and subsoil.

Last summer, under the provisions of the law of the sea, Canada claimed jurisdiction to manage Icelandic scallops that reside beyond the 200-mile zone and not within it. Some American fishing vessels decided to fish those scallops. Canada asserted clearly, strongly and unequivocally our right under the

appropriate sections of the law of the sea to manage those species. Under the appropriate provisions of the law of the sea sedentary species which extend on the continental shelf are to be managed by the coastal state.

Such a claim has never been made anywhere else in the world before. We made it last summer. It led to a period of disagreement with our good neighbour and friend, the United States. At one point some direct action was taken to stop fishing activity. However some months later there was a recognition by the United States of Canada's jurisdiction over Icelandic scallop, even those scallop residing in waters beyond our own 200-mile limit but on our continental shelf. That was last summer.

This summer we staked a claim to control distant water snow crab on the high seas, beyond our 200-mile limit. No country challenged that claim this year.

For all these questions, the oceans act is a consolidation of current Canadian law. What is so crucial in the bill is the declaration of Canadian jurisdiction over the contiguous zone and the exclusive economic zone. Most Canadians will not be familiar with these technical terms, but many Canadians will have heard the phrases 12-mile zone and 200-mile zone.

Canada's territorial sea extends from our coastline out to 12 nautical miles. In the territorial sea Canada has full jurisdiction to ocean waters, to the seabed beneath those waters and to the airspace above. This is existing law.

The contiguous zone will extend an additional 12 nautical miles from the outer edge of the territorial sea. In this zone Canada will have the power to enforce our fiscal immigration, sanitary and customs laws. The exclusive economic zone, which we are declaring and prescribing for the first time in legislation today, will absorb the 200-mile fishing zone and cover all economic activity in the ocean area out to 200 nautical miles from the coastal baseline. In this zone Canada will have jurisdiction for exploring, exploiting, conserving and managing all the living and non-living resources of the waters, seabed and subsoil.

Canada's jurisdiction in this zone will cover economic activity and will cover marine scientific research, protection and preservation of the marine environment and artificial islands, installations and all structures. The act will grant Canada powers that go well beyond the powers our country has asserted in the past. It puts in place a clear definition of jurisdiction fully supported by existing global agreements.

Canadians should rightfully feel proud and satisfied this day has come. Canadians from every corner of the country and, as I have said, from every political persuasion, from every party and every walk of life, have at one time or another stood together for decade after decade to make this declaration of Canada's oceans jurisdiction a reality.

• (1140)

For all the excellent co-operation that went into establishing oceans jurisdiction, the truth is that Canada's policies for actual management of our ocean areas over the years have been piecemeal, fragmented and scattered on occasion. The same spirit of partnership, co-ordination, co-operation and innovation that enabled Canada to gain authority over ocean resources must now be used to manage the same resources.

The oceans act sets out a basic legislative framework to support a new Canadian oceans management strategy. The act provides the building blocks for integrated management and sustainable development of Canada's ocean resources. The act outlines a new ecosystems based approach to marine resource management. It provides a common focus for federal responsibilities and consolidates federal programs and authorities from as many as 14 different departments under the jurisdiction and administration of one department. It endows Canadians with legislative tools to start working on oceans management holistically rather than sectorally.

The need for sustainable development of resources was made crystal clear in the 1987 report of the World Commission on Environment and Development chaired by Norway's current prime minister, Prime Minister Brundtland.

That same year, in 1987, the previous government, the Conservative government of the day, committed itself to the introduction of an oceans act. Unfortunately that commitment was not translated into action and no legislation was introduced.

The government is acting. Last year the National Advisory Board on Science and Technology in Canada called for an oceans act equipped to address the needs of ocean frontier development for the present and, more important, for the future. The advisory board called Canada's ocean management policies ad hoc and at times haphazard. The board called for Canada to develop a proactive oceans policy that plans for the future rather than responds to the crisis of the day.

As the present Prime Minister said at that time, "far-sighted, prudent management of our oceans will provide us with a powerful tool for long term regional development from coast to coast in Canada".

In November 1994 I released a document setting out the potential elements of an ocean management strategy for Canada. The government then sought advice all across the country, from St. John's to Vancouver, from Inuvik to Quebec City. Certain things emerged early and were clear. The federal government does have a leadership role to play in oceans policy. There should be one federal department taking the lead in developing new strategy. People want to be involved locally in providing solutions to regional priorities. There is a need to sustain resources and to diversify ocean industries.

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All the advice from provinces, municipalities, coastal residents, fishermen, business, labour, environmentalists and scientists was heard loud and clear. The bill now sets out the elements of an oceans policy. However all Canadians must be involved in developing specific mechanisms, planning and management structures, and the guidelines and standards required to bring about sustainable use of oceans and their resources.

In recognition of the need for an integrated approach to oceans management, the government announced the merger of the Canadian Coast Guard with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, which came into effect on April 1, 1995. The new organization will provide for a more co-ordinated approach to policy development and a strengthened operational focus. The new organization will comprise the principal civilian marine operational component of the Government of Canada. It is now constructed and consolidated into one of the largest marine fleets anywhere in the world today. As a consequence, we are able to be more cost effective, more cost efficient, we are able to ensure high national standards from coast to coast and be efficient in the provision of services.

• (1145)

There are new and increasing challenges for boating safety, navigation, infrastructure, and under sea exploration. The Canadian Coast Guard provides, in conjunction with the Department of National Defence, the marine component of the federal search and rescue program, marine aids to navigation, icebreaking services, vessel traffic services, safety communications and the dissemination of information regarding marine weather, ice, and changes to navigational aids.

The coast guard brings much in the addition of programs to the department of fisheries, programs that ensure the safety of human life at sea, the safe and economical movement of ships, and the protection of our marine environment. It makes sense to include these programs with the federal minister responsible for oceans and the protection of the fishery.

Bringing together these two fleets and bringing together these two teams, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the coast guard, also gives us the ability to multi-task ships from both fleets and consolidate them and cross train them to ensure that people who heretofore were doing primarily coast guard duties are also available for enforcement duties on the fisheries side, and vice versa. It also ensures that the helicopters that were flying resupply missions to coast guard stations, to navigational aids, and to coast guard lights are also available for carrying out enforcement activity on behalf of the enforcement branch of DFO.

We will consolidate regional offices, regional directors general, regional strategic locations into one combined, enlarged, and improved location to find efficiency but at the same time sustain a high level of services, which were heretofore divided between two marine based departments. It is a common sense approach to dealing with the problem of the deficit that the government wants to undertake, not the hack and slash and burn advocated

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by some others, who believe that deficit reduction in itself, with no regard to the importance of providing basic services to Canadians, ought to be the goal of governing in the 1990s.

The Canada oceans act will give the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans the legal authority to draw together all of Canada's ocean stakeholders to develop a strategy, as I said, based on sustainable development and integrated management. The act provides the authority to develop the actual mechanisms to implement new strategies. It gives the minister the ability to enter into new partnership arrangements in order to ensure that the oceans management strategy meets real regional needs and fulfils real regional aspirations.

Every Canadian, I suspect without exception, is well aware of the extraordinary environmental stress placed upon our oceans. We all know too well and some of us too painfully about resource depletion, habitat degradation, and marine pollution. We know that if we destroy the ocean environment we cannot meet the social and economic goals of coastal Canadians.

This act therefore provides the authority to create for the first time protected marine areas in order to safeguard ocean biodiversity and to safeguard endangered species. For the first time we have set out a legislative framework to declare certain of our ocean areas protected marine areas.

While it is too early to say that the government has made a decision or I as Minister of Fisheries and Oceans have made a decision with respect to protected marine areas, I am much interested in the possibility of declaring protected zones as a means of ensuring conservation of endangered species. In other words, it is a management tool. If we want to take the precautionary approach in fisheries management, one way to do that is to set aside certain nursery zones, spawning areas, and to hold the areas to be off limits to any fishing activity to ensure that even as we conduct fisheries and even as we harvest what appear to be healthy stocks we give ourselves a measure of insurance by setting aside certain zones. The government will explore that and will seek advice from the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans in the weeks and months ahead.

● (1150)

The act gives the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans the ability to carry out scientific marine research in support of the new strategy. I cannot overemphasize that this act is about building new partnerships among Canadians. That is what we will be seeking with the stakeholders in the oceans community and the scientific community in the weeks and months ahead. Indeed, that is what we are seeking in referring this bill now to the standing committee: advice, comment, questions, and yes,

criticism where appropriate. We want the strongest possible bill that can be provided.

I am counting on the members of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, who have a long and distinguished record, both the current committee and its predecessors, for being the conscience and the voice of the oceans and of the living resources of the oceans, to bring forward a bill that is stronger than the one I put before the House today. I am confident that Chairman MacDonald will do just that.

The bill signals renewed federal leadership by consolidating under one authority the lead responsibility for management of oceans. It signals the federal government's commitment to a comprehensive and co-operative approach to oceans policy. It signals the need for shared information, shared planning, shared management. It signals that Canada and Canadians are prepared to act in making the most of our assets.

The act is the last step toward formal jurisdiction over Canada's oceans territory, but it is the first step—

I will conclude momentarily, Mr. Speaker. I can see you are edging up on your feet with excitement.

The Deputy Speaker: You have approximately eight minutes to speak. I would ask that when you refer to members of the House you refer to them by their riding name rather than by their surnames.

Mr. Tobin: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am fully aware of that rule. It was my desire to reflect the full responsibility and authority of the hon. member for Dartmouth in *Hansard* when it is recorded for purposes of householder mailing to refer to him by name. The Speaker of course would be unfamiliar with such considerations.

We all know that the model of Canada is from sea to sea. The Canada oceans act recognizes that Canadians from one end of the country to the other, in every region and in every province, are owners of our seas. Together Canadians from every part of the country have unbelievable opportunities to gain and to keep sustenance and wealth and pleasure from our oceans. Together Canadians from every part of Canada, from sea to sea to sea, hold those oceans in trust for the future. The Canada oceans act is one key move to exercise that trust that has been bestowed upon us with pride and with care.

In coastal Canada for the last number of years we have suffered tremendously from economic loss, economic dislocation, real human suffering. We can find it in every part of coastal Canada. We can certainly find it along the coastline of Newfoundland, where 300 communities have been displaced from the traditional way of life because of the groundfish failure, where 30,000 people find themselves not hauling up their boats and repairing their gear but are contemplating the end of another year when they have been absent from the sea.

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We can find it in Nova Scotia, in particular the groundfish failure in northern Nova Scotia but also along the south shore as well. We can find it in P.E.I., less so in New Brunswick, certainly in the province of Quebec along the north shore, in the Gaspé and the Îles-de-la-Madeleine, where people have suffered real hardship.

We can find a sense of fear and concern on the coast of British Columbia, a concern that the groundfish failures of the Atlantic not be repeated in the west. There are conflicts between stakeholders about who has access to resources, who ought to have access to resources, and what gear types are most resource friendly. These are ongoing discussions and difficult ones between stakeholders.

• (1155)

Whatever our backgrounds, whatever our political stripe, whatever our ideology, the one thing we all must know in this place—and notwithstanding the public perception that we never agree, we have demonstrated it in the past in this place—is that we understand the tremendous importance and value of the oceans heritage. We can and we must. I call on colleagues again to work together to expand and protect and ensure that oceans heritage.

As I am fond of frequently saying, as I think it is a wonderful piece of advice for all of us, may we be guided by the words of the Haida people, who say that we do not inherit the land or the sea from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé, BQ): Admittedly, it has been a while, Mr. Speaker, since we had the opportunity to debate a fisheries bill in this House. I can remember the House having to debate such legislation very soon after Parliament reconvened in 1993, even though we started in 1994 and had been elected in 1993. This morning, I would like to say from the outset that this is a sad day for myself, as a parliamentarian, for two reasons.

First, contrary to what had been the case with the two previous bills presented by the Liberal government, this time, we did not have the chance to familiarize ourselves with the legislation and prepare to provide proper explanations to our constituents. Let me explain.

This bill was introduced for first reading approximately three months ago, on June 14. During all that time, I tried to know more about the bill. I also spoke with the chairman of the fisheries committee, the hon. member for Dartmouth. I hope he can be recognized later, but the fact of the matter is that we do not have all the information. We asked senior officials of the department for information. We made all kinds of inquiries, had several briefing sessions, but never got the answers we were looking for. These could have been included in a precis, the purpose of which, and I will refer to my notes so that I do not mislead anyone, is to identify the scope of each clause of a bill.

My point is that the fisheries department, and hopefully not the minister himself, did not make the task any easier for us parliamentarians.

Bill C-98 covers many other existing acts of Parliament. This is why I wanted to know the origin of each of these acts and see how they complement each other. I also wanted to be able to measure the scope of each of the clauses. In that sense, it is a sad day for me.

The other reason why it is a sad day has to do with the fact that we often ask questions in this House but seldom get answers. This is the first time, since the last meeting of fisheries ministers in Victoria last fall, that the department has given us an indication of where it is headed. From what I understand, since the department's officials did not provide us with a precis, this new bill provides that the provinces will be consulted like any other legal person interested in the issue. Already, this is something that I have trouble with. Quebec attended that conference on fisheries management, but so did British Columbia, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick.

• (1200)

Some of these provinces had stated their needs, as well as their willingness to share with Ottawa the responsibility for fisheries management.

However, this morning, we see that at the first opportunity the provinces have to give an idea of where they are headed, the whole issue is downplayed. I do not oppose regional meetings and decentralization, but the importance of the provinces should not be overlooked. Moreover, there is no indication of any hierarchy in terms of the consultations and that also makes me sad.

The House is a place where we can express our views. I want to take this opportunity to say that even though some provinces may be prepared to give more power to Ottawa—and I cannot keep these provinces from doing so—we should take into consideration those provinces which are willing to play an active role in the management of fisheries. However, the bill does not appear to do that.

This was my introduction. I will now discuss the content of the legislation for the benefit of the members who did not have time to read it, as well as for your benefit, Mr. Speaker, and that of the public watching us on television. The bill contains three parts, as the minister pointed out, but I will summarize them a little faster.

The first part seeks to recognize, in the law of the land, Canada's jurisdiction over its ocean areas. There is a reference to Canada's role in the drafting of the Convention on the Law of the Sea, which came into effect in 1982. It is now 1995. They have taken 13 years. Now they are asking us to take less than three months to understand it all, to assimilate it all, while

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refusing to give us the texts setting out the scope of the bill. This concerns Part I of the bill.

Part II deals with defining the legislative framework necessary for establishing a national oceans management strategy. I will say no more about defining the legislative framework just now, but will come back to it later. Part III addresses clarification of federal responsibilities with respect to oceans management.

I would like to touch upon these three points briefly. I have attempted to take notes of what the minister said, thinking this would help me in constructing my own address as well. But let me start by commenting on how the minister has been able to use this bill to do a great deal of flag waving. He is entitled to do so, except that in my opinion Part I of the bill which gave him such a chance to wax patriotic could, according to what I hear from some public servants, have been handled by the governor in council alone, in other words the cabinet, with ratification of the Convention on the Law of the Sea. Or, to put it more clearly, there was no need to bother the House, no need of a statute for it to be adopted.

And that from my understanding of his words is where he has placed the most emphasis in his speech. So you will understand my amazement.

Part II concerns the legislative framework. What is the framework he presents? My initial conclusion is that what is being addressed here is facilitating implementation of this integrated oceans management.

• (1205)

Reference is made to facilitating contacts between federal ministers and other concerned parties. Does it take a statute of Parliament in Ottawa to encourage federal ministers to talk to each other? Perhaps encouraging ministers to communicate with each other ought to have been put into the Constitution right at the start. An act to encourage communication. Again, Mr. Speaker, pardon my amazement.

A little further on I do see how this legislative framework operates, but it still strikes me as poorly defined. Poorly defined in that the federal responsibilities with respect to oceans management as they are set out still strike me as fuzzy, but the relationships between the ministers also strike me as fuzzy, very very fuzzy.

At the briefing sessions I was told that as many as 14 departments could be involved. Upon reading the bill, we see four or five departments referred to by name. The Department of Foreign Affairs will be responsible for approving the zones. Oddly enough, when the bill refers to sustainable management and the quality of the environment, we see that the minister will be able to set standards. However, unlike certain cases when the Attorney General of Canada is asked to issue a certificate, the minister would not be required to seek the permission of the Deputy Prime Minister who is also the Minister of the Environ-

ment. However, that is a matter on which the hon. member for Laurentides will expand later on.

As far as I am concerned, I find it rather confusing, and I have the impression it will take more than one bill. The Prime Minister will have to attend quite a few of these meetings to be sure that all ministers are present and are willing to take part in the sessions the fisheries minister will have to set up to implement his management strategy.

Imagine how the bureaucrats and the ministers will react when they have to do it all over again together. I think the sequence is all wrong. I said earlier there were three parts to this bill. They could have set up the first part with cabinet. As for part two, the management strategy, they could have provided a better framework. As well, before second reading they could have asked us to work on the bill in the fisheries committee. It is really too bad that such a poor job was done, according to some bureaucrats and some members opposite, Liberal members. We will not name them because solidarity bids me to respect their silence. They will speak for themselves. However, the confusion this morning could have been avoided.

We could have avoided the sniping that went on earlier, and we could have avoided the partisan remarks. In any case, I will try to be objective to the very end, but I have a feeling that some members have already been given notes for their speeches and will have to read what the party asks them to say, not what they feel like saying or have already said. In clear terms, from what I understand, the minister is not proposing a specific strategy, but merely a duplication of powers.

• (1210)

The minister could have tabled a specific strategy that recognized the respective roles of other federal ministers and the provinces. Once approved, the strategy could have been supported by a bill. There was nothing to prevent the minister, at that point, from calling a meeting with his federal and provincial colleagues to define the strategy. But no, the minister preferred to give himself new powers and, as I said earlier, to put his colleague, the environment minister, before a fait accompli and leave the provinces out of the debate altogether.

As I said earlier, the Bloc Québécois co-operated with the government at the beginning of its mandate on Bill C-29, the legislation to protect straddling stocks. I think that in this case we showed our good faith, we showed we were not influenced by partisan considerations nor by our cherished goal.

An hon. member: Separation.

Mr. Bernier (Gaspé): Some call it that, but I have always said sovereignty. When you say in Bill C-98 that its purpose is to strengthen—

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order, please. I may remind the House that comments should be made through the Chair, not directly from member to member across the House.

Mr. Bernier (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, minor disturbances occur from time to time, but as I was saying—I have lost the gist—I was saying that one of Canada's prime objectives in connection with Bill C-98 is to reaffirm its sovereignty over its coastal waters.

One of my colleagues whispered to me that one project dear to my heart was separation. How is it that, when Canadians are talking about affirming their identity, they talk about sovereignty and, when Quebecers talk about wanting to be sovereign, Canadians call it separation?

Nowhere have I seen reference by international journalists or in the international press to Canada's wanting to separate from the rest of the world with the announcement of Bill C-98. It just wants to assert its sovereignty.

I hope my little digression will help some people to understand and to use the proper terminology in the future.

I would also like to add, before getting into this small digression, that the Bloc Québécois took part in Bill C-29. We knew it would be difficult. We knew that our plan to protect fish stocks in overlapping zones outside our territorial waters had no basis whatsoever in international law. However, I should add that no point of law prevented us from taking the action we unanimously authorized the Canadian government to take, here in this House.

What I want to say is that common sense prevails, always. When we appeal to people's common sense, when we take the time to explain things to them, they understand. When we do not take the time, we keep going round in circles. This is what has been happening in the constitutional context for the past thirty years; we have not taken the time to properly explain to people, and we are going round in circles.

In terms of the bill before us this morning, we could have avoided going round in circles, but we did not take the time to properly explain. Had that been done, we in the opposition would have worked with the government members opposite and talked about our suggestions for part I and whether fundamental principles could be respected and an order of consultation established in connection with part II—that sort of thing. We would have saved a lot of time and a lot of taxpayers' money, and the problem would be solved. At least we would have a timetable that would allow us to say we would progress.

• (1215)

At this point, we do not have anything. I am saying right off the bat that if the government ever uses its majority without taking into account the comments made by members who disagree with it, we will always have problems with this bill. If I understand correctly, the minister of fisheries sees this bill as

the way to correct the management errors we made in the past. We should, however, ensure that everybody understands and that the solution is appropriate to the problem. We must first agree on the definition of the problem before trying to define solutions.

All this to say—I am not such a bad guy after all—that I agree with the minister of fisheries that many things in Canada are scattered. I, too, recognize that this management is a little chaotic. I may not be using the same words as the minister but I think the same thing.

In this regard, I could agree to go back and sit with the people on the fisheries committee and work on what could be called an integrated ocean management system. For the people listening to us, integrated management system does not necessarily mean that everything should be centralized. We should first of all ensure that the right hand knows what the left hand will be doing.

At this time, when we are still at the starting gate, I am not sure that the other members of the cabinet are aware of the full import of this bill, but there is one thing I would like to know. If it is supposed to make things easier, I would like the minister of fisheries to show us that he is on top of this by inviting the 14 other ministers concerned by this bill to come and tell us how they see their participation in this proposed management committee, how all this will come together, so that we can see and feel it in front of us. But I have yet to hear the other ministers.

This sums up my position this morning. I could perhaps close with a brief summary of what I said and I will then have a motion to table. In short, this is the position of the Bloc Québécois. Part I of the bill defines in the laws of this country Canada's jurisdiction over its ocean areas. It is certainly important to recognize one's sovereignty. However, I am not sure that we needed a federal act to do that. Indeed, we were once told by the ambassador representing Canada during the negotiations on the convention that such recognition could be made by cabinet.

As far as I am concerned, Part II is only window dressing. The bill does not meet its objectives. The required legislative framework for the implementation of a national strategy is ill-defined and federal responsibilities regarding the management of oceans are vague. What is even worse is that the bill disregards the provinces' jurisdiction, including in the environment sector—as the hon. member for Laurentides will explain later on—and defines provincial ministers as mere associates on the same level as any other person, whether in the private or the public sector, interested in the issue.

This bill could therefore generate disputes. This is unacceptable, in our view. Consequently, we oppose the legislation. We feel it is necessary to clearly define a strategy for the management of oceans, but that strategy must be efficient and not lead to conflicts.

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• (1220)

In that regard, the minister must go back to the drawing board and come up with a strategy that will clearly define the responsibilities of each one involved in the process, without creating any new overlap between federal and provincial departments.

On that note, I would like to table a motion—although I do not know if I can do so at this stage—which could read as follows. I move, seconded by the hon. member for Laurentides, that the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word “That” and substituting the following therefor:

“Bill C-98, an Act respecting the oceans of Canada, be not now read a second time, but that the order be revoked, the bill withdrawn and the subject matter referred to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans”.

In so doing, we would create a climate which would ensure the implementation of an ocean management strategy much more quickly, efficiently and constructively, with the participation of parliamentarians. That would also result in significant savings.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore table my motion.

I note that there is still some time left but as I have already stated I would not wish to drag things out in my concern to save the taxpayers' money, and to launch into patriotic speeches as well, a move which I expect would offend some of those present in the House this morning because any flag waving I would do would not necessarily involve the flag of Canada.

Not that I have anything against Canadians, but my objections are instead against the federal system as it exists at present and as it is administered at present. The bill tabled this morning is to my mind a perfect illustration of the fact that no effort is being made to seek agreement among ourselves. The minister makes a decision. Perhaps an ill-advised one. I am, after all, prepared to attribute good intentions to him from time to time. But the minister heads in a certain direction, deliberately closing his eyes and ears to everything around him, probably even within his own caucus.

On these grounds therefore I invite the minister to withdraw the bill, to provide an opportunity for us to develop a strategy at last, but a strategy that must be created in an atmosphere of mutual trust. If we cannot manage to do so I feel Quebecers will understand that if, every time we take the floor to try to get our point of view across to the others, theirs is the one that wins out it would not be surprising if at some point when nothing can be changed from within it becomes necessary for us to break out of this federal morass.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): My colleagues, the amendment by the hon. member for Gaspé is in order.

[English]

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C-98 today. Some of the things in the bill bring back a lot of memories from watching politics over the years as to whether the bill will be a success or failure in future years. One never knows but I trust the minister is going in the right direction on the issue. We will speak to a few things on that in a moment. I want to talk about the minister's introductory comments on the bill in general. I want to spend some time on the fees issue which he seemed to disregard in this comments.

• (1225)

First there is something amiss about planning in the department of fisheries over the last two decades particularly. I can recall about a year and a half ago talking to the previous deputy minister of that department. It took me so long to get out of this fellow exactly how many years the department of fisheries undertakes its strategic planning activities. He really did not want to answer but I badgered him until he did. The answer was three years of strategic planning within that department.

The reason I was asking that question was that if there is a three-year planning cycle in the department of fisheries why then did the previous Conservative government come out with a five-year moratorium plan in fisheries and this current government came out with the five-year TAGS plan?

First of all if there is a three-year strategic planning session, it is beyond me how the department can come out with a five-year plan not really knowing what the end results will be. It seems to me the reason the five-year plan came out was it had a lot to do with when the next election was and a lot less to do with the planning, the conservation value and quantities of fish. That is truly unfortunate.

This government, as was the previous government, is intent on passing money out to unemployed fishermen. That is a subject of discussion in itself, whether it is good or bad or how indeed it is going to deal with the conservation of fish. One thing in Bill C-98 that I heard here this morning is the area set aside for conservation. I think it is good but there is a non-commitment in that aspect of it which I shall address very shortly.

We have a department with three-year plans. The minister would be well advised to have that department look at longer term plans as they do in certain forest industries. The business cycle in some forest industries is as long as the life of a tree, from start to productive cutting. Perhaps the length of planning in the depart-

ment of fisheries should relate to the cycle of the fish. It would not be a bad idea.

I want to mention some of the comments from the separatist member who talked about some convoluted exercise. He mixed it in somehow with the fact that the minister wants to create a certain amount of sovereignty over our waters. He has it mixed up a bit as to what is right and what is wrong about sovereignty in this country.

The very fact that the government is trying to make the waters surrounding our country a part of our sovereign nation is certainly not only for Newfoundland, British Columbia or P.E.I.; it is for all provinces, including Quebec. Why the member would have a disagreement with that just baffles me.

As much as the government may complain about comments from the separatists, as a member of the parliamentary committee on fisheries I find it hard to understand how government members can unanimously endorse that committee's vice-chairman from the Bloc. On the one hand they complain about the comments about sovereignty and so on but on the other hand they allow that to happen. Do the Bloc members actually represent interests of Newfoundlanders, people in P.E.I., people in British Columbia? I have not heard it in this House if that is the case. What is the mind set for that kind of move? I suspect it is appeasement, once again, and that is unfortunate.

• (1230)

The minister talked about the pride we have in our forefathers, the founders of the nation, people like John Cabot who at times had difficulty steering through the waters off the Grand Banks because of the amount of cod. I wonder what John Cabot would say today after 20 to 30 years of government bungling. He would have probably said: "It is a darn good thing we do not have government or an overbureaucratic organization. At least I was allowed over here. There are lots of fish, but what have you people done?" The question on the minds of most Canadians today is: What have politicians done to the fishery?

I am aware that something like 14 formal reports have gone through the House of Commons on the east coast fishery, most of which were ignored. What do we have today? I have family members on TAGS and they are not proud of it. Their boats are sitting on the slip, never to go back in the water again. They are wishing for work. They are hoping some day that there may be work in the fishery. However it does not look good.

Canadians are wondering what we allow government to present in the House of Commons. How bad will this hurt them? There are so many unknowns and so many people out there saying they have been hurt time and time again and asking if this will help that one never knows.

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The minister talked about several happenings in the recent affairs of fisheries. In 1958, 1967 and 1993 there were UN conventions. There was a new binding convention to protect ocean resources. I wish just for once the government would stop talking and start doing. I cannot blame the minister. He has to try to improve operations and bring in organizations, but there is no confidence left that good will come of the legislation.

The bill will formally assert Canada's jurisdiction over its coastal waters. However there was no mention about the nose and the tail of the Grand Banks with respect to fish.

Mr. Tobin: It is called the continental shelf.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): The minister tells me now that it is in there. From what we can determine those two areas are not included. The area specified is the 200-mile nautical limit. If they are in there they should be very carefully specified because those two areas, as he knows, are outside the nautical limit. If the committee purports to amend things in favour of government legislation it should carefully take note and carefully include the nose and the tail of the Grand Banks. Let us not make it as nebulous as these things usually are.

Apparently there is a consolidation of 14 programs as a result of the bill, but a bureaucracy still exists in the department and the minister well knows it. For a department to lose so many clients, if fishermen can be considered clients of the department, I am at a loss why there is not a proportionate decrease in staff directly related to that loss. That is not the case. We lose the fishermen from the system but we do not lose the bureaucrats.

• (1235)

By the way, I talked with the deputy minister at one point. He is no longer the deputy minister and that is not a bad thing either, but the results of the discussion are still the same. I asked how many people in Ottawa, for instance, had been directly related to the fishing industries on the east or west coasts. I had difficulty getting that answer too but finally the answer, if we check the record of that committee meeting, was negligible.

If that were the case, the minister would be well advised to look at the potential. If he wants gainful employment for those who have been put out of work and gainful retraining, he should start replacing the employees of DFO with those directly affected by the mismanagement of the department in the first place. It would go a long way to responding to some of their needs rather than sitting at home in their chairs waiting for the fish to come back.

The minister stated that the act planned for the future rather than responded to the crisis of the day. This may be the first time in recent history that any government actually planned for the future rather than responded to the crisis of the day. I only have to refer the House to the moratorium in TAGS, an absolutely disastrous program. If the government wants to plan for the future, it should start listening to the people who are involved.

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That we know, from British Columbia's point of view, is really not the case.

It is not a bad idea to merge the coast guard with the DFO. That was done in April. However, I caught the comments of the minister that are not bound in legislation. The minister said that we would cross train and consolidate the coast guard, that we would consolidate offices, duties and so on.

I do not know if the coast guard knows about it yet, but I am sure those offices are now wondering what the government is up to. It talks about planning. It should not make announcements in the House that it is to start a consolidation program, that it will move them here and there. There are people involved in the exercise. The minister would be well advised to get some advice first and plan the exercise rather than make a people kind of announcement in the House.

The minister commented on the operation of the parliamentary committee on fisheries and the job of the chairman. Thus far the government's committee has basically done a tremendous job. It met and put a separatist as vice-chairman who does not really represent any of the exercise. Perhaps it is part of the Quebec border. That is the exercise of the government thus far. The chairman of the committee has a bigger job. He should go back to the minister and ask: "Why don't you plan this exercise a bit better?"

No mention has been made of fees. I am sure the minister knows how contentious this exercise is. Sections 49, 50, 51 and 52 indicate that the minister may fix fees for service. I have trouble with government fee for service exercises when Canadian taxpayers are paying for government service as it is. They will end up paying for a service that is supposed to be provided twice: once through taxes and once through a fee for service. It is typical of governments at all levels today to say that they are providing us with a service but if they provide it they will charge a fee. That is what taxes were supposed to be for.

For the information of the minister, a fee, a licence or a permit is a tax. The people involved in the fishing industry do not see a fee, a licence and a permit as just more dollars out of their pockets. They see it as more taxation and more costs. They wonder what it will be spent on. It goes into general revenue. Do we get it back? For the minister's information I have some quotes from fishing organizations that he would be interested in.

• (1240)

It gets back to the philosophy of the government. It does not understand that we have a spending problem and not a revenue problem. Successive governments over the last 20 years have been overspending, overspending and overspending. What is their answer? Rather than find ways to cut back they go back to

people like fishermen and say they need more money off their backs. That is the Liberal way.

What kind of fees are involved? They say the overall average increase in the fees across the board is approximately 400 per cent. I would like to see how the chairman of the committee will get around that when we talk about it. Congratulations to the Liberals; they will ding fishermen across the board 400 per cent in fees. They say the \$30 lobster licence will be \$310. That ought to please the fellows who are trying to eke out a living.

The government currently gets approximately \$13 million from licence fees, and that is going to \$63 million. Is there not a way to look at some efficiencies within DFO to get \$50 million rather than license or tax fishermen? Is there not a way? Have they looked at that? It is another job for the chairman of the committee that we will be asking about.

When will it happen? The minister says the government will decide on that by the end of September. That is pretty soon. Fishermen can take note that they will get notice of when fees, licences and permits, these taxes, will be increased.

I am surprised on such a big issue that the minister stood for 40 minutes and told us about John Cabot. That was interesting but the people out there are really asking who is getting taxed, how much and when.

What is it for? The minister says they are progressive fees, progressive taxes; that is the larger the catch, the larger the percentage increase. They are based on the ability to pay. That is fair ball, I suppose. They apply to commercial fisheries on both coasts. The government presumes once again that if there is any possible way to tax them it will do it. It does not look at perhaps not spending money here or there.

We only have to look at the minister's own example that he set for his office furnishings, which we complained about in the House. We only have to look at some of his expenditures, like advertising in New York City when he was promoting himself. I wonder where these folks are coming from.

Why do they want to increase fees? Let us see what they say. The Liberals want an additional \$50 million on top of the \$200 million in current cuts. They say they can get away with cutting \$200 million and then go back to the people they will tax and say: "Look, we cut \$200 million; you can pay \$50 million". Why can they not look for \$250 million in cuts? It is there. Starting from the top it is there.

DFO's budget will apparently be decreased to \$500 million from \$700 million.

• (1245)

I wonder if there is not more. Where is it? We only have to ask the fishermen. They had all kinds of suggestions about where to cut when I sat down with them. The one thing common with the east and west coast fishermen is that they are not asked. They get

the fees, the licences, the permit costs and the taxes but they are not asked where the cuts can come from. Does this sound like the Liberal government? You bet it does.

I talked to employees of DFO who said there are two reasons behind these fee increases. They want more money and they want to reduce the number of fishermen. I said: "If those are your reasons do you have any other alternatives? Is there something you can do other than increase taxes to the fishermen?" I suggested two things which I will suggest here. The answer was they did not think of that. There is a priceless answer. That is a pun to the minister.

What is the impact of these fees? The fees must be paid up front with no instalments. There will be a graduated fee structure. If we have landings of \$25,000 worth of catch, the fee is approximately 3 per cent. If we have landings of over \$100,000 the fee is approximately 5 per cent, and on it goes. It sounds like the tax structure we are working on today. It is similar to the tax structure we are working on today, therefore it is a tax.

What does the P.E.I. fishermen's association say about it? The money is simply a form of hidden taxation. That is felt right across the country: "It will not even be funnelled back into the fishery but will go into a consolidated revenue fund or general pot that they will blow away". That is the feeling out there.

Can we take money as was done in the case of British Columbia's forestry? Part of the fees from licences and permits goes toward silviculture. If the government has to take money could it not possibly think to put it back into rejuvenating fishing stock?

The government is looking at more fees for service from coast guard services which now comes under DFO, and for scientific investigations. One has to wonder what the methodology is here. This will be another cash cow like most things the government is involved with. It cannot deal with the fact that it is overspending. All it can deal with is it does not have enough revenue, and that is wrong.

There are some alternatives we could provide. DFO should be managed by fishermen and their dependents, the people in the indirect fisheries. Start moving them in, start training them. Get them involved in DFO in Ottawa, on inland waters, on both coasts.

● (1250)

If they get a piece of that administrative action maybe they will influence ministers to help the industry. Right now there is not that interlocking or interfacing. There is the DFO and a number of fishermen, a resource, a tax resource, which is the way they look at it. Therefore why not have the fishermen manage the resource by getting them involved?

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If there are problems within the industry many come from UI regulations. Fishermen will tell us that. They understand that. Let us look at UI regulations. We do not have to license the fishing industry again.

There has been much talk about what happens to Newfoundland fishermen and what they do for a future. Many of them suggest the minister might want to look at inshore fishing again on handlining and getting perhaps some of the people in the villages along the shores active again in handlining and reduce the number of larger ships. They talk about that a lot. Whether it can be done, I do not know. Really all they want is to get out, get their lines in and get at it.

If we look at the number of people who could possibly be employed around the villages as opposed to the number of people employed on the larger ships there is a drastic difference. Since fish plants have been shut down on the coast perhaps there could be regional plants. Perhaps the fish caught by handlining could go to regional plants and then to larger plants. That is a possibility but I do not know if it has been looked at.

We are looking at a flat tax system but the tax system has to take into account that there have to be fewer exemptions. Perhaps if the government looked at the tax system and UI system it could come up with better alternatives than to strike larger fees and licences.

The government has to look again at reducing costs. We know the costs are high there and the government knows it. I do not think its mandarins are willing to let it have much more money. I guess the government has to learn to be a little tougher in dealing with the bureaucracy. As the Liberals are listening and whining about what I am saying, there are a lot of senior bureaucrats in that department. There are a lot of expenses. We do get letters outlining where things should be cut. The fishermen tell us and so the minister should look at it.

In the final analysis we have to look at where the Liberals are coming from on bills such as this. Although I compliment the minister on some of the issues within the bill, particularly the conservation areas, I continue to worry about traditional governments. We have thrown out that other party and the country brought in this party. They are traditional parties intent on looking at balancing books by way of taxing more as opposed to cost cutting. They are intent on perpetuating programs like the Conservative program on the moratorium and the TAGS program which was Liberal.

We are looking at a government truly looking backwards to a future. If anything I sincerely wish this committee well because we will be spending a lot of time on this committee. We will be asking a lot of questions of this minister. We sincerely hope he keeps the interests of the fishermen in mind, not the interests of the bureaucrats in Ottawa.

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• (1255)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): We now enter the next stage of debate on second reading of Bill C-98. Members will have up to 20 minutes for their interventions, subject to 10 minutes of questions and comments.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Fernand Robichaud (Secretary of State (Agriculture and Agri-Food, Fisheries and Oceans), Lib.): It goes without saying, Mr. Speaker, that I am delighted to have the opportunity to take part in this debate on the Canada Oceans Act. To address immediately the remarks made by my colleague from the Reform Party, I can assure you that both the minister and the department have the best interests of fishermen and the fisheries community at heart. They have always had and will always do.

This legislation is divided in three very straightforward parts. The first part defines Canada's maritime zones. The second part provides legislative authority to foster a new, wider, forward-looking and more inclusive strategy for Canada's oceans and their resources.

Part III of the bill authorizes a modern departmental mandate—including the merger of the Canadian Coast Guard with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans—as a vital means of carrying through on the Government of Canada's ocean responsibilities.

Each of the three parts of the bill contains three key structural elements. In each part, there are regulatory measures, enforcement measures and operational measures.

And, the legislation has three key objectives. First, the Canada Oceans Act will stake out Canada's clear legal jurisdiction over our oceans. Second, the Canada Oceans Act will put in place the legal framework required to support a new oceans management strategy based on the principles of sustainable development and integrated management. Finally, this act will consolidate and clarify federal responsibilities for managing Canada's oceans.

There are three very simple themes that run throughout the legislation: cooperation, coordination and, of course, broad-based community input. And at the very centre of this bill is the determination of the federal government to lead in a positive, thoughtful direction in promoting the economic and environmental potential of the waters in our three great ocean areas—the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Arctic.

Quite simply, this bill seeks to seize the present in order to build upon the achievements of yesterday so that we are prepared for the possibilities of tomorrow.

This summer, the National Advisory Board on Science and Technology issued its major report on Canada's future entitled "Healthy, Wealthy and Wise". The Board wrote that "Sustainabil-

ity and stewardship must become that watchwords for economic development."

The Board called for integrated strategies that "encourage the environmentally responsible exploitation of resources, consistent with long-term sustainability". That is the very point made by the World Commission on Environment and Development in its United Nations Report eight years ago. That is the very point made at the famous Rio Summit. That is the point made by Canada in our fisheries disputes and negotiations.

• (1300)

That is also the point made in the election Red Book, when we stated that "Integrating economic with environmental goals fits in the Liberal tradition of social investment as sound economic policy".

Of course, Canada's oceans belong to all Canadians and it is up to all Canadians to pull as one to integrate the economic and environmental viability of our oceans. For many, many years, we have come to see the need for a comprehensive and integrated oceans policy. With the introduction of new ocean jurisdiction for Canada, that need becomes greater than ever. And the bill before us will indeed dramatically extend Canada's ocean jurisdiction and rights.

This bill expands Canadian control over nearly five million square kilometres of ocean under Canadian jurisdiction. That's an incredible amount of ocean offering Canadians fantastic potential for new economic development. It is also an incredible amount of responsibility requiring us to get our act together on ocean policy.

The bill clearly defines Canada's maritime zones and Canada's rights and jurisdiction in each of those zones. It incorporates Canada's full jurisdiction over our internal waters and over the territorial sea stretching twelve nautical miles out from our Arctic, Pacific and Atlantic coasts. The bill incorporates Canada's jurisdiction over the continental shelf. I would like to point out that the hon. member of the Reform Party who spoke earlier indicated that, as far as he could see, the nose and tail of the Grand Banks did not seem to be included. This is where Canada's jurisdiction over this zone is asserted by affirming our jurisdiction over the continental shelf.

The bill states the right of Canadians to control exploration and exploitation of minerals and resources of the continental shelf's seabed and in its subsoil. It also confirms full rights for Canada over the shelf's living organisms belonging to sedentary species. This legislation also incorporates Canada's jurisdiction over its fishing zones in the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic including the Bay of Fundy, near my riding, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, also near my riding, and Queen Charlotte Sound. We first declared those zones to be ours 18 years ago—and they will always be part of Canada's ocean rights.

The Canada Oceans Act will also give Canada a new contiguous zone. In this zone, Canadian immigration laws, customs laws, health laws and fiscal laws will apply. Most importantly of all, the Canada Oceans Act will declare an exclusive economic zone for Canada stretching our 200 nautical miles from our coastline. To understand how significant that is, members of Parliament need only remember that Canada has the world's longest coastline.

In this new exclusive economic zone, Canada will have full rights over the exploration, exploitation, conservation and management of the resources of the ocean waters, the ocean floor and the ocean subsoil. Canadians will have jurisdiction over marine research and the preservation and protection of the marine environment.

• (1305)

Once this bill becomes law, as I fully hope it will, we will have established in Canadian law that Canada has grown in size and jurisdiction. Canadians will become responsible for more than the care of our ten provinces and two territories. We will become the custodians of a large part of the world's ocean treasures.

Canadians have fought with diligence to establish the principle of global fisheries conservation. We have taken some licks along the way but, thanks to the leadership of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, we have come out a winner. We now have the duty to turn our same principles into action over all the oceans resources that are coming into Canadian jurisdiction.

Naturally, we will need strong leadership by the federal government. We will need strong leadership from coastal provinces and municipalities. We will need complete involvement of all sectors of ocean stakeholders.

The problem and the possibilities are complex, so much so that Canadians must work together to solve them. The interrelationships of ocean species is so complex that we need to pull together to understand them. The current and potential uses of our oceans are so numerous that we need to guarantee that we work together to make the most of them.

Our individual and collective actions as human beings have important impacts upon the well-being and potential prosperity of the ocean environment. That is why the Canada Oceans Act calls for an ocean strategy founded on the twin principles of sustainable development and integrated management.

The concept of sustainable development is a not a new one but it meets a need Canadians understand very well. Canadians know that we need an oceans policy that embraces sustainable development as one of its guiding principles. The concept of integrated management of ocean resources is a new one but it too meets a need that Canadians understand well.

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We know what it means when government policies are confusing or contradictory. We know the opportunities that are lost when the private sector and governments and labour and local communities fail to pursue shared goals. Canadians know that we need an oceans policy that embraces integrated management as one of its guiding principles.

It is time to start coordinating, consolidating and harmonizing our oceans strategy. It is time to develop a common focus and plan of action to promote the quality, abundance and diversity of ocean resources. It is time to set some goals for ourselves and to set some limits on ourselves.

Global environmental concerns should lead us to act. The oceans' economic potential obliges us to act. Canada's new ocean jurisdiction compels us to act. The bill before Parliament gives us the legislative tools to act.

The Canada Oceans Act will establish a clearly identifiable lead federal department accountable for oceans management. The legislation extends Canada's environmental laws to our new ocean areas. The bill will permit the establishment of marine protected areas and the development of marine environmental quality guidelines. These are essential tools if we are to adopt the principles of integrated management and sustainable development in our stewardship of Canada's ocean waters.

• (1310)

The Canada Oceans Act will give the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans formal authority to enter into new partnership agreements in order to pursue Canada's oceans management strategy. That is an essential tool if we are to face the problems and find the solutions together. That is an essential tool if we are to set a national strategy with full local input from coastal provinces and citizens. That is an essential tool if we are to respect the specific priorities of those who live along the coasts of our three vastly different oceans.

This legislation follows through on the government's budgetary promise to "strengthen Canada's capabilities and effectiveness in oceans policy-making". This legislation will set the stage for developing an oceans management strategy that conserves and protects the ocean environment and the ecosystems and resources that our oceans contain.

The bill demonstrates that the federal government will play its full role in managing ocean resources on an economically viable and technologically sustainable basis.

And the legislation demonstrates that the federal government wants more than a one person show. The bill permits an upsurge in the sharing of scientific, environmental and management information relating to our oceans. The bill before Parliament emphasizes the need for an integrated federal approach to ocean management, a need recognized in part through the merger of

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the Canadian Coast Guard and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in April.

The new structure will provide stronger coordination of policy development and stronger, streamlined operations. The coast guard will form the primary civilian marine component of the federal government.

By the way, on the subject of oceans management, on all of the important matters required to build a comprehensive oceans management strategy, the federal government is determined to show a spirit of partnership. Marine safety. Oceans understanding and knowledge. Marine Resources Management. Environmental Management. Economic Development. International Leadership. They are all components of an ocean strategy based on an integrated management approach. They are all components of a strategy based on a sustainable development approach. They are all part of the strategy that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans invites all Canadians to help create.

The first action required to build a future of maritime greatness for Canada is to declare jurisdiction over our ocean areas. Through this legislation, that is what Parliament will do.

The second action required to build a future of maritime greatness for Canada is to show strong federal leadership in establishing the framework for a new oceans management strategy. Through this legislation, that is what Parliament will do.

• (1315)

The third action required to build a future of maritime greatness for Canada is for all of us, from every sector and every corner of the country, to create a new oceans management strategy together. Through this legislation, that is what Canadians will be in a position to do.

I urge all members of the House of Commons to join in speedy passage of the Canada Oceans Act so that Canadians may join in the urgent task of making Canada an even greater ocean nation.

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech by the secretary of state and hon. member for Beauséjour. I have several questions but I do not know where to start. I will ask two at the same time and, time permitting, I will ask another one later on.

Now for his first comment, and I must say I find it hard to follow the federal government's thinking today. They say they needed this legislation to make the Coast Guard part of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, although this was already done last spring in the finance minister's February budget. What is going on? Is the department trying to rectify an illegal situation? What was or was not illegal before? I think we could draw quite a few conclusions in that case.

I remember saying in a speech to the Minister of Fisheries at the time that he should consolidate the fleets owned by the Government of Canada. I mentioned the Coast Guard. Their ships could have been included in the same fleet with the Fisheries and Oceans vessels. But there are other fleets as well, so why the piecemeal approach?

Once again, the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing. As far as the ships of the Department of the Environment are concerned, why did they not look at the kind of work involved, since in this bill, for all practical purposes, the minister will have the authority to set environmental standards for oceans?

What does the Department of the Environment intend to do? I was told there were a number of ships, so what are they going to do with them? Why did they not consider integrating all this?

My point is there is still room for improving the bill. The Department of National Defence has ships as well. Why did the government not consider some kind of plan or strategy in which these ships could be used, and I am thinking of the quite spectacular operations we saw last spring?

In any case, I am glad that was done. However, why does the government not take advantage of this experience to consider a system for integrating these ships?

That is one point I wanted to make. As for part III of the bill, I already mentioned two departments that were not consulted. What is going on? I wish the secretary of state would tell us. Where are they headed and do they really intend to merge? Good, I see some messages coming. Do they really intend to merge or is this just a lot of smoke and mirrors?

I repeat, the Coast Guard fleet has been under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Fisheries since the spring budget. I would like to put a question to the secretary of state, who may be able to remove this perception I have that the bill is improvised, that the government is going a little too fast and has not finished its consultations, starting with the parliamentarians in their own party.

• (1320)

I would like to draw the secretary of state's attention back to clause 54. In formulating this bill, they are already including conditional amendments in clause 54, which provides: "If Bill C-84, introduced during—the thirty-fifth Parliament—is assented to, then—". Should I read the whole thing? We are told that this bill will have consequences, and given that, attention will have to be paid to this and to that.

Bill C-98 involves regulations, and must be able to accommodate other existing regulations and legislation. But we already have C-84, which is in the process of changing it. They could not even agree among themselves to wait for C-84 to be drafted.

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In connection with this, I would like to mention another doubt. I will read you subclause 54(3): “Any fee fixed under this Act shall stand permanently referred to a committee described in section 25 of the Regulations Act to be scrutinized as if it were a regulation”.

I would like to direct a question to the secretary of state to at least start getting rid of our perception that the thing is improvised. Can he tell us who will form the committee? Does he already have the answers this morning? There are a whole bunch of amendments, but I would at least like to know whether he has had time to read the bill to the end and ask these questions and whether he got an answer from an official somewhere. We did not.

Mr. Robichaud: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Gaspé for all these questions he would like to see answered like any self-respecting opposition member or critic. I think that the minister answered some of his questions in his speech, but he also urged members, especially those on the Standing Committee on Fisheries, to which this bill will be referred, to feel free to ask questions and search for answers.

I am happy to see that the hon. member sees the advisability of merging the Fisheries and Oceans fleet with that of the coast guard. He also asked why the Canadian forces fleet was not included and he referred to last spring's turbot war. The hon. member must know that the three fleets he mentioned were all called upon at the time and worked together in a joint operation to make foreign fleets, and one in particular, realize that Canada is serious about conservation.

I think the hon. member will agree with me that, by pooling our resources, we succeeded in getting our message across and convincing the rest of the world, and all fishing nations, that Canada is serious about conserving ocean resources and focusing attention on the problem.

• (1325)

In this regard, I must say that if we succeeded in conveying to the world that the minister acted decisively, it is because the minister represented in an effective way the aspirations of those who want Canada to focus on conservation. All the political parties in this House and across Canada gave us the support we needed to do so.

I take this opportunity to thank all those who supported this effort. If we are talking about this bill respecting the oceans of Canada, it is to give the minister of fisheries the authority he needs to watch over ocean resources by putting in place policies and programs aimed at protecting these resources for all of Canada.

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to address Bill C-98. This morning, the hon. member for Gaspé explained at length why we will oppose this legislation. I

want to elaborate on the environmental aspects of the bill, that is the environment minister's responsibilities under the proposed legislation.

This legislation gives exceptional powers to Fisheries and Oceans, but these powers already belong to the Department of the Environment. This is yet another example of overlap between two departments and it is a real concern to see how there is no true agreement or harmonization at the federal level. I cannot help but wonder why the minister did not tell environment critics about this bill? Why is it that we were not informed of that legislation? How come we did not even hear about it in committee?

When a bill has such an impact on a department like the environment department, we have to be able to look at it and make sure that it does not create more overlap. Let us not forget that the Department of the Environment lost one third of its personnel and one third of its budget following the government's drastic cuts. Consequently, this whole situation is a real source of concern.

The bill seems to establish a sectoral environment department: the department of coastal environment. If each department did that, we would end up with an environment transport department, an environment industry department, and all the government's ministers would have powers regarding environmental protection and preservation.

If this is the way this government wants to go, then we should abolish the environment department, because it will become useless in Parliament.

We hear a lot of nice rhetoric, speeches and commitments about the environment, but not much is actually done to protect it. There is still a lot of work to do. This is a vital issue; our future and that of our children is at stake. When I see how the government treats this issue so lightly, seemingly attaching little importance to it, I become very concerned about the future of Canada, Quebec and in fact the whole world.

When it comes to the environment, the government's tendency is to centralize powers in Ottawa for the sake of national interest. This is also a real concern, considering that environmental problems are of a global nature.

Let me read you two clauses which are rather preoccupying. Clauses 28 to 36 of the bill deal with the implementation of a strategy for the management of estuarine, coastal and marine ecosystems.

• (1330)

This part does not apply to the lakes and rivers. In large part, management of those ecosystems is a provincial responsibility.

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We on this side of the House have one other concern, that this act could allow the department to again interfere in provincial jurisdictions, particularly with respect to the environment. It puts provincial ministers on an equal footing with any other interested persons or bodies. It is very important for us to know what an interested person or body is.

This means that an individual might come to express his personal views. Will importance really be attached to that individual? God only knows. The environmental groups will be able to have their say and provincial ministers of the environment will be considered on the same footing as any individual coming to make a representation. This makes absolutely no sense. There is constant talk of partnership, harmonization, sustainable development, protecting our ecosystem, but I do not consider that to be a partnership. I would call it a source of conflict.

A situation of conflict will be created with the provinces, perhaps even with the municipalities. With this bill the interference could reach as far as the municipal level. In other words, if the minister decides he is not satisfied with a municipality's waste water treatment system whose effluents go into a river or a lake, which in turn release their waters into the ocean, he can say: "Change all your waste water treatment systems, because they are not up to our standards and affect the fish in our oceans."

I think the government is getting into jurisdictions that are already very much protected and work very well. I fail to see why the minister should have additional authority over areas we have been managing for years and that have been managed by the municipalities which are already supervised by the provinces. We do not need federal supervision on top of that. It is very disturbing that this bill gives no indication that the municipalities will be consulted as well. The government says it has the right to assume that authority.

We believe it is necessary to clearly identify an oceans management strategy—this is extremely important—but this strategy should be effective and not a source of conflict. The provinces should be made part of the decision-making process leading up to the formulation of the strategy. The minister should go back to the drawing board and table a strategy that specifies the responsibilities of all partners involved, without creating further overlap between federal and provincial departments. We have said this repeatedly here in the House, and I do not know whether anyone is listening, but it tends to be forgotten. Not only forgotten but ignored.

I would like to say a few words about something that concerns the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Department of the Environment and the conflict situation we had this summer. If they cannot avoid a conflict between departments at the federal level, imagine what it will be like when we get to the provinces and the municipalities. This makes no sense at all.

The government could never enforce a decent piece of legislation. There is no way.

This summer we had the experience with the *Irving Whale*. The environment minister made a decision that we did not support, which was extremely risky and kept the people of the Magdalen Islands on edge all summer, and I must say I felt like that myself. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is now in charge of the case. Is it because the minister did not do her job? I wonder.

And now we have a similar situation. In the case of the *Irving Whale* last summer, work was suspended because the courts made that decision. The minister had announced publicly and to the media that she would decide Monday morning whether she would stop the work or not.

• (1335)

The same day, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans was also telling the media that, definitely, no decision would be made; that the decision would be made on Friday and the ship would be raised on Friday. Is this not departmental conflict? Who is not doing their job?

We do not need situations like this, and, moreover, when they involve danger, as in the case of the *Irving Whale*, we cannot make decisions just so we can be in the limelight or in the news or so we look good. We have to make logical decisions. We have to make environmental decisions, even if the cost is greater, because the risks of environmental dangers are high. We know very well that PCBs are getting into the ocean and that they will be around for hundreds and hundreds of years to come. We are destroying our marine ecosystem. We have to stop this sort of thing in areas that are as important as the environment.

Throughout the entire process, the minister is under no legal obligation to agree with other federal or provincial departments. In most cases, he may, if he wishes, ask for help from other authorities. It is both unacceptable and inconceivable that the minister does not have to work with the officials of the Department of the Environment, in particular, and with other departments, in general. There must not be any dictatorship. You cannot arrive in a department and declare that you are going to run the whole show. This sort of thing has to be done with harmony, but up to now I have seen no sign of harmonization in this House. I have never seen any. So imagine what it will be like when we run into conflict.

With positions being cut and some restraint to be exercised in public spending, the minister is creating duplication right within the federal government. What is more, the new powers of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans are not exclusive, because they are not taking away from powers already in the hands of other ministers and stakeholders. So we may well see competition and overlap in connection with the standards and fines to be applied, priorities and the approaches taken.

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Last year, on the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, we worked for a year revising the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, CEPA. While reviewing this law, we realized on several occasions that there were many problems and that it overlapped a lot with the Fisheries Act.

How come the minister, who I think is not yet aware of this fact otherwise she would have answered us or she would have told us in committee what she knew about this report, has not read the report and made a decision yet? How do you explain the fact that the minister of fisheries has now come up with a bill after the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development worked on this issue for a year and gave the minister constructive suggestions regarding the environment? Why is the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans doing her job? I do not understand; this is not clear at all in my head.

I am asking the Minister of the Environment to keep party politics out of this department, which is, in my opinion, the most important department here in this Parliament. This department should not be partisan. It should always focus on the ecosystem, on sustainable development. It should always make decisions for the future of our children, of Canada, of Quebec, and not partisan decisions.

I would like to conclude my remarks by mentioning that a sovereign Quebec would give priority to the environment. If you ask Quebecers what importance they give the environment, they will give it top priority after health because they are aware that, if the environment is not protected, we will have no future. We will have no drinking water.

• (1340)

Sure, we will always have problems but we must give priority to environmental issues. In this regard, the minister simply did not do her homework. She should go back and do her homework. I would like to see Bill C-98 referred to the environment committee. You would see that there would be many proposed amendments to this bill.

Mr. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's motto is *a mari usque ad mare*, from sea to sea. It may be that Bloc members are upset because the title of the bill before us is an Act respecting "the" oceans of Canada. Had we used the singular, Bloc members might be happier today.

Canada is bordered by the Pacific ocean, which gives us access to all sorts of foreign markets. It is important that Parliament pass the act respecting "the" oceans as quickly as possible. No, that legislation should certainly not be postponed to a later date.

As you know, some people always want to postpone everything. In the last few days, we even heard some say that the referendum should be postponed. The fact is that the referendum date must not be postponed, and nor should the review of the Oceans Act. We must put an end to uncertainty and we must do so in the best interests of Canada. As the hon. member for

Laurentides just mentioned, we must make the best possible decisions for the future of both Canada and Quebec. This is why we are here.

Federal-provincial considerations are a major component of this bill. Earlier, the member for Laurentides said that the proposed partnership agreements could be a source of conflict. It goes without saying that if you want to separate, partnership agreements are indeed very difficult to implement and can lead to conflict. However, if we want to get along, co-operate and reach agreements, anything is possible and partnership is definitely the best option for Canada today.

I want to ask a question to the member for Laurentides, regarding federal-provincial relations. Does the hon. member know that the act allows for the implementation of guidelines on the quality of the marine environment, as well as—and I want to overlook her comments on the sources of conflict—the reaching of partnership agreements with other interested persons or groups? Is the hon. member for Laurentides aware of the importance of federal-provincial relations in that regard?

Mrs. Guay: Mr. Speaker, once again I have a flagrant example of the member for Brome—Missisquoi's using environmental issues for reasons of petty partisan politics. Nothing surprising about that; that is his usual way of doing things.

Yes, there will be a referendum in Quebec, and it has nothing at all to do with this bill. We are talking about a statute. Here in this House today the Minister also has made a highly patriotic speech, and when such questions are asked, do not try to tell me that the problem of an unworkable bill will be solved. Not in the least.

I have not spoken of the referendum, I have spoken of a bill that we feel is unworkable. It will not work between departments and it will cause conflicts between federal departments. Imagine what will happen when it gets down to the provincial level. What we have here is a bill that needs to be redone. It has been badly drafted.

• (1345)

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has given himself all sorts of powers not even within his jurisdiction. This should be handled by Environment.

I strongly believe that the member for Brome—Missisquoi should study the environment a little more. It could not do any harm. Second, this is not a matter for partisan politics but truly a matter in which there are problems, one that is unclear, that has been dumped on the House and is unfamiliar to us, this Bill C-98. I reiterate my demand that it be studied in the Department of the Environment, so that we can find out where it is headed. Let the Minister of the Environment do her homework for once and let her ensure that decisions affecting the Department of the Environment are made in conjunction with her department. When true environmental decisions are involved, let it be the Minister of the Environment who makes those decisions, and not the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. It is Environment that

Government Orders

possesses the environmental expertise, not Fisheries and Oceans.

This is totally senseless. Why dump one's duties onto someone else? This is totally senseless. We are prepared, our consciousness is raised, very much so I believe, we are prepared to address this matter, to look at what can be done to ensure that it heads in the right direction, but not this way.

[*English*]

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address some of the concerns of the hon. member.

Some of the points she has made about the environment are very important. I have made these points in the past about how important the environment is, how important it is for our future generations.

I know she is concerned about the environment. I know that when she has an opportunity to really have a close look at this bill she will understand that it is very important for the environment. I know she is concerned about the duties of the Minister of the Environment. I can assure her that the Minister of the Environment would be willing to bring forward new ideas if she thought this in any way would impede upon her work as the Minister of the Environment.

This bill will in fact create more opportunities for our coastal communities. Contrary to what the hon. member says, this will have no effect on provincial rights. In fact this approach is an integrated approach. The National Advisory Board on Science and Technology recommended this. It looked at it. We have to heed some of those recommendations. As we are often told by members on the opposite side, we as the government have to listen to some of the advisory boards we have. Should we reject what the National Advisory Board on Science and Technology said when it said we need an integrated approach, we need a better approach? I know she will want to support the idea of putting in protected marine areas.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I wonder if I might ask the parliamentary secretary for clarification. Following the intervention of the hon. member for Laurentides we were on questions and comments and not on debate. I wonder if he could clarify if he is engaging in debate or question and comment.

Mr. Dhaliwal: I am going to proceed to my question, Mr. Speaker.

The hon. member has noted how important the environment is. I agree with her that the fundamentals of the bill talk about sustainable environment, about protected marine areas and about managing our ecosystem. Are they not important for the environment, as she has said?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Guay: Mr. Speaker, I realize that my time is running out. The secretary of state for fisheries and oceans said there was no likelihood of interference with provincial jurisdictions. But I have here a short text that says that the main source of contamination in coastal areas is not disposal at sea but urban waste water, urban and agricultural run-off, industrial waste, urban waste, uncontrolled dumping and erosion.

This bill will open the door wide to interference in jurisdictions that are provincial and municipal as well.

• (1350)

If the government starts creating conflict situations—and I refer not only to Quebec, but to provinces like New Brunswick and British Columbia that are already concerned, want to protect their coastal areas and their fisheries and say they want more powers in this area—if the government starts interfering again, the result will be chaos. The environment does not need that.

I think anyone who, like the parliamentary secretary, is concerned about the environment should realize that we do not need further concentration of powers in Ottawa but more powers for the provinces which are closer to their ecosystems than the federal government and could play a far more important role than they do at the present time by assuming all authority over this area.

[*English*]

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to support Bill C-98, the Canadian Oceans Act. The provisions contained in the legislation will be of tremendous benefit to all Canadians. Most especially, they will bring new opportunity to those Canadians who live and work in our coastal regions. It is this economic opportunity I wish to focus on today.

Canada is such a large country that it is easy to overlook the fact that Canada is one of the world's great maritime nations. Our shores are bordered by three oceans: the Arctic, the Atlantic, and the Pacific. Our coastline is the longest in the world. We have the world's largest archipelago, the world's longest inland waterway, and the world's second-largest continental shelf.

All this is about to get bigger in terms of doing a lot more out to the 200-mile limit. Under the terms of the 1992 United Nations convention on the law of the sea, which came into force in November last year, Canada can turn its 200-mile fishing zone into a 200-mile exclusive economic zone. This gives us the right to extend Canadian economic environmental jurisdiction

over almost five million square kilometres of coastal and ocean territory. The result is oceans of opportunity: opportunity to better protect our oceans' fragile resources, opportunity to strengthen our historic fisheries, and opportunity to channel creative energy towards a new ocean industry that can enhance the economic potential of our coastal communities.

This is an opportunity our government recognized as essential for our future, and it is an opportunity our government intends to act upon to secure jobs and economic growth for all Canadians.

For centuries the wealth of our oceans has sustained hundreds of communities, large and small, all along our Pacific, Atlantic, and Arctic coasts. In each region an entire culture and identity has been built around the exploitation of our ocean resources and maritime economy, especially around the three pillars of fishing, transportation, and tourism. However, in recent years these traditional activities have been supplemented by an increasing variety of new ocean-related industries, each with its own success story.

For instance, with our world demand for protein from fish on the rise, aquaculture has become one of the fastest growing industries in Canada. With successful operations on both our east and west coasts, aquaculture revenues reached \$280 million in 1993.

At the same time, firms such as Geo-Resources, International Submarine Engineering, and others are leading the way in developing and applying high technology to oceans management and exploration. In Atlantic, Pacific, and central Canada, firms specializing in remote sensing, computerized geographic imaging, cold water technology, offshore and coastal engineering, and new sectors are creating thriving new enterprises capable of competing in the changing global marketplace.

• (1355)

Furthermore, we are now realizing the promise of ocean energy exploration and development. After years of patience and investment, the Cohasset oil field to the southeast of Nova Scotia came onstream in June 1992. The giant Hibernia oil field off the coast of Newfoundland is scheduled to go into commercial production in 1997. Just this year, there have been new discoveries in Newfoundland itself.

These are all positive developments. What is more, they come not a moment too soon. Canadians cannot escape the fact that our oceans are under increasing stress from such factors as overfishing, marine and land based sources of pollution, and longer term phenomena such as global warming.

The collapse of our Atlantic groundfish industry has left some 40,000 Canadians out of work. While lobster, crab, and scallop

fisheries are prospering, the Pacific salmon fishery is requiring closer and more careful management than ever.

Clearly it is time to protect our marine environment and further diversify our marine economies. Our government has recognized both of these needs and we are taking action. We have acted in the international arena to strengthen the protection of straddling and highly migratory stocks. We have taken strong international action against overfishing and we are strictly enforcing fishing moratoriums on commercial fish stocks to give these resources a chance to rebuild.

These are just first steps. We need to back these up with an integrated and comprehensive approach to ocean management that emphasizes environmental conservation as its first priority. We need to accelerate and develop our ocean industry strategies so that our coastal economies will be able to diversify and prosper in the new global economy.

The Speaker: My colleague, it goes without saying that you will have the floor immediately following question period.

It being 2 p.m., we will go to statements by members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Canadians we have always prided ourselves on having three levels of government: federal, provincial and territorial, and municipal. In my opinion, and I am sure in the opinion of many members of the House, municipal governments have not been given the national recognition they deserve. In Canada we are very fortunate to live in a nation where municipal governments work toward providing decent standards of every day life.

Today we welcome the 36 reeves and the staff of Renfrew county council. They held the first ever county council meeting on Parliament Hill. I invited them here to hold one of their regular sessions as a gesture of appreciation for their work and to remind all Canadian citizens of the importance of their individual municipal governments.

Let us move ahead with a united Canada and a continued dedication by all levels of government.

*S. O. 31**[Translation]***INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs said yesterday in Sherbrooke: "After October 30, we will offer Quebec various arrangements in many areas". What kind of arrangements is he referring to? What miraculous offer would the federal government, which stubbornly refused to go along with the unanimous consensus among Quebec stakeholders on the manpower training issue, extend to us? Why did this government so abruptly shut down the military college in Saint-Jean last year, if Ottawa is prepared to offer a compromise solution after October 30?

Is the ax that will fall on the unemployed after October 30 included in these arrangements? The people of Quebec want to know why the Prime Minister of Canada wants to "clobber them" before announcing his proposed compromises. It seems obvious to me that this government is confusing compromise with revenge.

* * *

*[English]***UN CONFERENCE ON WOMEN**

Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, equality, democracy and peace were the themes of the fourth UN conference on women recently held in Beijing. Just what was advanced by our Canadian delegation? Not equality but gender equality that put feminist issues above all other considerations in government policy and direction and called for a social revolution based on a new definition of gender, affirmative action and sexual and reproductive rights.

Not equality, but a blatant refusal to speak against the most basic human rights abuses. That our minister would declare no problem after counting an equal number of heads in a preschool is an insult to the sensibilities of Canadians.

Not democracy, as our delegation put forward a token representation of MPs, senators and academics. Instead Canadians were represented by bureaucrats with no accountability for policies that had no public input. Not peace, but division with over 500 actions to be taken by the government. This agenda will drive a wedge between women and men, families, religion and custom.

Canada's position at this conference was nothing but a sham.

* * *

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian van line owners are very distressed about a new tendering process

that has been put forward by the Department of National Defence which will radically change how government contracts out moving services in Canada.

The present tendering system ensures each local or regional moving company shares in the winning contracts by matching the lowest bid, thus everyone gets a piece of the pie. The new proposed tendering process will allow one bidder to take all, with tenders open to anyone in any country, thus creating a monopoly.

If allowed to proceed, this new moving tendering process could destroy much of Canada's moving industry. Atlantic Canada will lose approximately 2,500 jobs.

Atlantic Canada cannot afford to lose any more. I ask the government to stop this proposed new tendering process before jobs are lost and an industry is destroyed.

* * *

*[Translation]***GENERAL MOTORS PLACE**

Mrs. Anna Terrana (Vancouver East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to announce the opening of General Motors Place, in my riding of Vancouver East.

[English]

Last week international recording superstar Bryan Adams, a Vancouverite, opened GM Place. Home of the Vancouver Canucks and the Vancouver Grizzlies, General Motors Place is the most highly advanced sports and entertainment complex in North America.

General Motors Place is truly the eighth wonder of the world, with excellent viewing, luxurious seating for 20,000 and state of the art sound. GM Place has one of three diamond vision scoreboards in North America. With four giant video boards, it offers the highest resolution colour technology in the world.

[Translation]

General Motors Place has already created 250 jobs and will soon create another 1,000 full and part time jobs. GM Place was completed in 20 months and immediately became one of Vancouver's largest and most important buildings.

The people of Vancouver are pleased to be able to count on entrepreneurs like Arthur Griffiths, John Mcaw and Orca Bay Sports and Entertainment, who gave them a great building like GM Place.

Congratulations to all.

S. O. 31

[English]

BILL C-68

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when constituents write to members of the House they do not write without meaning. They write with passion, with reason and frequently with pain.

Recently a woman from a Toronto women's centre wrote to an hon. member of the other place to voice her support for Bill C-68. In her letter she pointed out gun related violence adds \$70 million a year to Canada's health care bill.

That person responded by saying the firearms industry is worth more than \$1 billion per year to the Canadian economy and that the GST alone ought to cover the health care costs.

At what level do we value a bullet over an arm or a leg? At what level do we value a trigger over a breath? At what level do we value a barrel of a gun over the life of a daughter or a son?

Bill C-68 is not based on economic gain. It is based on the value of life, the value of Canadians and the value of a country which is not rooted in a culture of violence or a culture of guns.

* * *

UN CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fourth world conference on women has recently concluded with the ratification of a solid agenda for the equality and advancement of women within the United Nations.

In a great spirit of co-operation between 180 nations, a general agreement on the platform for action was reached in an effort to achieve social, political and economic equality for women around the world.

• (1405)

This agreement includes the protection of women from violence in the home and in society, women's rights as human rights, freedom of expression, equal rights to female children, control over our health, alleviation of poverty and improvements to education.

Canada was instrumental in the negotiation process and in bringing about the ratification of a progressive platform for action.

I commend the leadership of the secretary of state responsible for the status of women and I applaud the work and contributions of all the women from across Canada who represented our country so successfully.

[Translation]

REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, these past few days, Quebecers have had a foretaste of the arrogant and contemptuous tone the federalist side intends to use throughout the referendum campaign. When federalist spokespersons are not calling politicians elected by the people of Quebec traitors, they believe they have been vested with the mission of crushing once and for all any resistance from Quebec.

The No side uses a mean and arrogant tone that reveals their desire to crush and clobber their opponents. They think that, if they are defeated, the claims, ideas and hopes they represent will disappear with them.

As Lise Bissonnette wrote this morning in *Le Devoir*, the real strategist of the No side, the Prime Minister, has always wanted to put an end to Quebec's claims, hence the War Measures Act, the fight against Bill 101, the 1982 Constitution, the opposition to even the slightest demands of Quebec in the Meech Lake Accord and, now, the refusal to make any offer to Quebec. For the Prime Minister, even moderate nationalism, as practised by Robert Bourassa, Claude Ryan and even Daniel Johnson, is to be knocked down and crushed.

* * *

[English]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on August 24 the Saskatchewan Chiefs of Police Association reported that 100 per cent of the chiefs of police in that province are opposed to the planned gun registry. On August 22, I released the results of a survey showing that 91 per cent of RCMP officers in Saskatchewan are also opposed to the registration system. Last week a similar survey in Alberta showed that 85 per cent of RCMP officers opposed it.

With such overwhelming opposition from police chiefs and police on the street how can the justice minister still claim he is bringing in the firearm registration system because police are requesting it?

Between December 1994 and July 1995 Environics reported that support for a law requiring all firearms to be registered had dropped from 90 per cent to just 60 per cent. Public opinion polls show support for Bill C-68 dropping like a spent bullet. By the time the Senate is done reviewing it support will be below 50 per cent. How far does support for his bogus bill have to drop before the justice—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona.

S. O. 31

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it appears from a presentation made to the program review committee on the human resources investment fund by the Minister of Human Resources Development that the government strategy is to prepare Canadians for the transition to a low wage economy.

The government is now talking about making targeted earnings supplements of a few thousand dollars for a year or so to encourage or coerce, as the case may be, unemployed high wage earners into accepting lower paid jobs.

The Liberals say they want to help workers adjust financially and psychologically to the new situation. What the Liberals are really saying to a lot of Canadians is: "Welcome to the post-NAFTA low wage economy where your children, no matter how much education they receive, should not expect to have the same standard of living as you".

Canadian wages are being driven to the bottom as part of the multinational corporate agenda which the Liberals are capitulating to at the same time as they attack the social wage of these same Canadians. This is not what the Liberals promised in 1993. They lied about free trade and now they are preparing Canadians to adjust to the way free trade—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: It is always better for us to be prudent in the language we use. In this context the word "lied" was not directed at any one member. I hope this term will not be used in the House.

The hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester.

* * *

CANADIAN UNITY

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today to share a message of Canadian unity from a constituent of my riding, Mr. David Austin St-Amour.

[*Translation*]

Austin Saint-Amour is a singer-songwriter as well as a pilot in his own helicopter business. Combining his talents, he conveys the message of Canadian unity in a song and video entitled "*Envolons-nous ensemble—Let's keep flying together*".

• (1410)

[*English*]

Mr. Austin St-Amour combines Canada's beautiful scenery with a simple message through a song of pride and love for our country to create a powerful message of Canadian unity.

[*Translation*]

Like him, let us be proud to show our love for our country. Long live our united Canada.

* * *

SOCIÉTÉ SAINT-JEAN-BAPTISTE OF SHERBROOKE

Mr. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Saturday night in Orford, in the beautiful riding of Brome—Missisquoi, where in a by-election held almost nine months ago voters said No to separation, the Governor General of Canada, the Hon. Roméo LeBlanc, became an honorary member of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste of the Diocese of Sherbrooke.

In fact, as the Director General of the Société, Marcel Bureau, told me, "Our Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste is federalist. The pride we have always felt as Quebecers never prevented us from being deeply attached to Canada".

Members of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste of Sherbrooke are proud to be both Canadians and Quebecers. Mr. Bureau, on behalf of all Canadians represented in this House, I take my hat off to you.

* * *

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, most major daily newspapers in Quebec feature advertisements bought and paid for by the Quebec sovereignty council about the future of the French language after the referendum.

As could be expected, the sovereignty council predicts a very dark future for the French language should the No side win, but wonderful days ahead should the Yes side win.

Last week, the BQ member for Rimouski—Témiscouata dispensed the same medicine to francophones outside Quebec, and I quote: "You should realize that a No vote in Quebec would spell the end of French Canada both within and outside Quebec". The French language is alive and well within Canada and will remain so after October 30, because Quebecers will say No to those who have nothing to offer but fear and threats.

* * *

OLD AGE PENSIONS

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux-Montagnes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, "You have your pensions and you will keep them". That comment was made yesterday to a group of seniors by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Should these people rest assured following that statement? No, Mr. Speaker, because the minister did not dare tell them the whole truth concerning old age pensions. The minister did not mention that the last budget contains this statement, and I quote: "Later this year, a paper on

the changes required in the public pension system will be released”.

Who can deny that the government intends to bring in changes? Moreover, the minister refused to tell these seniors whether the amount of old age pensions and the eligibility levels would be maintained. Misinformation and manipulation, this is what the minister’s statement is all about. Seniors want to know the truth. They want to know before the referendum what Ottawa has in store for them.

* * *

QUEBEC REFERENDUM

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, a no vote does not mean status quo. A no vote means that Quebec will co-operate with all the other provinces to give a better federation to Canadians from every region.

Just like a good chess player plans his moves, we urge Quebecers to look at their situation before the referendum and to give serious thought to what will happen after they have voted no.

We give Quebecers the best possible reason to vote no, that is a combination of all the benefits of Canadian unity, along with a mandate to reduce the federal government’s powers. We believe that these powers should rest more closely with Canadians and that Ottawa must stop monopolizing them.

Again, Mr. Speaker, a no vote does not mean the status quo.

* * *

REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN

Mrs. Pierrette Ringuette-Maltais (Madawaska—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bloc members are resorting to the scaremongering tactics of Quebec’s separatists.

Indeed, we learned that the Bloc member for La Prairie began using such tactics on the elderly as early as last March.

• (1415)

In an interview with the weekly *Le Reflet régional*, the Bloc member said: “It is not Quebec’s sovereignty which threatens the income of seniors; the danger for old age pensions comes from the federal government. Such is the price to be paid if we vote no at the next referendum”.

These comments by a member of Parliament are both irresponsible and shameful. They also show the weakness of the separatists’ arguments. Stop using such silly scaremongering tactics. Quebecers are not interested in separating and they will vote no on October 30.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Human Resources Development tried to play down the existence and importance of a document from his office dealing with his proposals for unemployment insurance reform.

This morning, the official opposition released a letter from the Canadian Labour Congress which shows that Canada’s labour unions are taking very seriously the threat to the unemployment insurance system represented by the minister’s reform. The CLC sent its members an analysis of the devastating repercussions of the new cuts in unemployment insurance being prepared by the minister.

My question is directed to the Prime Minister. Instead of putting his tape on replay, would he admit that the new cuts his government has decided to postpone after the referendum will have the effect of denying two out of every three unemployed workers access to unemployment insurance?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the statement made by the Leader of the Opposition is not true. We do not intend to do as he claims.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think the Prime Minister and the government are playing down the apprehensions and concerns we are seeing in labour circles across Canada, not just in Quebec. This time, the alarm was sounded by the Canadian Labour Congress which represents all unions in Canada.

I want to ask him whether he would confirm an analysis by the CLC which says that the new cuts in unemployment insurance will come down hard on seasonal and part time workers who will have to work twice as many hours for twice as many weeks to be eligible for reduced benefits. Does the government want to crush them as well?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said to the Leader of the Opposition yesterday, we have had a chance to discuss this for months. A green paper on the subject was tabled a year ago. We have consulted with the committees of the House of Commons, the public, the Canadian Labour Congress and many other institutions. Representations are being made, and ultimately we will have a bill that will be tabled in Parliament. As in the case of every other bill, there will probably be amendments, and these will be either supported or rejected by hon. members. And we will know the result at that time.

Oral Questions

What we are trying to do? We are trying to make sure that the reforms we need in Canada will give workers access to jobs. Everyone wants us to make changes in the unemployment insurance system. We clearly identified these in the budget, we have been discussing them for a year and a half here in the House, and in time reforms will be introduced. The minister is still working on his bill, and in November or December the Leader of the Opposition, provided he is still in the House, will have an opportunity to raise any questions he wants and make any appropriate suggestions, and the government will consider these before the final vote on the bill.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, whether or not the Leader of the Opposition will still be in the House is not up to him.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Bouchard: Second, the reason we have these never ending debates on unemployment insurance reform is that the government does not have the courage to table its reform proposals, and people are concerned because of these documents from the minister's office—and he did not deny that; he admitted it was true—announcing horrendous cuts.

Would the Prime Minister have the courage to tell us today that he will table the reform before the Quebec referendum?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will table what should be tabled in Parliament when the reform is ready. The Leader of the Opposition is trying to scare everyone. Unemployment insurance reform will apply to all Canadians, not just to Quebecers.

Now the opposition is trying to scare people. This morning they said senior citizens were in trouble. They are trying to scare Quebecers on the language issue. The opposition's scaremongering continues. We are getting one scare a day. We have 34 days left, so we can expect 34 more during that time.

I simply want to say that we will keep doing what we have decided to do, which is to act responsibly as the government of this country, provide for good government, put the country on a sound financial footing and create jobs to restore the dignity of workers in our society. It is by providing good government for the people of Quebec that we will make them very happy to vote for Canada on October 30, by voting No to separation.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, listening to the Prime Minister talk of a campaign of terror is a bit like hearing the bogey man accusing someone else of being scary, or the pot calling the kettle black.

An hon. member: Something he knows all about.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gauthier: To the man who has made the threats of the bogey man his stock in trade, the Canadian Labour Congress analysis—not the analysis by the Bloc, although it does reach the same conclusions—says that “the main tools are training vouchers, training loans, wage subsidies, income supplements and daycare vouchers. These new approaches to program delivery will enable the federal government to bypass the provinces and deal with individuals directly”.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Does he acknowledge that the Canadian Labour Congress analysis confirms his government's intentions, the federal government's intentions, to interfere even more in the areas over which the government of Quebec has exclusive jurisdiction, in total disregard of the consensus that exists throughout Quebec?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have to begin by asking the hon. member to stop for a moment and ask himself about what he has been saying. He has taken a piece of paper prepared by the Canadian Labour Congress speculating on what it thinks might be some time in the future the proposals of the federal government and now declares that to be the reform.

I deny totally the kind of conclusions the Canadian Labour Congress has put forward because frankly it does not know what it is talking about.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it will be noted that the Minister has referred to the analysis of a document originating with his office which he refuses to table before this House. He ought perhaps to remember that. This report also states that the objectives of the human resources development fund are fairly clear, namely to establish a program structure and a system of implementation which eliminate any need for provincial consent or participation.

Will he acknowledge that, if he is deliberately putting off tabling his human resources reform, his unemployment insurance reform, the reason is that it comes down so terribly hard upon the unemployed, because it invades as never before the areas over which the government of Quebec has jurisdiction, and because this would be the price Quebecers would have to pay for a no in the referendum, if ever they should vote no and allow the minister to do as he pleases?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in listening to the hon. member, there must be a new slogan for the Bloc Quebecois which is, separation by words of desperation.

Oral Questions

The reality is that once again the hon. member is making a fundamental fallacy. He is taking conclusions from the Canadian Labour Congress. It may be that the Canadian Labour Congress wants to deny co-operation with the provinces. It may be that the Canadian Labour Congress wants to cut these kinds of programs. It may be its analysis that this is what should be done with the UI system but it is not ours.

• (1425)

We have worked very hard over this past year. We have met consistently with the provinces and local communities. The whole thrust of the reform is to decentralize, to get real programs at the local level so that people can tailor and design employment programs to fit the needs of those communities. That is what we are trying to do. That is the real meaning. It is not to turn power over to other bureaucracies but to give the power back to the people to choose how they want to get back to work.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, for two years the provinces and Ottawa through the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment have been discussing ways to harmonize environmental management in Canada. These talks have been progressing toward a framework agreement to rationalize responsibilities and eliminate costly overlap and duplication. Recently the federal Minister of the Environment pulled the plug on this process, refusing to proceed on an agreement that would have been a significant victory for the environment and for federal-provincial relations.

Will the Minister of the Environment table the draft environmental management framework agreement negotiated with the provinces and let the House and the people of Canada decide whether or not it should proceed?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the third party exhibits his ignorance on environmental issues when he says that. There were 11 annexes—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Colleagues, the reason I took a few seconds is my own fault. I was distracted and apologize to the House for that. After having what was said explained to me, I will go on to the second question of the member for Calgary Southwest. Once again colleagues, I would urge you to be very judicious in the use of your language.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, of course we did not get an answer to the first question but we could see where it was headed.

There are two sides to this story and it is particularly important that the side of the provinces be known in the House. The Alberta government believes the minister deliberately scuttled the agreement because of an unfounded fear that somehow the federal government's role in the environment might be weakened, a fear of decentralization. This was despite the fact that every province was prepared to recognize in writing the need for a strong federal presence.

Why does the government consistently reject every provincial attempt to streamline government services, harmonize regulation and eliminate costly red tape if those attempts include any significant element of decentralization?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there were 11 annexes in the environmental management framework agreement. The federal government is prepared to proceed with 10 of those annexes. The reason the annexes were not put forward to the public was that the provincial governments led by the province of Alberta refused to publish those 10 annexes.

• (1430)

I will quote what the minister of the environment said about the role of the federal government under his vision for Alberta. He said: "You can have the national parks and the Indians. We want to look after all the rest".

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the environmental management fiasco is a symptom of a deeper problem with the government. There are too many old style ministers who cling to the obsolete notion that any change in federal-provincial relations is to be resisted if it includes any element of decentralization.

The Minister of Health resisted when we talked about decentralizing the financing of health care. The Minister of Human Resources Development resisted in his department and now the Minister of the Environment resists an agreement unless it makes Ottawa the centre of the universe.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Why does he not send a clear signal to all Canadians and all provinces that Ottawa is prepared to accept the principle of decentralization? Why does he not send it by removing those ministers who consistently obstruct the implementation?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since I became the Minister of the Environment I have signed environmental agreements with every province including the province of Alberta.

Oral Questions

I would ask whether the public believes there is a national role to play for a national government. When we are talking, for example about automobiles, does it make sense to have 10 standards for 10 provinces? Or would it make much more sense to the Canadian consumer to have one national standard for vehicle emissions? There is a way of doing things logically, not through the knee-jerk decentralization being proposed by the leader of the third party.

* * *

[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. While the budget announced additional cuts of over \$1.5 billion on the backs of the unemployed, the unemployment insurance account was heading toward a surplus of nearly \$5 billion for 1995 alone. We must not forget that the government has not put a penny in the unemployment insurance fund since 1991. Worse yet, Ottawa is using the account surplus to fund new intrusions into training.

Does the Prime Minister acknowledge that increasing the unemployment insurance fund surplus by cutting benefits to the unemployed and using this surplus to fund new federal intrusions into manpower training is totally disgusting?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises an important question about the application of the UI surplus.

The UI fund is set up over the period of the business cycle to be self-financing. In those periods when there is a recession or a heavy draw on the UI fund, the government finances the UI system, as we had to do during the late eighties and early nineties in the previous government when the fund went into a deficit of close to \$11 billion.

We are now simply paying off that deficit, but the government had to finance it through its own borrowing during that period of time. When the economy improves, as it is now doing under this administration, we begin to build up a surplus—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Did I hear a loud voice in support of that notion?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): It is clear that over the life of the business cycle it is important to make sure there is a reserve in the UI fund so that we will not run into a position as the previous government did, of which the Leader of

the Opposition was a member, where all of a sudden it dropped premium rates and then had to jack them way up. As a result, it made the recession even worse.

I remind the hon. member that she was a member of a committee of the House of Commons that looked at the whole UI question and recommended: “The UI account be permitted to accumulate a surplus to accommodate changes in premium rates over the business cycle”. That was a recommendation of a committee in which the hon. member was a full participant.

● (1435)

[Translation]

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister should have read the minority report. While there has been no net job creation in the past eight months, the government has insisted on repayment of \$6 billion in less than two years creating a surplus this year of \$5 billion, which is being used to impose decisions and guidelines on the provinces that they do not want.

How can the Prime Minister use the money from cuts made to the unemployed to get round the provinces, going over their heads, in order to impose its views directly on organizations and individuals? If he says this is not true, let him table his reform.

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member puts in her question the idea that there has been no major change in employment or unemployment rates in the country.

I point out that since the government came into office the unemployment rate in the constituency of Mercier, which the hon. member represents, has dropped by 4.5 per cent. What will put in danger the thousands of jobs we created in the hon. member's riding is if Quebec decides to separate, which it will not do. The threat and uncertainty of the separation movement endangers job creation for Canada and Quebec. If the hon. member really wants to protect jobs in her riding, she would vote no in the coming referendum.

* * *

QUEBEC REFERENDUM

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago the government said that a yes vote was a one-way ticket to separation. Last week the government refused to say that yes means yes and accused the Reform Party of being disloyal for suggesting the government make the consequences of a yes vote clear.

Today the finance minister said in Quebec that a yes vote would mean “the certain destruction of Quebec's economic and political partnership with Canada”.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Is the government now prepared to be clear to Quebecers that this referendum is a yes or a no to separation and that the no side must win for Quebecers to enjoy the benefits of Confederation?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Finance was clear in the very good speech he made today explaining the consequences of a no vote for the economy of Quebec.

[Translation]

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is also for the Prime Minister.

Did the government explain that its statements regarding a political and economic union are not a threat but represent the best interests of the rest of Canada; that Canada will never allow a foreign country to become involved in this Parliament, in its monetary policy, in its equalization payments; and that, if Quebec votes No, it will become a foreign country like any other?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is what we have always maintained. What the Bloc Québécois and the Parti Québécois are proposing is Quebec's separation, except that they are trying to hide this behind all kinds of words designed to obscure the truth.

They tried to come up with what they said was a winning question, but look at the confusion they have created. A third of the people who say they will vote Yes think Quebec will remain a Canadian province after separation. That is what poll takers are reporting today.

They should be completely honest and tell Quebecers that they are separatists. They know full well that Quebecers will vote to stay in Canada. I know that, and the Leader of the Opposition knows it too because, as recently as last March, he was saying: "We must change the question because if we tell the truth, we cannot win; we need a winning question". Quebecers can now see through the opposition leader's game.

* * *

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

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

Yesterday in the House the minister stated that he was going to follow the recommendations of the task force on seasonal work.

• (1440)

Now, the key recommendation by that task force is to not create two classes of unemployed persons through penalty clauses for seasonal workers such as those in the minister's document which were made public this past weekend.

Oral Questions

Does the minister confirm the Canadian Labour Congress analysis that he will be coming down heavily on seasonal and part time workers by requiring "twice as many weeks and hours of work before they are eligible for benefits".

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I indicated three or four months ago, following publication of the report and looking at the analysis of the seasonal works report, that we would not be pursuing the notion of a two-tier system.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, seasonal workers are fed up with being treated like ping pong balls by the federal government.

Is the minister aware that all the proposals for reform originating within his department include direct attacks on seasonal workers in Quebec and on what awaits them if they vote no in the referendum? If you want to clear away this doubt once and for all, well then just table your reform now.

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member was truly in touch with various groups representing seasonal workers, he would know that we have been consistently and constantly working with them. We have had meetings with construction workers. We have been taking a number of recommendations they have been putting forward. We have worked on the sector councils which represent agricultural workers. We have been working consistently with them to get their recommendations.

The difference is that the hon. member takes a piece of paper put forward by the CSN in Quebec and tries to treat it as the gospel truth. Whereas our view is to sit down with the people who really know what is going on, talk with them and get their recommendations.

* * *

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in the health minister's January 6 letter to the provinces she stated:

I am convinced that health care facilities providing medically necessary services that operate outside the public system present a serious threat to Canada's health care system.

Today reports say that she will allow those very same private clinics.

Can we get a straight answer from the health minister on private clinics? Is she for them or against them?

Oral Questions

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member referred to my January 6, 1995 letter. That is exactly the way I felt then, exactly the way I feel now, and exactly the way our government feels about these clinics.

One of the beauties of medicare is that it provides equality of access which is extremely important for all Canadians. We, the Government of Canada, will continue to protect that access for Canadians.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Health Act is very specific. The provinces must pay for all medically necessary services. To have this changed, the Canada Health Act would need to be modified. Is the minister finally listening?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have always listened and listened very carefully.

However there is a difference between listening and doing things which would destroy something very good. Medicare was built in this country one step at a time. Some might even say one two-by-four at a time.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Ms. Marleau: Some of us are builders and some of us seek to destroy. The government will seek to continue to build.

* * *

• (1445)

[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

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

By once again limiting the access of the thousands of unemployed to unemployment insurance, the minister's proposals will result in more unemployed being pushed toward welfare. The cuts he has made to unemployment insurance since 1994 have forced 5,000 Quebec families to seek social assistance.

Will the minister acknowledge that the new proposals for cuts to unemployment insurance analyzed by the Canadian Labour Congress will heighten the move of thousands of unemployed from unemployment insurance to welfare? Is that what awaits Quebec workers the day after a no vote?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it has already been made clear that I do

not think very much of this document of the Canadian Labour Congress. It is simply not based on any proper or realistic analysis.

We have not decided yet exactly what the elements of our proposal will be, so how they can go about speculating on what the impacts will be is beyond me. I guess you need to be an economist for the CLC to figure that out.

I want to make one point very clear to the hon. member about the impacts. In the month of August, for which we have the most recent statistics, we know that the welfare caseload in Quebec dropped by 13,000. One of the reasons is that we are making real headway in getting people back to work. There were over 110,000 new jobs created in Quebec during that period of time.

We still say that the best way to deal with poverty and the best way to deal with unemployment is to help people get a job.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let us set the record straight about the number of people on welfare in Quebec. Statistics provided by the Quebec department of income security reveal that, in July 1995, there were 799,900 people on welfare; in August 1995, the figure was 799,400, 500 fewer; and, in September 1995, there were 800,100 people on welfare in Quebec. So either the minister does not know how to count or he spends his time inventing figures.

The Prime Minister, who always has the word "honesty" on the tip of his tongue, should ask his minister to make use of this virtue in tabling his famous document. What is preventing the minister from acting honestly and openly?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): I know this might be a little delicate for the hon. member, but if he is asking about the source of the figures I would simply like to confirm that on April 27 the prime minister of Quebec, the Hon. Jacques Parizeau, said that between April of 1994 and April 1995 the number of social assistance recipients in the province of Quebec declined by 60,000.

If he wants to call into question the figures put forward by the prime minister of Quebec, certainly he is simply following in the footsteps of his leader, who seems to be always second guessing the prime minister of Quebec.

* * *

[Translation]

MOODY'S

Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Moody's has indicated that the credit ratings of Quebec and the other provinces should be reviewed in the event of a yes vote. What does the government think of Moody's analysis?

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, Moody's indicates that, in the event of a yes vote, the credit ratings of Quebec and the other provinces should be reviewed, suggesting that the cost of credit would increase in Quebec and across Canada.

The conclusion is that the best way for Quebec to have a better credit rating and therefore lower interest rates is for it to remain in Canada.

* * *

[English]

PAROLE AND SENTENCING

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that Melanie Carpenter was viciously raped and murdered by a violent offender released by way of statutory requirement after serving only two-thirds of his sentence. This means that government legislation contributed to her death.

Will the Minister of Justice introduce legislation to amend the law that allows criminals to be released after serving only two-thirds of their sentence, as was the case in the Melanie Carpenter situation?

• (1450)

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, legislation has been introduced in the House that deals with violent offenders and with sentencing, and that is Bill C-45. The bill will be debated at third reading tomorrow. I invite the hon. member to be here to vote for the bill.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, of course that was no answer to my question.

The Canadian Police Association has said that crime prevention includes the reduction of opportunities to commit crimes. It has also said that easy parole requirements provide violent offenders a golden opportunity to reoffend.

Will the Minister of Justice amend the law to allow for the assessment of violent offenders prior to release to determine their likelihood of reoffending and allow them to be declared a dangerous offender at the end of their sentence rather than at the beginning, as is the case now?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is not a Canadian who was not touched and indeed angered by the tragic death of Melanie Carpenter and by the other tragic deaths in recent months.

Oral Questions

I met this morning with Melanie Carpenter's father. I had the opportunity to speak directly to him to express my own anger and as a parent of young children to identify with the sorrow he feels.

This government has been working steadily in its term in office to strengthen the criminal justice system, to introduce DNA testing, to strengthen the Young Offenders Act, and to provide mandatory penitentiary terms for those using guns in the commission of a crime.

When we introduced Bill C-41, which would encourage uniform sentences in criminal courts in Canada and send the message that violent crime must be punished harshly, the Reform Party voted against it.

Let me simply say that if the hon. member and the members of his party were genuinely interested in public safety instead of exploiting personal tragedy for political gain in the short term, they would work with us on the changes we intend, including changes to deal with the high risk offenders in this country.

* * *

[Translation]

OLD AGE SECURITY

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

In his recent budget, the Minister of Finance clearly announced old age pension reform, and I quote: "That in turn requires reform to ensure that the pension system is sustainable in the long term". Yesterday, the Minister of Foreign Affairs clearly contradicted his colleague by saying that Ottawa would definitely not touch old age pensions.

In view of this flagrant contradiction by two senior ministers in his cabinet, would the Prime Minister confirm clearly that the old age pension reform is ready but will be put off until after the referendum so seniors will not know the scope of the cuts that await them?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we made it very clear in the budget statement that the government will do nothing to jeopardize the security of our seniors who are on public pension plans.

What we did say was that in order to maintain the sustainability of the Canada pension plan there has to be a review. As the hon. member knows, there are substantial changes going on in the demographics of this country. The CPP does not apply to Quebec, but it has a relationship because the two pension plans have a certain compatibility. We do want to have a public review before the Minister of Finance meets with his provincial colleagues by the end of the year. That is one reason it is very important that we be able to get out for public view how the Canada pension plan itself can be revised and amended to ensure it maintains its sustainability.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how can the minister contend that his government will not touch old age pensions, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs said yesterday, when this same minister refused to make any commitment on the amounts of the old age pensions and the eligibility level, leaving it up to his colleague in finance to do so, when the budget has clearly stated there will be a reform and cuts?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that reform is going on constantly.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): May I amend that to say that modernization is going on constantly? It is terrible how we have debased the currency of the word "reform".

• (1455)

I want to point out to the hon. member that we have brought in legislation in the past in the House that makes it substantially easier for pensioners to get their pensions without reapplying. We have changed the delivery system so they can now get half-day service when service used to take 13 or 14 days previously. All along we have been making very significant and important changes for seniors. I announced just today that based on the quarterly review we have increased the seniors pension by \$2.35 beginning today.

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VICTIMS OF CRIME

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last night Canadians from coast to coast saw quite clearly how much the government cares for the victims of crime. This minister and his government had a chance to vote for financial compensation to assist victims and their families to recover from the trauma of violence and sexual assault, but did not.

My question is for the justice minister. How can the minister tell Canadians he supports efforts to benefit the victims of crime when the minister and his government refuse to back up their words with actions?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: My colleagues, the question as it is framed I find to be acceptable. I will permit the minister to answer if he so wishes.

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me just say that had the hon. member been aware of the provisions of Bill C-41 before speaking and voting against it, he would have seen—

Mr. Abbott: We are talking about C-45.

Mr. Rock: No. The attention of the hon. member was focused on two words in one subsection of a 70-page bill. If he had read the bill in its entirety he would have seen that Bill C-41, which has now been enacted by the House of Commons, provides in a very meaningful way for the restitution of victims of crime through the criminal justice system in ways that are innovative and will be effective. That is the response of the government toward victims of crime.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, more words. I know how the vote went last night and so do all Canadians.

This minister is willing to spend hundreds of millions of tax dollars on a registry that frontline police officers and criminologists say will have little or no impact to reduce crime, but he is not willing to make criminals pay for their actions by financial compensation.

Why does the government follow the wishes of special interests who want to punish law-abiding firearm owners yet will not listen to grassroots Canadians when they demand compensation to victims of crime? All they can do now is sue.

The Speaker: My colleagues, it is the tradition of the House usually not to reflect on a vote that has been taken by the House.

Mr. Thompson: Is that public?

The Speaker: My colleagues, when in the preamble we refer to votes the Speaker is put in a precarious position. Is it the preamble that leads up to the question? I am trying very hard to listen to the questions themselves, which may be in order, but I find sometimes that you push the preamble so far that you seem to want the Speaker to intervene earlier than he ordinarily would.

I ask you once again, in your preambles you must stay within the confines of the question you are going to frame. Once again, I will permit the Minister of Justice to answer the question, but he is under no obligation to do so.

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to set the record straight. The preamble that preceded the hon. member's question is so filled with errors that time will not permit me to address them all.

• (1500)

The very purpose of the restitution provisions in Bill C-41 now passed by the House and which the hon. member opposed was to

permit the court to award restitution and the victims of crime to collect it without having to sue simply by registering the order.

If the hon. member had a genuine interest in the victims of crime then he would join with CAVEAT and victims groups across the country that are calling for him to support gun control.

* * *

PEACEKEEPING

Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today the Minister of Foreign Affairs will address the UN General Assembly on a government study entitled: "Towards a Rapid Reaction Capability for the United Nations". This study began when the Minister of Foreign Affairs first addressed the UN General Assembly in September 1994.

Can the Minister of National Defence tell the House how Canada's report on rapid reaction capability will improve United Nations peacekeeping operations?

Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to say that my colleague the Minister of Foreign Affairs will be outlining this afternoon the Canadian government's response to some very tragic situations seen in recent years with respect to international peacekeeping. That is moving toward an international rapid reaction force, a standby force which we call the vanguard principle of up to 5,000 troops. This multinational force will be ready to intercede in places like Rwanda to ensure that the kind of horror we saw there last year does not occur again.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Stats Canada reports that in 1993 the median family income with inflation factored in declined by almost 3 per cent. For single parent families mainly headed by women their standard of living dropped by an incredible 8.6 per cent in that one year.

Can the minister tell us by how much more the income of single parent families will drop when the changes to UI and the new Canada health and social transfer gets implemented?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my view the statistics the hon. member cited are the most important and dramatic reflections of what is taking place in Canada overall and the changing society we are in.

Government Orders

I would ask the hon. member to look very carefully at the cause of that circumstance. It is because single parent mothers have substantially fallen out of the labour market. There has been almost a 15 per cent decline of single parents in the labour market. Therefore, the answer to their problem is not more transfer payments. The answer is helping them get back to jobs, get back into the labour market, get back to being employed. That is the most effective way of putting additional income in the hands of our single parents across Canada.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

OCEANS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-98, an act respecting the oceans of Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and on the amendment.

• (1505)

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to speak on Bill C-98, the oceans act.

What we need is a coherent oceans policy that embodies a full range of economic environmental issues that pertain to the management of our oceans and coastal territories. Our government realizes this is the time for action in this area.

Ocean stakeholders have been calling for a coherent vision for some time now which is why soon after coming to office the Prime Minister called on the National Advisory Board on Science and Technology to study, consult and report on Canada's oceans policy. It did not give the federal government high marks.

The NABST report criticized the federal government for the neglect of its ocean responsibilities. It then suggested steps to set up our oceans policy on a more favourable course. These steps included an oceans management strategy and new legislation in the form of an oceans act.

I am proud to say that my colleague the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans did not waste any time in responding to these suggestions. Since the NABST report and the minister's 1994 release of the vision for oceans management, the minister and his officials have consulted widely with many stakeholders in the oceans sector. They have spoken with fishermen, business representatives, government officials, aboriginal groups, environmental interests and others. The result is a set of proposals for an ocean management strategy to be developed by the federal government in partnership with other key oceans interests.

Government Orders

The plan as outlined by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is to create an integrated oceans management strategy that would have as its primary goal the sustainable use of our ocean resources. A second goal would be to help each coastal region bring together and co-ordinate the elements needed to build a flourishing and diverse ocean based economy.

The concept has received widespread support throughout the oceans sector. However, before the government and its partners can proceed any further with this initiative, we must establish the legislative framework within which an integrated strategy can operate. This is what we are doing now by introducing the oceans act.

It is fundamental that the oceans act is enabling legislation. It removes barriers and sets the stage for Canadians to begin a new era in their relationship with the sea.

The oceans act has three main components. There is the declaration of Canada's jurisdiction over both its exclusive economic zone of 200 nautical miles and a contiguous zone of 24 nautical miles. Another component is the provision for the development and implementation of a national oceans management strategy based on sustainable development and integrated management of oceans coastal activities and resources and the consolidation and clarification of federal responsibilities for managing Canada's oceans. These are all essential steps if Canadians are going to work together to develop a new, integrated approach to oceans management.

First, it is absolutely vital that the Canadian government expand its jurisdiction over the ocean areas within our 200-mile limit, implementing the sovereign rights to which we know are under the law of the sea. This is essential both to protect the environmental integrity of these areas and to ensure that the oceans' precious resources are available for use by future generations of Canadians.

Second, an integrated approach to oceans management will help ocean stakeholders to consider a wide range of ocean activities all in one big picture. This includes everything from shipping, offshore oil and gas exploration, fisheries management and coastal development to the creation of special marine protected areas for fragile ecosystems. An integrated ocean strategy will help decision makers to consider environmental and developmental issues in relation to each other rather than in isolation. As was the case in the past, in this way it will enable Canadians to achieve a better balance between environmental protection and human activity than we have ever had before.

• (1510)

Third, it is essential that the federal government and its partners in the oceans sector work together to bring an end to the current ad hoc fragmented approach to ocean management that has worked for so long to the detriment of both the environment and many of our ocean industries.

Ocean and coastal issues cross many jurisdictions. They can be international, national, regional, provincial and local all at the same time. In the past, this has given rise to a host of problems, including conflicts over jurisdiction, duplication and inaction. Yet marine ecosystems know no artificial boundaries and neither do trade and business. It is time to work together in a new spirit of co-operation and to learn to harmonize our efforts.

All of these steps will strengthen our ability to protect the ocean environment. They will also enhance the potential of the many ocean based industries that are so important to our coastal communities. Allow me to take a few minutes to outline some of the benefits of both the oceans act and the planned oceans management strategy to industry.

First, extending our economic and environmental jurisdiction out to 200 nautical miles will provide greater stability to all of our ocean industries. It will build upon the exclusive fishing zone which we already have and will expand to include other opportunities for development. It will further cement our right to protect the environment.

Second, the clarification of federal roles and ocean responsibilities will help to simplify the relations between government and other stakeholders. Business will especially appreciate both this move and the consolidation of regulations.

Third, the commitment to build partnerships will allow other levels of government, industry and non-governmental organizations and other interested stakeholders to develop shared goals in oceans management. This approach should lead to better communication, greater co-operation and increasing harmonization. All these are welcome spinoffs for industry that should reduce the cost of doing business and stimulate growth.

Fourth, an increased emphasis on the co-ordination and dissemination of scientific, environmental and management information should place our ocean policies and practices on a much firmer scientific footing. In addition, improved communications between the private sector and federal scientists should stimulate innovation and technology transfer.

As a package, these benefits will help to generate new opportunities and improve the business environment for our ocean industries. An integrated oceans management strategy will place Canadians at the forefront of ocean management and the development of related technologies.

Canadians already have many of the needed tools to fill this ocean vision and to move ahead in the world economy. Both our west and east coasts have world class research facilities that make important contributions to an international climate and oceans research. Both these regions have clusters of thriving private sector enterprise that have the know-how to design, apply and market specialized ocean based technology to clients around the world.

Allow me to provide a few examples of how the Canadian oceans industry is selling its products and expertise to clients around the world.

A good example is New East Technologies of Newfoundland. New East started out as a ship to shore radio business but a few years ago started to design and build an improved switch system that routes radio signals to specific destinations by satellite. Now a cluster of satellite communication firms, New East companies track the progress of ocean going ships and provide radio links for some 40 airlines. In addition, it is exploring the telephone switching equipment markets of Hong Kong and China.

• (1515)

Another example is AGI, Ariel Geomatics of Nova Scotia. Formed in 1993, this growing company undertakes airborne environmental mapping and monitoring surveys using a compact airborne spectrographic imager, CASI for short. AGI is one of the few private sector owners of this advanced technology.

AGI has used CASI technology for ocean mapping but is also marketing its potential application in other areas such as land use and vegetation studies, urban mapping, agriculture, forestry and geological work. Already its services have been used by clients in Italy, Chile and the United Kingdom.

The future of this new industry looks bright and with the oceans act and the oceans management strategy it will look even brighter. Countries ratifying the United Nations convention on the law of the sea will have to map the 200 mile offshore exclusive economic zones. With Canada's demonstrated leadership in this field, many of these nations will turn to Canadian companies to assist them in fulfilling these and other requirements.

The oceans act and the oceans management strategy will help Canadians to make the most of our ocean expertise and resources. The benefits will be many and varied. The extension of Canadian jurisdiction and the adoption of an integrated approach of fisheries management will better enable our Pacific and Atlantic fisheries to achieve sustainable harvest levels. The more effective protection of our marine and coastal environment will make Canada a prime destination for ecotourism. The application of new technologies will make Canada a world leader in aquaculture, marine safety in shipping, resource assessment and offshore petroleum production.

I am very proud of our government's leadership in working with Canadians to draw up the oceans act and oceans management strategy. Together they are proof of the government's commitment to create prosperity and a better quality of life for all Canadians. An ocean of opportunity lies before us. With careful consultation,

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management and sensitivity to the environment all of our ocean industries can be encouraged to flourish and grow.

I encourage all my colleagues to join me in voting in favour of this long term oceans vision for Canadians.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his intervention. I would like to set him straight on some very important issues in western Canada, on the coast. The member mentioned we do not have a problem with shellfish. That is simply untrue.

Shellfish stocks on the west coast are being pillaged. They have been pillaged for years. Even with abalone, which was banned in 1989, there has been widespread poaching of abalone all over the coast, in Nanaimo, in Victoria, in Sooke. Stocks of mussels and various other subspecies of shellfish, geoducks, abalone, are being pillaged all over the west coast.

DFO officers have been told to look the other way when this is happening. This is a problem of low level management. They have been told not to enforce the laws in fisheries.

The ministry cannot even handle two miles out of the country, let alone 200 miles. I suggest it get its act together now, otherwise we will not have any fishery left on the west coast.

I ask the hon. member what he and his ministry will do to help the decimated subspecies of groundfish, of salmon and of shellfish on the west coast so that we can avert an east coast disaster, because we are close to that.

Mr. Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

All hon. members know the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has taken a lead role in conservation in the international community. When I was at the recent convention in St. Petersburg, many people came up to me and said they were glad we have a Minister of Fisheries and Oceans willing to take a lead role. He has put conservation on the front lines. He has put sustainability of fisheries on the front lines. He has made people all over the world aware of how important our fisheries are and how important it is to have a sustainable fishery and how important conservations is. The minister has taken a lead role in terms of assuring we as Canadians take a lead role.

• (1520)

If the hon. member would look at what happened in the United Nations on the convention on straddling stocks and migratory stocks, it was Canada that took the lead role. It was the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans who took the lead role to ensure that even beyond the 200 mile zone we have a dispute mechanism system so the international community will respect our marine resources.

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The minister has admitted we can do a better job. We can improve the way we are doing things. I talked about the 40,000 Canadians who are not working because of the collapse of the groundfish. We have to work harder. We have to ensure we do have a sustainable fishery. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has put that as his number one priority. He has taken the lead not only in Canada but he is known as someone who has taken the lead in the international community in ensuring we preserve our marine resources and that we have a sustainable fishery for future generations and that we preserve our coastal communities and their economies.

The bill will ensure that we look at our oceans on an ecosystem basis, not manage on a species basis. It ensures we take into consideration coastal communities and the economy. We have to treat our oceans as an asset. We have to ensure exploitation of those resources are done in a way that we have a sustainable fishery to protect our coastal communities and to ensure they have an ongoing fishery for the long term.

I assure the member the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans will take a lead. I hope the hon. member will take the opportunity to study this bill. I know he will support it because of his concern that we have an ongoing sustainable fishery.

I assure the hon. member we will have strong enforcement. As he knows, we have increased the enforcement budget on the west coast to make sure all people comply with the Fisheries Act and we will make sure we take action when someone does not abide by the Fisheries Act.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will try to use the few minutes that are left to make a comment and put a question to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

First of all, in his answer, he often referred to "our good minister of fisheries who did this and that". I would like him to focus on Bill C-98, which will become an act of Parliament.

This means that the law will still be in place even after the current minister of fisheries leaves his post. So he should not cite the current minister's popularity as the reason why things will stay the same in the future. He should be aware of that. I know that the hon. member comes from the west coast while I come from the east coast. He probably attended the meeting of fisheries ministers in Victoria last year. Since the parliamentary secretary has invited us to read the bill carefully, I would like to hear his comments on clauses 30 and 31, which provide that the provinces will be consulted only on the same basis as all other

parties interested in ocean management that the department wants to consult with.

I am getting to my question. I understand that, at last year's meeting of fisheries ministers in Victoria, British Columbia was ready to take on part of the responsibilities for fisheries management, as were Newfoundland and Quebec. This is the department's first opportunity to answer publicly, and from what I understand, there is no link, no consultation hierarchy.

• (1525)

Is this the future of Canada, all interested parties on an equal footing while the provinces must fend for themselves? Is the parliamentary secretary endorsing this kind of attitude? I would like him to comment on this.

[*English*]

Mr. Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I also thank him for his contribution to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

I was at that meeting and just as in any other government department if there are areas in which we can improve the way fisheries and oceans works, if we can eliminate areas of duplication and if there are areas in which we can create more efficiencies, we are open to that. The minister is very open to that. He has stated we always want to look at how we can improve things.

One of the things which was done, of which the hon. member is aware, was the merger with the coast guard. That was part of a process to create a synergy in which we can operate more efficiently and in which there is greater flexibility.

The hon. member should support the bill because it takes a much broader view of our oceans. The bill does not in any way take away from provincial rights. It will enable us to work with the provinces. It will encourage us to all work together. For those reasons I hope the hon. member will support the bill.

Part of the reason the bill came about was the National Advisory Board on Science and Technology said as a federal government we have to do a better job in managing our oceans, that we are not doing a very good job. We accepted its advice.

We will have to manage in an ecosystem and in broader terms. We have the longest shoreline in the world and we have to look at it differently. We have to look at our oceans in terms of an asset we have to treat with respect. When we exploit that asset we have to look at what the interdependence is. The bill finally brings together a strategy on how to deal with our oceans.

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with a great deal of interest to the words of my friend across the way. I am a little surprised at some of the conclusions he is drawing with respect to Bill C-98.

Bill C-98 at first blush looks like a pretty innocuous bill. It is a good bill in some respects. It recognizes Canada's jurisdiction over an exclusive economic zone and a contiguous zone in accordance with the United Nations convention on the law of the sea. That is a positive move.

It is also supposed to allow the management of all oceans and coastal activities to be co-ordinated under the oceans management strategy and it tries to clarify federal responsibilities in the management of our oceans. I say it is supposed to and tries because the bill is an attempt to address the concerns of the oceans and the fisheries, but it is a failure.

The bill manages to impose a new tax on fishermen. It manages to retain the duplication in the bureaucracy which exists now. It also manages to introduce new levels of bureaucracy.

This is not what fishermen want. It is not what Canadians want or deserve. Canadians want less government, not more. The minister and members of the Liberal government seem to be the only people who do not understand that.

The bill represents the Liberal government's complete lack of understanding of what life is like in Canada as a taxpayer. What will it take for the government to understand it is impossible for Canadians to shoulder any more of an already unbearable tax burden?

What will it take to make the government understand the fishermen of Canada, already victims of a fisheries crisis on both coasts, can barely make ends meet right now? It is either a complete and utter misunderstanding on the part of the minister, although not surprising since he just awarded himself a generous pension out of all proportion to what most Canadians could ever expect, or it is a complete disdain for the plight of the fishermen. As long as his pockets are full and he does not have to make serious cuts in his department, he simply does not care. Look at the attitude he had toward the Canadian taxpayers when he refurbished his office last year at the cost of a couple hundred thousand dollars.

• (1530)

As I said, times are tough for most people involved in the fishery in Canada, but the fisheries minister proposes a new tax on them anyway. Clause 49, page 21 of the bill, explains that the fees are for the service provided by DFO. Would that be the privilege to fish? This is not a service. It also states that fees may not exceed the cost of providing the service. Would that be the cost of DFO, TAGS, unemployment insurance, and other social programs or what? Where does it end?

A tax would only serve to hurt an industry that is already in trouble. DFO already collects \$13 million in fees from fisher-

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men, and it wants to increase that to \$50 million. That is a 400 per cent increase paid in one lump sum. The fees are based on the landed value of the catch but are paid in one lump sum at the beginning of the season. They will be incremental, not fixed.

The parliamentary secretary said last week in response to questions that were asked in the House that there had not been an increase since 1985 and therefore he was condoning the decision. A 400 per cent increase paid in one lump sum is not reasonable. Imagine if you will, your hydro bill going up 400 per cent in one lump sum, or your phone bill or your mortgage payment. If this were happening to me I would push my MP to oppose such attempts. But alas, Atlantic fishermen have no one to turn to. Reform is the only party here to hear their voice.

This tax is a way for the Liberals to get the fishermen out of the industry. The minister wants to tax them out of the water. The minister calls this a user fee, but he is wrong. User fees are in return for services rendered. There are no services rendered here.

There are 31 Atlantic Canadian Liberal MPs and one from an extinct party. Where do the fishermen have to go? Reform is their only voice. We were in Atlantic Canada a couple of weeks ago and this is what we heard consistently. I feel rather bad for the Liberal MPs who come from Atlantic Canada who are going to be required to support the bill, because the people in Atlantic Canada are going to remember them for it.

The minister enjoys trying to impress the international community, but what about Canadians? Is the tax supposed to impress them?

Let us talk about another aspect of the bill; it is called partnership. This means that the minister under the bill will have the discretion to enter into partnership agreements on the management of the fishery resource in Canada—at his discretion.

I would like to read an excerpt from a letter I received from people in Atlantic Canada who are concerned about where this is going to lead. I quote:

In general, our concerns arise out of a potential that the Bill will permit delegation of actual resource management authority to anyone whom the Minister may see fit to nominate for this purpose. This regime has potential to be even more unpredictable and unchallengeable than the present "absolute discretion" of the Minister for which Section 7 of the Fisheries Act provides. "Management" of fisheries resources (including such decisions as access to and allocation of the resource) are critically important to individual fishermen. The delegation of such decisions to committees, who are not subject to even the dubious control of political accountability, would create opportunities for management by special-interest groups.

Fisheries management in Atlantic Canada has had a dismal history of inability to ensure that the greatest good accrues to the greatest number of participants in the industry. See, for example, the third report of the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries, dated June 23, 1993. Strong leadership, a fair and reviewable decision-making process, and clear legislative mandates as to exactly whom

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benefits from the fishery are to principally accrue to, are required to address and to correct the fundamental problems in the industry.

• (1535)

The special provision in Bill C-98 which raises the concern expressed above is in Section 32(c):

32. For the purpose of the implementation of integrated management plans, the Minister may

(c) on his own or her own or jointly with another person or body or with another minister, board or agency of the Government of Canada,

(i) establish advisory or management bodies and appoint or designate, as appropriate, members of those bodies, and (ii) recognize established advisory or management bodies;

The scope to which this provision would permit delegation of unfettered and unreviewable authority to unidentified and unaccountable persons is of great concern to the independent fishermen whom it is my privilege to represent.

Mr. Speaker, you can see there is a great deal of concern in Atlantic Canada over these partnership provisions in Bill C-98.

Let us talk for a minute about the bureaucracy. Will the size of the bureaucracy be affected in any way by Bill C-98? Is this consolidation of legislation under one umbrella called the Canada oceans act going to in any way affect the bureaucracy? On paper the shuffle looks good, but the reality is it is not going to affect the bureaucracy in any tangible way.

The DFO is already a bloated department and is extremely top heavy. With the cutbacks we see the minister is talking about destaffing lighthouses while the offices in Ottawa on Kent Street remain fully staffed. Nobody has made any concerted effort to rationalize DFO's bureaucracy from the top down. They are starting from the bottom up. We see conservation officers being taken off the beat, we see enforcement officers being taken off the beat, but we do not see the bureaucracy addressed in any tangible way.

This bill was obviously drafted by bureaucrats, not parliamentarians. I guess we cannot expect them to address the need for cuts by cutting their own department, can we? It is really unfortunate that with this opportunity the minister and the government did not seize it and seriously address the size of DFO's bureaucracy.

Let us talk about ocean protection. Yes, this will be a step toward ratifying the United Nations convention on the law of the sea, but what else? What about the extension of the 200-mile limit? The minister crusaded so proudly against the Spanish fleet off our Grand Banks, and he was supported by a great number of Canadians for doing so, but what of the protection he so strongly hinted was on its way? This bill does absolutely nothing to address the extension of the 200-mile limit to cover the nose and tail of the Grand Banks. I understand the minister made such indications here in the House earlier today. I am here to say that it does nothing to extend Canada's jurisdiction in those areas. This bill does not give the governing body any real

authority. It has no teeth. Governing is only possible with authority.

As with gun control, cabinet will iron out the details of this bill later. We are talking about order in council decisions. Understandably, the fishermen in the industry do not trust it. After all, it was the government's mismanagement that got us into this whole mess in the first place. Why trust them? They have only shown that their own interests are at heart and not those of their constituents.

This bill does not invoke thoughts of government accountability in the minds of Canadians and in particular in the minds of fishermen. Instead it promotes fears of trickery and backroom dealings. The Liberal cabinet needs to make the decisions by order in council because even some of their own members are upset about this bill. We all know what the Prime Minister does with members who represent their constituents.

Cabinet could hike fees again next year without parliamentary scrutiny and without public debate. It is no holds barred for the Liberals. These are legitimate concerns. If the Liberals were implementing legislation they knew would better the fishery, why hide behind cabinet? Why would they be afraid of a public debate on the matter?

I am concerned that this will mean the special interest groups will be allowed to control the agenda. The conservation of the fishery should be in the interest of all Canadians, not just a select few.

• (1540)

The Reform Party cannot support a bill that would increase taxes and increase the size of government. Do the minister and this government not understand that Canadians want less government and taxes, not more? This bill is nothing more than a cowardly tax grab to ensure the job security of bloated DFO offices in Ottawa. The minister could not really have thought that fishermen and Parliament would ever condone such an act.

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened very closely to my colleague from the Reform Party.

I know my colleague from the Reform Party has just been to Atlantic Canada, but there is an old saying that a little bit of knowledge can be very dangerous. I know they feel they know Atlantic Canada, but I can assure this House that we have members who know it very well, are well informed and can advise us on the issue.

Let me first make a few statements. The member should go back to the budget, which outlined the cost initiatives. Obviously his party did not look at the budget very closely, because some of the issues in terms of cost recovery were already indicated in

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the 1995 budget. They should go back to that. Obviously they did not read that part.

In the second part, in terms of the headquarters, that is where the biggest cuts are coming. Once again they should go back to the budget, because the headquarters are going to be cut by 26 per cent when the average cuts in the department are only 16 per cent.

Let me also ask the member a question in terms of his position on the licensing fee. Our main resources are a public resource. As a public resource, certain people have beneficial privileges to that resource. Should the fisherperson who catches or lands \$10,000 worth of fish and pays \$30 for a licence pay the same fee as those individuals who have a landing value of \$1 million? Should they pay the same licence fee of \$30 when they are taking out of a public resource that belongs to all Canadians? This government has said that those who take the most out of the public resource should pay a little more. This is only common sense.

The Reform Party always talks about user pay. They want to have user pay for all those people who go to the doctor. All this is saying is that if one is taking a huge amount of a public resource then they should pay based on how much they benefit from that public resource. I think all Canadians and all members from Atlantic Canada would support that view.

Mr. Scott (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I hear the hon. member for Halifax saying she invites me there. She may be aware that I just came back from there. I talked to a number of fishermen in the Halifax area, the Dartmouth area and Central Nova. I went down to the wharfs and talked to the small guys with the small boats, not the big guys. I heard what they had to say about this fee increase.

It is interesting to see the parliamentary secretary over there defending what the government is doing when it flies in the face of what I heard back in Atlantic Canada. I would suggest to the hon. member for Halifax that maybe she wants to go and spend a little time talking to some of the fishermen in her riding, because she might get a different point of view from what she is getting from the parliamentary secretary.

I ran into one old fellow and asked him how he was making out in the fishery this year. He said: "Well, it is pretty tough. My fingernails are all wore out trying to hang on." This is the kind of attitude the parliamentary secretary displays to these fishermen who are having a very difficult time surviving from year to year.

The parliamentary secretary defends the increased fees and says it is a public resource and the fishermen ought to be paying a suitable fee for access to that resource. I do not think anybody in Canada would disagree with that, but is a 400 per cent increase in one lump sum reasonable? Regardless of one's income for the year, the person pays it up front in one lump sum. Is that reasonable? I do not think most Canadians would find that reasonable.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to what the hon. colleague from the Reform Party had to say. This prompted me to take another look at my history of Quebec fisheries, and I would like to share with you these facts that bear a direct relation to the bill.

Between 1922 and 1980, in Quebec, fisheries were managed under an administrative delegation agreement whereby the federal government had transferred fisheries management to the Government of Quebec.

Therefore, during this time frame, we were able to develop a network now referred to as a sustainable development network, because small processing plants and refrigerating plants that pretty well met the needs of shore fishermen sprung up along the coast.

About 1980, following a fight—another one—between the federal minister, who has now become a senator, and his Quebec counterpart, this delegation of power was cancelled. After that—a coincidence perhaps—fish grew scarce and can no longer be found in our oceans.

I would draw a parallel between this and the remarks made by the hon. member because we are often told that big is beautiful. The larger the structure created, the larger the number of people involved and the better the chances it will work and be successful.

I tend to say that maybe the word is "small is beautiful" in this instance. Perhaps, if we had structures better suited to the people's needs, we would have a better chance of getting by. Take for example the fishermen of Rivière-au-Renard, Newport or the Lower North Shore. They keep running into problems with respect to fisheries management in Canada.

While fishing is a major economic activity in the Gaspé Peninsula, the Lower North Shore and the Magdalen Islands, Quebec fisheries are a very small part of the whole Canadian picture and we have always sought ways for our fishermen to have a greater weight in the balance by providing expertise, supporting them through the work of biologists, so that they can adequately argue their points.

The cod stocks were depleted in part because the politicians in charge had frequently given in to pressure. We now find ourselves with many endangered species because the policies did not reflect the reality in terms of the market and the fishing of the species. Some fishermen are forced to stay home because they cannot get the required service.

I will conclude by asking the Reform member if there is a way to ensure that fisheries management stays close to the people, in a concrete and daily fashion, while also taking into account the opinion of fishermen, instead of having huge structures where the power ultimately rests with whoever has the largest number of biologists or provides the biggest report. Such a structure is of

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no help to users, namely the fishermen, who do not have enough of a say in the process.

Does the Reform member feel that this bill is headed the wrong way since it promotes a “Big is beautiful” instead of considering also a “Small is beautiful” approach?

[*English*]

Mr. Scott (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his intervention. He made a couple of observations and I think he is right on.

I was not aware that there was a withdrawal of delegated authority in his province in 1980, but it does not surprise me because that is the way the federal government has acted over the last 25 or 30 years. It has tried to consolidate more power for itself all the time: Ottawa is always bigger, better and more beautiful. Obviously that is not what Canadians think. Canadians would like to see decentralization of power such as the member is alluding to. It certainly is a philosophy and a vision of the party I am representing in the House today. Our leader was trying to make that point with the Prime Minister during question period.

• (1550)

We believe the federal government ought to look at devolving powers to provinces, municipalities and communities wherever possible and get away from the notion that only Ottawa has the brains and the ability to run the country.

Mrs. Jean Payne (St. John's West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as vice-chairperson of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans I am pleased today to have the opportunity to take part in the debate on the oceans act.

Further, I make note that contrary to statements made earlier today by the member for Fraser Valley West this vice-chairperson is not a separatist. He neglected to mention that there were two vice-chairs of the committee, myself and the member for Gaspé.

Parliament is called upon today to formalize Canadian jurisdiction over vast new areas of ocean waters and numerous resources off our coasts. The bill before us challenges all Canadians to unite in the development of a strategy which will incorporate the harnessing of the oceans' economic potential and command respect for the oceans' environmental necessities.

In the red book we stated that Canadians increasingly understand that the national environmental agenda can no longer be separated from the national economic agenda. It is long past the time for the federal government to act on this understanding by adapting economic and environmental agendas that converge.

As a government we will stand behind our agenda and devote attention to this important piece of legislation.

The oceans act encompasses the fundamentals that ensure Canada's economic and environmental agendas for our oceans are a priority. It is a pivotal turning point in providing a foundation which will ensure ocean resource management is properly administered. Painfully we have come to discover that the ocean resources are finite and that human activity can and has jeopardized fragile ocean ecosystems.

Just as everything that lives exhibits interdependency, we have seen the environmental health of our oceans connected to the economic health of our country. As children we were told not to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. As teenagers we learned the basic laws of physics which state that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. These laws and proverbs are represented in the oceans act. It is based on implementing a few simple lessons. If we destroy the oceans they will not provide us with the sustenance we enjoy on a daily basis. If we abuse them we will pay a grave price.

The oceans act provides direction for the Canadian jurisdiction of over nearly five million square kilometres of ocean. Through the act we create a 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone for Canada in the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic oceans. We will have the right to explore and exploit resources within the 200-mile exclusive economic zone and at the same time be given the right and responsibility to conserve and protect the same resources.

It is our duty as Canadians to preserve and to protect the marine environment not only for ourselves but for generations to come. We cannot continue to shortchange generations of the future. That is why the bill before Parliament today goes beyond the simplicities of one statement of jurisdiction. The bill is a cornerstone, a building block and a framework for a new ocean management strategy which consolidates and clarifies federal responsibilities for implementation of the new strategy.

The key to the future is sustainable development of Canada's oceans and an integrated approach to management of ocean resources. Only through this approach will Canadians be able to make our economic and environmental agenda complete.

It has been 12 years since the United Nations General Assembly established the World Commission on Environment and Development, more commonly recognized as the Brundtland commission. The commission urged the world to embrace the concept of sustainable development. The Brundtland report was the cornerstone of all forthcoming legislation. It embraced the concept of sustainable development where the environment is fully incorporated into the economic decision making process as an afterthought and not as an afterthought.

• (1555)

The oceans act is based on that wisdom. The philosophy of the bill is strengthened in its foundations of sustainable development. Unfortunately a philosophy is not a plan of action.

The new bill breathes light into the principle of sustainable development by putting in place the framework necessary for a Canadian action plan for our oceans. In developing an oceans management strategy the federal government must show leadership, and the bill exemplifies leadership.

The oceans act will extend Canadian environmental legislation to include the new exclusive economic zone. The act will make the Department of Fisheries and Oceans the focal point for the co-ordination of federal oceans activities. It will authorize the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to develop marine environmental quality guidelines and establish marine protected areas.

The act will also give the minister responsibility for conducting marine research, preparing scientific reports, and operating and maintaining the necessary federal research facilities. Most important, the minister will have the authority to lead in the co-ordination of activities to promote the development of a shared Canada oceans strategy, in turn uniting all Canadians and promoting international unity.

The minister will be able to enter into new partnership agreements, to share ocean information, to share ocean research, to share ocean planning and to share ocean management. Through the basic principles of sharing we can reduce duplication and conflict. Only by working together can we adopt a comprehensive ecosystem based approach to comprehensive ecosystem problems.

This unified approach to ocean management provides the criteria necessary for the creation of a legal framework which will enable provinces and territories, businesses and environmentalists, fisher people and ocean industries to pull together and to strive toward a common goal.

We have a common goal. We all want Canada's oceans to be productive, safe and healthy for all generations. We can only achieve that goal by making Canada a world leader in oceans and marine resource management.

On Canada's coasts there are hundreds of fishing communities. My riding is made up of many such communities, one of which I was raised in.

The minister has already mentioned that when John Cabot reached the shores of Newfoundland in 1497 he found the sea: "swarming with fish which can be taken not only with a net but with baskets let down with a stone". This illustration of the former

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abundance of fish is now in contrast with the shortage of northern cod off Canada's east coast.

The oceans act is our management strategy to ensure that the devastation which has occurred on the coasts off Newfoundland never happens again. Many fish stocks on the coast of Newfoundland were severely depleted prior to Canada's declaration of a 200-mile fishing zone in 1977. Although some Atlantic codfish stocks have begun to recover somewhat since that time, many stocks continue to be subject to high fishing pressure, particularly the stocks that straddle the 200-mile limit where foreign fleets have ignored internationally negotiated catch limits.

Our fishers on the Atlantic coast and throughout Canada have suffered. They have lost their livelihood, their pride and their sustenance. It is not too late to provide legislation countenance. We must amend the marine conservation policies in the country and prevent future tragedies from occurring. The oceans act will do just that.

Canada's fisheries will continue to face a variety of pressures imposed by an increasing world population. This will produce more wastes which will impair the natural productivity of oceans and inland waters. Managing the fisheries in the face of these pressures will require co-operation on national and international levels.

The oceans act will ensure that proper management of the ocean resources both living and non-living will be sustained. Each one of these communities houses a wealth of accumulated knowledge about currents, salinity, water depth, temperatures, tides and navigational routes. We must link this knowledge to a shared ocean management strategy. We must understand how each of these regions is unique and independent.

The bill before us today confirms the merger of the Canadian Coast Guard and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. It ensures boating safety is placed in the highest priority.

• (1600)

The legislation makes it possible to form new domestic agreements to increase prosperity in trade and commerce. Through basic principles of sustainable development, the transfer of technology from government and academic researchers to the private sector will be facilitated. Together we must work to improve resource assessment and inspection. Harmonized regulations will guarantee services provided by different levels of government effectively meet the needs of our sea coast communities and ports.

The oceans act makes it possible for Canadians to work together to shape the best national answers and the best local answers for ocean sustainable development. Better understanding of oceans, better resource management, better environmental management,

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increased safety and increased trade and commerce are all components of an integrated ocean strategy.

By providing the legislative tools to enable Canadians to get our act together on these issues the oceans act will help to ensure Canada is a forceful and effective voice on global ocean issues. By demonstrating our own responsible attitude to ocean sustainable development we will be in a strong position to push forward for greater global responsibility. In effect, Canadians must seek the same force for good on all ocean issues that we have for our fisheries conservation.

The Brundtland commission called its report "Our Common Future". That is what this bill is about and that is what we are really debating. Canada has a special responsibility as a country which borders the Arctic, the Pacific and the Atlantic oceans. Our common future depends on whether we use those oceans wisely, whether we actively seek to promote sustainable development and whether we actively seek to pursue both our environmental responsibilities and our economic opportunities.

I am happy and proud to support the bill and urge all members to join me in allowing this legislation to move forward quickly for study by the standing committee. The oceans act charts a wise course for the future of ocean policy. It is a course which would bind our country with a common future, a course we must all sail together.

Mr. Allan Kerpan (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre, Ref.): Madam Speaker, for two years now the Liberal government has presented legislation it says will make government more streamlined, more responsive and more responsible to Canadians. Its comments have been merely smoke and mirrors. I am sad to say Bill C-98, an act respecting the oceans of Canada, is another example of the government's saying one thing and doing another.

The government told Canadians its changes to the Young Offenders Act would raise ultra-violent youth to adult court and that this action would give 16 and 17-year old cold blooded murderers sentences equal to their heinous crimes. The government's statements were not equal to the realities of the bill.

The government has made numerous statements that Bill C-98 will end duplication, bring control of Canada's traditional fishing grounds on the open sea into Parliament and ensure the success of fisheries. Again we have statements which do not match the realities of the legislation.

How can the fisheries be successful when the government intends to tax them to death? The government tells Canadians we on this side of the House do not understand the problems of the east coast. We understand all problems facing Canadians better than the government.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans bored himself a place at the trough by accepting his gold plated, self-imposed pension. Now the minister wants to pay for his pension on the backs of the fisheries, an area where it is impossible for those Canadians to bear the brunt of an already unbearable tax burden.

The Liberal government claims the bill will end duplication and provide efficient operation through the oceans management strategy. Again we have a catch phrase for media consumption which has no bearing on the realities of the bill.

Bill C-98 suggests all government bodies co-ordinate their activities relating to the oceans surrounding Canada. Nowhere in the bill does it state that all government bodies dealing with oceans must co-ordinate their functions. There are no penalties, consequences or even government scrutiny for any departments which refuse to end duplication.

• (1605)

In effect, the bill will create even more bureaucracy. How does the government intend to pay for this new bureaucratic nightmare? The government will raise licensing fees for fishermen. That is the tax I have been talking about. Not only that, it will increase the fees to such an extent that family oriented fishing boats or small fishing groups will be put out of business.

It is either absolute and utter ignorance of the reality on the east coast that the minister does not understand or it is total disregard for the east coast fishery, large and small.

To the minister it seems as long as his pockets are full and his future is assured he does not care about those he is supposed to be helping. The government gives itself all the power to set fees through orders in council.

Parliament is bypassed once more as the body that decides issues for Canadians. This proposed new tax will punish those who have finally achieved a harvest worthy of their efforts.

Just as a previous Liberal government crippled the western Canadian economy by placing punitive taxes in place for the oil industry, this government now intends to place punitive taxes on fishermen who do not manage to get a decent catch.

If fishermen obtain a catch large enough to cover their bills, large enough to give them a decent living once again from the ocean, those members opposite intend to raise their fees to the point at which fishermen will be simply taxed out of business.

The east coast fishery has had enough hard luck and has had enough businesses driven to extinction through failed government management of the fisheries without having government finally drive the last nail in the coffin by higher and higher taxes. Of some of these smaller and medium fishermen the government

will demand tax increases as high as 400 per cent over current levels.

We from the west understand the social disintegration and punitive taxation imposed by an uncaring federal government and what that can create. We from the west know how punitive taxation can cause breakdowns of marriages, losses of homes and an increase in alcoholism, suicide, bankruptcies and affect many other social programs. If the bill is passed the east coast will experience the same.

U-Hauls behind cars driven by grim faced drivers will proceed like caravans down east coast highways as those forced from their homes seek employment in other areas of the country.

As Canadians trying desperately to keep their families and homes together on the east coast know, times are hard enough without the government making it worse.

I oppose the bill not because of what the government says it does but because it does not do what it says it will. The bill will give cabinet dictatorial powers and remove the elected representatives chosen by the people of Canada from that decision making process. The bill will continue a policy adopted by the Prime Minister that elected representatives must not be responsible for their constituents.

The Prime Minister stated that members of his party who support their constituents and not decrees from the top will not get their nomination papers signed or will be punished in other ways.

We have already seen these threats in practice when some members who followed constituent wishes were removed from their committee posts. The bill will give the cabinet even more power to punish the east coast representatives of its party who vote the wishes of their constituents and not the wishes of the ministers' inner circle.

The bill will not consolidate the operations of various government departments related to the fisheries or oceans but instead will allow another level of bureaucracy to be formed.

It is very clear the government has no desire to reduce the taxation load on all Canadians by bringing in efficiencies in any department. The minister is probably the worst offender.

Canadians are tired of larger and larger government taking more and more money from their pockets. The justice minister recently appointed 11 supporters, failed candidates and fundraisers to taxpayer funded posts within his department.

Liberals love larger bureaucracy because that gives them places to appoint people at taxpayers' expense, while this bill will create

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another bureaucracy for the government to fill patronage appointment positions.

We agree fisheries and oceans should have jurisdiction over the coast guard and marine science but only if it will save money by ending duplication. The bill simply will not do that.

• (1610)

We agree that small and medium size fisheries are the lifeblood of many east coast families. The bill will create punitive taxation that will destroy their very livelihood which the government states it will defend.

Under those circumstances the members opposite elected to represent constituents dependant on the fishery to survive absolutely must vote no. All decisions on future actions, be they fee increases or regulation, will be enacted by special interest participation with cabinet and not Parliament.

Special interests will dominate environment discussions relating to fisheries or oceans and paralyse realistic growth or use of fishery or development of ocean related industry. Just as they have with issues relating to realistic and safe development within Canada's borders, special interests will again have the ear of the minister.

Here is an example of how special interests have held up needed expansion in the country. I am thinking of the TransCanada highway through Banff that had been planned and put off for years even though study after study said the twinning of the highway could be done with more than adequate concern for large animals ranging throughout Banff. Thankfully this type of process has come to an end and that twinning will commence. However, many serious injuries and possibly needless deaths of motorists have occurred because government would not listen to the voice of reason and preferred to hear the voices of special interest groups.

Even a study by Parks Canada officials said the improvements could be done on this stretch of road without harm to the environment. However, it was not until the government lost two frivolous court cases that were only instituted to appeal the special interests having the government's ear did the harassment stop.

How long will needed projects, realistic economic development and opportunities to enhance the lives of those living near the oceans be delayed? The bill would impose a duty on the minister to collaborate with all interested persons.

I cannot support the bill. With all honesty I do not see how any member whose constituents depend on the ocean for their livelihood can support the bill. I am certain those members opposite will be told they must vote according to the decree of the few and not according to the wishes of many. That is the saddest point of all.

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Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his speech. I listened very closely.

His speech is very similar to the speech made by the member for Skeena. I do not want to repeat some of the remarks I have already made. I once again remind him he should read the budget. He has put forward concerns about the licensing fees which were budget items in February 1995. For every \$5 in cuts there is only \$1 in cost recovery. This is part of the cost recovery. The hon. member should also keep in mind there was public consultation right across the province.

More to the point, hon. members often mention special interest groups. When special interest groups represent the ideology of these people they work hand in hand. They are holding hands with special interest groups. Look at the gun lobby. They are joining hands with the gun lobby so they should not tell us about special interest groups. When they represent their view, they are happy to work with them.

The licence fee was \$30. For those who use the resource, it does not matter if they have a landing value \$12,000 or a landing value of \$1 million. The fee was an insignificant amount of \$30. Now those people who take the most from the resource will pay a higher amount. It is a public resource. They have a beneficial access to that resource that not everybody has only because they have to pay that licensing fee. Should we charge the same amount?

• (1615)

Should we not charge those people who take more out of the resource? The figure of 400 per cent was used. Some fisherpersons make \$1 million in a six to eight-week fishing season. Their fee is only going to be 1.6 per cent of their landed value. Do you think that is a huge burden on those people? Obviously, this amount is going to be rated depending on how much the landing value is. If there is a higher landing value then more will be paid. I do not think 1.6 per cent is very much. I am wondering if the member thinks that is too high.

Mr. Kerpan: Madam Speaker, this government always amazes me. I remember very well right after the 1993 election one of the highlights mentioned throughout the media was that this government would be more open to consulting people involved in any industry when it was building policy.

There is case after case. For example when agriculture policy is made no farmers are consulted. When justice policy is made no policemen are consulted. The Minister of Justice talks well and long about how he consulted with the chiefs of police. That is a very small group. I am wondering why this government which

talked a good game at the beginning of 1994 has suddenly gone back on those initial words.

I see the very same thing in this department. The parliamentary secretary talks about consulting the people. I have just come back from a trip to St. John's, Newfoundland. I had the opportunity to speak to some fisher people, as the politically correct term would be. I asked them exactly those questions. I found during my visit that the two biggest concerns the fish industry has are that there is far too much government, far too much bureaucracy, far too much red tape and that the ordinary common every day fisherperson is not consulted on policy making.

Mr. Dhaliwal: Madam Speaker, the hon. member talks about not consulting. In fact, if we look at every one of our policies whether it is human resources or the gun control bill, there has been more consultation done by this government than by any other government. There has been more consultation done by this government on this issue itself.

First, the government consulted the National Advisory Board on Science and Technology. Should we ignore its advice? Should we say it does not know what it is talking about? Then the members across would say we are not listening to these advisory boards. They are the ones who started it.

The minister continued with a vision for oceans management. In November 1994, 600 people and 200 responses were received. Consultation was done. In April 1995 the coastal provinces, the Northwest Territories and Ottawa were consulted. There were meetings in November and December 1994. The list goes on. The people consulted were academics, scientists and others in the fishery, people in the oceans industry, environmentalists, First Nations people and people involved in community development. How much more consultation do Reformers want?

We have heard one of the Reform members say many times that we were consulting too much. He has told the Minister of Justice to stop consulting and get to it. Members of the Reform Party should make up their minds.

One thing is for sure: this government takes its responsibilities seriously. We do the consulting and then we make the decisions. The problem is that Reform members do not always like the decisions and then they complain and say we did not consult. There has been ample consultation on this bill. The Reform Party member who is a member of the standing committee will have an opportunity to work further and put forward recommendations as they come before the committee before this bill goes to third reading.

Mr. Kerpan: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the remarks of the member opposite. The question I would have for him if I were allowed to give one would be: What about the issue of MPs pensions? Were the people consulted on that?

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• (1620)

When I look at things such as this bill we are talking about today and the gun registration bill which was mentioned earlier today, I would ask the member opposite if he really, truly and sincerely believes that full consultation went on throughout all departments with this government. Perhaps he should go out on the street—I would be happy to accompany him—and ask the people if they have been consulted on Bill C-98, on Bill C-68 and on Bill C-85. I rest my case.

Mr. Derek Wells (South Shore, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will begin by commenting on some of the statements made earlier by the opposition parties, particularly the third party.

We on this side of the House are concerned with the issue of access fees and the future of the inshore fishery. We are concerned with coastal communities and the effect that changes in the fishery will have on our coastal communities.

My province is the largest fishing province in the country in terms of landed value in tonnes. My riding of South Shore is the largest individual fishing riding in Canada. Therefore, we are concerned about these issues and I am particularly concerned.

The third party talks about the concerns of Atlantic fishermen and fisherwomen. This is the same party whose policy it is to relocate Atlantic Canadians out of the area. This is the party that would cancel the TAGS program which so many Atlantic fishers rely on. This is the party whose leader told Atlantic Canadians, particularly Atlantic fishers, last weekend to take 15 seconds and tell themselves the fisheries are dead. This is the party that purports to speak for Atlantic fishermen. Reform members go to Atlantic Canada for a weekend and become instant experts.

I want to tell members opposite that I have been meeting with these fishers all my life. I have lived in coastal communities in different parts of Atlantic Canada all my life.

I also ask the members opposite to read the bill because what they are speaking of is not what this bill is about. This bill is not about access fees. This bill is not needed to increase, if that is the government's wish, access fees. Some of the information being circulated is incorrect because those decisions have not been completely made. They are issues to be debated at another time.

I invite members opposite to come to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans when it takes this bill after second reading and begins reviewing it. At that point, after they get an understanding of what the legislation is about, then they can raise some of these issues.

I am pleased to take the opportunity to express my support for Bill C-98, the oceans act. This legislation takes an important

first step toward the creation of a comprehensive, integrated oceans management strategy based on the principles of sustainable development. It provides the legal framework by which the various players in the ocean sector will be able to work together under the leadership of the federal government to protect the marine environment.

For the first time the bill gives statutory recognition to the tremendous importance of Canada's ocean territories. For this reason the oceans act is pioneering legislation. It is a bold step toward a new era in oceans management. It turns good intentions into concrete deeds and actions. It places Canada at the forefront of nations striving to implement the commitments of agenda 21 made at the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development in 1992.

Canada's ocean regions are vast. The richness and variety of the resources almost defy the imagination. Imagine them and comprehend them we must. The future of many of our coastal communities and indeed of humanity itself depends on all of us building a deeper understanding of the incredible magnitude and fragility of this great ecosystem. It is for this reason that I want to take the time today to remind my colleagues of just how important the oceans are to the lives of Canadians and why the passage of the oceans act will be of such benefit to all.

• (1625)

I said that Canada's ocean territories are vast. This hardly does justice to the facts. Canada's coastline stretches from the Pacific through the icy waters of the Arctic to the Atlantic Ocean. At almost 250,000 kilometres it is the longest coastline in the world. This is just the beginning. Our continental shelf spans more than 6.5 million square kilometres making it the second largest in the world.

Together these great bodies of water have been pivotal to our country's evolution. Rich in biodiversity, the oceans have helped forge our sense of identity and have provided the means for transport, trading, communications and sustenance for many generations.

On our east coast especially, an entire culture has been built around shipping and the fishery. For 400 years or more the daily rhythms of communities up and down this rugged coast have centred on the ways of the sea. Nowhere is this more obvious than in my riding of South Shore where communities such as Shelburne, Lunenburg, Clark's Harbour and many others line the coast.

Today Canada's ocean industries no longer dominate our economic profile like they once did. However their importance to our national accounts and to the economies of our coastal areas should not be underestimated. Together the ocean sectors of fishing, shipping, oil and ocean manufacturing and services

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account for almost 3 per cent of Canada's gross national product.

Last year despite troubles in the groundfish industry, Canadian seafood exports totalled \$2.8 billion. Of this total, more than half came from Atlantic Canada with the crab, shrimp and lobster fisheries putting in an outstanding performance. Canada's aquaculture industry continues to grow despite stiff international competition. This is happening on both the east and west coasts.

Canada's oceans manufacturing and service sector is also growing, now comprising more than 300 high technology firms. This sector generates millions of dollars in revenue each year.

In addition Atlantic offshore oil and gas have finally come on stream. The Cohasset field off Nova Scotia began production in 1992. The giant Hibernia development off the east coast of Newfoundland is promising to employ some 20,000 workers once it begins production in 1997.

With growth like this it is easy to see why the oceans sector plays such an important role in the economies of our coastal regions. Together these industries have the potential to generate considerable wealth and prosperity.

The oceans also have a more indirect impact on the lives of Canadians. The world's oceans are a key part of the ecosphere, acting as a major environmental sink of carbon dioxide. In particular the world's oceans play a critical role in determining the rate of climate change and its regional variations. Globally this has many implications as it does here at home.

Scientists working with global climate models forecast that with global warming the oceans will change. According to these predictions there will be less upswelling which in turn will affect productivity. Already we have seen some evidence of this with the frequent reoccurrence of the El Nino effect in the Pacific in recent years. In fact some scientists believe that the El Nino may be a common factor contributing to changes in the fish population in both the Atlantic and the Pacific.

What does all this mean for Canadians? Disruption in the fishery? Drought on the prairies? Melting sea and land ice in the Arctic? We do not really know. Our understanding of both the ocean and the earth's atmosphere is not yet well enough developed. We can only assume that widespread climate change is likely to have a dramatic impact on ocean ecosystems around the world as well as to alter the entire range of human activity.

Clearly the oceans are of tremendous importance to Canada as a nation. They impact on our environment, our economy, our social structures and culture as well as on our sovereignty and defence. Even from this very brief sketch it is obvious that managing our

oceans and their resources is a complex and challenging task. At no time has this been more true than at the moment. Each region and each activity within the ocean sector presents its own pressing challenges to policymakers at all levels of government and industry.

• (1630)

Let me give a few examples. On the east coast several issues stand out. First, there is an urgent need for scientists and fishermen to work side by side to improve methods of resource assessment and to achieve a better understanding of the dynamics which caused the collapse of the groundfish stocks.

Second, industry and government must continue to work together to revitalize the fishing industry.

Third, we must continue to build on the potential of the ocean manufacturing and service sector to act as a catalyst for the innovative diversified economy in the region.

In the Arctic, as in other parts of Canada, environmental issues take priority. Northern communities are deeply concerned with issues of climate change and the contamination of Arctic waters and resources. These are the issues the bill speaks to.

On the west coast international relations, climate studies and resource assessment are key. Strong measures are needed to assure the future of the Pacific salmon fishery. What is more, with the region's increasing population density, environmental issues are of growing importance. Issues related to the coastal zone management, marine environmental quality, ship standards and pollution prevention demand attention. That is what the bill is about.

These are not isolated issues. Rather they are interlocking pieces of one large puzzle. It is time to respond to them in a coherent and integrated fashion. That is what the legislation does.

The oceans act sets the stage for the development of a long range comprehensive vision for the management of Canada's ocean territories and marine resources. Our approach has two phases.

First is the introduction of enabling legislation. This is the oceans act that we are now considering. With the oceans act we are extending economic and environmental jurisdiction out to the 200 nautical mile limit permitted by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We are consolidating legislation and clarifying the federal government's responsibilities for oceans. We are creating the legal framework for an oceans management strategy based on both the sustainable development and integrated management of our oceans and coastal waters. Contrary to what a Bloc member stated earlier, there is zero impact on powers between the federal and provincial governments.

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The second phase is the development of the ocean management strategy. The oceans management strategy is currently at the developmental stage. We are consulting extensively with stakeholders about what should go into the strategy and we will continue to do so. So far our proposals have received strong support from almost everyone involved: fishermen, aboriginal groups, businesses, provincial and territorial leaders, academics and non-governmental organizations. Everyone sees the necessity for a new approach to decision making.

Canada can no longer afford to manage its oceans with partial ad hoc, short term measures. We can no longer afford to divide our decision making like so many pieces of the pie, with decisions on resource management made in isolation from decisions about shipping or environmental protection. We can no longer afford to have our experts, whether they be in government labs, universities, industries or on fishing boats, working in isolation of each other. It is time to bring all the elements together so that we can make the best decisions possible.

We must start to look at oceans issues through a wide angle lens so we can make choices based on the best interests of the entire ecosystem. Sustainable development is all about integrating economic, environmental and social considerations together into one policy framework.

What do we need to make it work? To start with, we need decision making that is open, transparent and based on sound science. We need a commitment to change from all parties involved and we need a new relationship among ocean stakeholders. I will elaborate.

• (1635)

First, we need a more open and more integrated approach to policy making. The oceans management strategy would see our approach to marine resource management change. Traditionally the federal government has carried out its responsibilities for oceans management on the basis of narrow sectoral approaches, in consultation with stakeholders but not in partnership with them. We recognize this must change, so we have begun a new relationship with other ocean stakeholders.

Second, ecological sustainability and economic viability depend on good science. To support these goals science needs to be multi-disciplinary, not limited by organizational structure, and responsive to changing needs and priorities. The oceans management strategy will foster partnerships involving government, academia, the private sector and environmental groups, ensuring that Canada's oceans science is once again at the leading edge of world knowledge.

Third, effective management requires a functioning ecosystems approach. Because ecosystems involve many interdependent physical and biological elements which cross lines of jurisdiction, scientific discipline and economic interest, an effectively function-

ing management system will have to take these factors into account.

These suggestions give an idea of the scope of the oceans management strategy. They also indicate how fundamentally an integrated management strategy would change oceans management in Canada.

Work on the oceans management strategy is just beginning. All the details have yet to be worked out. However I can assure all members that as the action plan for the oceans management strategy is put in place it will be developed in full collaboration among the federal government and ocean stakeholders. The government is committed to forging a new relationship with our partners in the ocean sector.

Stewardship of our ocean and coastal resources is a shared responsibility. Unless all those with an interest in the oceans agree to collaborate, to share information and to manage these resources in a careful and conservative manner, we will do irreparable harm to the environment. Canadians must work together if we are to protect the integrity and quality of the oceans environment and its resources for future generations.

The world's oceans have been described as the world's great heart, beating eternally. Canadians with their long relationship with the sea recognize this to be true. They understand also that it is time to make a commitment to their oceans. The oceans act is that commitment. It is the beginning of a new era of environmental stewardship and prosperity.

I look forward to reviewing the bill in committee. I invite other members to join with us in committee when we review the bill. Let us look at possible amendments that might improve the bill and bring it back for third reading. At that point it is my hope that we will have all-party consent. Once a thorough understanding is achieved by all members of what the bill is meant to do, we will have all-party consent, and I look forward to that time.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Madam Speaker, by tabling Bill C-98, the oceans act, the government has taken a step toward the recognition of offshore areas of the sea and protection of the resources in those areas. I feel this is a very good initiative.

As I see it the bill has three objectives: to recognize in domestic law Canada's jurisdiction over its maritime zones, to establish the legislation framework to support Canada's new oceans management regime, and to consolidate federal responsibilities for managing Canada's oceans. However there appears to be a great deal of overlap and duplication.

Can the government member explain to me where the duplication overlap is being eliminated in the bill? What measures in the bill reduce the level of bureaucracy? Why are the departments of environment and natural resources still in charge of oceans environmental and geological research? Why does the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans still have to receive authority from the foreign affairs minister for regulations under clause

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25? Why does the minister have to seek authority from the Minister of Justice to make regulations under section 26(1)?

• (1640)

I feel very strongly that having 14 different ministers overseeing this matter makes it difficult. We should have one department and one minister, that is the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Could the hon. member tell us exactly how we could make these changes and eliminate all the duplication?

Mr. Wells: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I would note that the member for Saint John who asked the question is an associate member of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. These are issues that have been raised at the committee level, and they are good questions.

Concerns have been expressed by various members—she being one and others on this side of the House—that perhaps there should be more power consolidated in the hands of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

When I invite the member—I know she will be there—and other members to talk about the consolidation of power, we will have to look at the various areas about which she speaks including the environmental area. We will have to see if some of the areas should perhaps be moved to the minister of fisheries. We can find out the rationale from the officials. Why is certain power still being left with the minister of heritage as far as marine parks, for example, are concerned? Why is the Ministry of the Environment retaining certain authority in certain areas? They are very valid questions.

As we get into a study of the matter at committee level we will ask those questions of various officials. It is my hope that at the end of the day there could perhaps be more consolidation of some of these powers. The committee process has to work. We have to seek answers and reasons from the various departments on why some of the consolidation has not taken place.

Without prejudging the process I personally feel that the minister of fisheries who is given certain authority under the bill should have more. The hon. member should agree that as a committee we need to look at that as a possibility.

I thank her for her question. I look forward to working with her in committee.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to put a question to the hon. member, who also sits on the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

Allow me to disagree with the hon. member. Since I believe he is a lawyer by training, he is used to reading laws. I also know that he

was rather nit-picking on that issue during the last few meetings of our committee. As regards Part II of Bill C-98, why do we have to put in law a plan that will be developed for management purposes?

I would appreciate it if the member, who seems to have a lot of experience in that field, would tell us why we must pass an act merely to introduce or announce a strategy. That could have been done in a press release. The issue would have been well presented. People would have understood. Instead, the government is sending invitations all over the place. It wants to consult just about everybody.

I also ask the member to recognize the fact that there is no hierarchy in terms of the consultation process. Indeed, the provinces are put on the same footing as any other group when it comes to consultations. We, in Quebec, do not think that this is the way to manage. How does the member, who is from Nova Scotia, think that this strategy should be managed in his province, which borders the ocean? Will the provincial minister want to have a say, at some point in time, regarding this process? This is the sort of thing we have to look at.

Right now, the government is merely presenting a strategy and saying that it is willing to consult everyone. I would appreciate it if the member could tell us which new real powers are included in this bill.

• (1645)

[*English*]

Mr. Wells: I think it is fair to say that the hon. member and I see the legislation differently. As he made clear in his previous presentation to the House, he sees this as taking away authority from the provinces and giving it to the federal government. That is simply not the case. I have seen nothing and he has pointed out nothing in this legislation which would indicate this is what is happening.

This is a consolidation. It is not something that just happened over the last number of weeks or months. This discussion has been going on for years. As the minister indicated this morning, there has been an evolution here. We are going back to the 1970s or maybe before that when various powers and various consolidations were being discussed. A lot of things have happened internationally that we have to establish in our own legislation. There is a recognition in the act of the merger of the coast guard and DFO which is relatively new.

To suggest there is something in this legislation that is affecting the powers of the provinces could not be further from the truth. This legislation does not state that. The hon. member has not been able to point out to me either here in the House or during any discussion that this is what the legislation does. That is clearly not what is in the legislation and it is not the intent of

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the legislation. I would suggest his motive is something other than trying to create a good piece of oceans legislation.

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the hon. member's intervention.

The member talked about the TAGS program and how wonderful it was for Atlantic Canada. When Reform Party members were there talking to people in the constituencies in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick we did not hear people giving large accolades for the TAGS program. As a matter of fact, what we heard was talk about corruption and talk about the way the TAGS program had distorted the marketplace, particularly the job market. No one I encountered had anything good to say about it.

The member is defending the government's move on licence fees. I wonder if he would tell the House whether he is going to poll his constituents because the story we heard in Atlantic Canada is that Atlantic Canadians are opposed to this. Will he poll his constituents and if they are found to be in opposition to Bill C-98 will he vote against the bill when it comes up for third reading in the House?

Mr. Wells: Madam Speaker, my only comment is that I would suggest the member shows a total lack of understanding of Bill C-98. Bill C-98 does not deal with access fees. He should read it and determine what it states. Talking about fishermen, I convene my own round tables in my riding to speak to fishermen's organizations on a regular basis. I know what the fishermen's position is on access fees. This bill is not about access fees.

I invite the member to read and understand the legislation before he asks questions that are totally irrelevant because that is not the issue. The question of access fees is certainly relevant but not as part of this legislation. There is going to be a new fisheries act and other things that we are going to discuss on this issue. It is a very real, important and serious issue which I have dealt with not just as of last weekend, like the hon. member, but is one I have been dealing with for years.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North, Ref.): Madam Speaker, for Canadians watching this debate I would like to preface my remarks by saying that what we are debating is Bill C-98, an act respecting the oceans of Canada.

The bill essentially deals with two issues relating to oceans. First, it deals with part of the oceans we designate as the oceans of Canada. Second, it deals with something called an oceans management strategy. I would like to direct my remarks on the oceans management strategy and some of the aspects that are of concern particularly to fishermen.

• (1650)

I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague opposite who just spoke. It was very interesting to hear the poetry and the talk about ocean ecology and all those good things. I would like to be more practical in this debate and talk about how we make sure that we have fish resources to harvest.

Other speakers have mentioned the enormous value to the Canadian economy of fisheries both on the east and west coasts and our inland fisheries. This is not a resource to toy with. It is not a part of our Canadian workforce that should be treated lightly because this has really a lot of impact for a great many Canadians.

I would suggest that there has been a bit of a misnomer about our oceans management strategy to date; it has been more oceans mismanagement. We see an oceans resource in complete disaster. So far there has been an unprecedented groundfish crisis on the east coast and we are minutes from disaster on the west coast particularly in the Fraser River fisheries.

We also have a population dependent on a resource that can no longer sustain a very large number of Canadian workers. There is a real pressure of numbers in the fisheries that is not going to go away and cannot be supported artificially forever.

We also have a minister who I suggest is not really dealing with these domestic issues. He is busy playing Captain Canada, talking about building his media image internationally. Even when his parliamentary secretary enters this debate it is to talk about the wonderful international image of the minister. That does not put food on the table of the fishermen of this country.

I think everyone would welcome a positive change in the way we are managing the fish resources and our oceans resources because we have a track record in this area that is not very inspiring to say the least. We look at the management strategy that is being put into place as a result of Bill C-98. We are looking for positive change. We are looking for changes to address some of the mismanagement of the past.

What do we see in this bill? We see two things that have not brought any relief, any hope or any positive response from the fishermen of this country. First, we have a government department that will become even more bloated but there are no precise lines of authority or management plan to help this increased government department do a better job of the mandate it has been given to manage the fisheries.

Second, the doors are being opened in this bill for increased fees on fishermen which the fishermen can hardly bear to shoulder. I quote from clause 50 of this Bill C-98 which states: "The minister may, subject to any regulations that the Treasury Board may make for the purposes of this section, fix fees in respect of products,

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rights and privileges provided under this act". That is the section which has a lot of fishermen quaking in their boots.

The nice name of the oceans management strategy really hides an increased bureaucracy. The stated purpose of this increased bureaucracy is to get all government bodies to co-ordinate the related activities with respect to management and harvesting of the oceans. That is a good objective. It is an objective I think everyone in Canada would support. We certainly have a lot of cases in this country—my friends from the Bloc often like to talk about this—of where the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing. There is duplication and interference between different levels of government and different government bodies. That of course leads to a great deal of inefficiency and an enormous unnecessary cost. Pruning that back, streamlining and making it more efficient, downsizing, is what needs to be done. It is of course also what is being done across the board in the private sector. Organizations are flattening, downsizing, becoming more efficient and we have been calling for a long time for government to do the same.

• (1655)

We fail to see how this is going to happen by adding more layers of bureaucracy and more complexity to the workings of the department. There is no process identified in this bill to ensure more effective co-ordination. It is simply stated as a nice goal. A lot of roads are paved with good intentions but we need to see some real specifics in the way we set out our legislation if we hope to accomplish the stated aims.

In fact, there are no penalties or even any other consequences to any of these bodies that are supposedly being co-ordinated for failing to work in concert. We have more bureaucrats, more activity, more process being added, but no power to initiate activities that would get the objectives met or to ensure compliance by all the bodies that are to be co-ordinated. There is no concrete planned agenda at all.

If this government is serious about the management of oceans, we believe it would give real power to the managing body. Management is only possible when there is some real authority and that is simply not happening. In fact, if government would stop thinking of ways to tinker with the system creating bloated government departments and instead get on with the job of protecting a valuable resource, everyone would be a lot better off.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans is already a top heavy organization. Fishermen on both coasts will tell of their frustration in dealing with a department based in Ottawa which does not understand what their needs really are. Passing this bill would not send a positive message to these people who are already very frustrated.

It is now abundantly clear that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is not committed to downsizing his bloated department. He would rather try to slip a new level of bureaucracy into his department under the guise of broad consultation rather than deal with the harsh realities of downsizing.

Canadians want less government and that is a message which must be sent over and over. Government members must get that message: Canadians want less government. They are tired of supporting and wrestling with and trying to deal with a huge and inefficient bureaucracy when they are trying to make a living and trying to live their lives and build their futures.

In Canada there are over 6,000 fisheries officials and they manage 65,000 licences. We have 6,000 officials and 65,000 licences. The department operates with a budget that exceeds three-quarters of a billion dollars and that is just for administrative costs. Clearly, there is room here for a little cost cutting to be taken at the top of this department, a department with over 6,000 officials and a budget of three-quarters of a billion dollars.

Madam Speaker, I am sure everyone will be waiting with bated breath to hear the end of this story after the vote.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I advise the hon. member that private members' hour is after the vote and that the next time the bill comes before the House she will have 10 minutes remaining.

* * *

MANGANESE BASED FUEL ADDITIVES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-94, an act to regulate interprovincial trade in and the importation for commercial purposes of certain manganese based substances, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): It being five o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a) the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the amendment of the hon. member for Kootenay West—Revelstoke at second reading stage of Bill C-94, an act to regulate interprovincial trade in and the importation for commercial purposes of certain manganese based substances.

Call in the members.

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:)

(Division No. 337)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Benoit
Brown (Calgary Southeast/Sud-Est)
Cummins
Epp
Frazer
Gouk
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hill (MacLeod)
Johnston
Manning
Mayfield
Meredith
Morrison

Ablonczy
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Chatters
Duncan
Forseth
Gilmour
Grey (Beaver River)
Hayes
Hoepfner
Kerpan
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)
Mills (Red Deer)
Ringma

Schmidt
Solberg
Stinson
White (North Vancouver)—35

Scott (Skeena)
Speaker
Strahl

NAYS

Members

Adams
Allmand
Anderson
Assad
Asselin
Bachand
Barnes
Bélair
Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Bhaduria
Blondin—Andrew
Bonin
Brien
Brushett
Calder
Caron
Chamberlain
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Collenette
Cowling
Crête
de Jong
Deshaies
Dhaliwal
Duhamel
Dupuy
Eggleton
Fillion
Flis
Gagnon (Québec)
Godfrey
Graham
Guarnieri
Guimond
Harper (Churchill)
Hickey
Hubbard
Irwin
Jacob
Keyes
Knutson
Lalonde
Langlois
Laurin
Lebel
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lefebvre
Leroux (Shefford)
Loney
Maclaren
Maloney
Marchand
Marleau
McGuire
McTeague
Mercier
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Murphy
Nault
Nunziata
O'Reilly
Paradis
Parrish
Payne
Peters
Phinney
Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Plamondon
Reed
Richardson
Robichaud
Sauvageau
Serré
Sheridan

Alcock
Anawak
Arseneault
Assadourian
Augustine
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bélanger
Bernier (Gaspé)
Bethel
Blaikie
Bodnar
Boudria
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Bryden
Canuel
Catterall
Chan
Clancy
Copps
Crawford
Culbert
de Savoye
DeVillers
Dromisky
Dumas
Easter
English
Finlay
Gaffney
Gauthier
Goodale
Grose
Guay
Harb
Harvard
Hopkins
Ianno
Jackson
Jordan
Kirkby
Kraft Sloan
Landry
Lastewka
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lee
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Lincoln
Loubier
Malhi
Manley
Marchi
Massé
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord—Ouest)
McWhinney
Mifflin
Minna
Murray
Nunez
O'Brien
Pagtakhan
Paré
Patry
Peric
Peterson
Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri
Pomerleau
Regan
Rideout
Rocheleau
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Shepherd
Simmons

St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Szabo
Telegdi
Torsney
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Volpe
Wells
Wood
Zed—169

Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Taylor
Thalheimer
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Ur
Wayne
Whelan
Young

Private Members' Business

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Bélisle
Bertrand
Caccia
Cauchon
Davault
Discepolo
Fry
Gerrard
Gray (Windsor West/Ouest)
Ménard
Robillard

Bellehumeur
Bouchard
Cannis
Dalphond—Guiral
Debien
Duceppe
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Godin
Jacob
Proud
St-Laurent

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I declare the amendment negated.

[English]

It being 5.30 p.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

ENERGY REGULATIONS

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should move to streamline administrative and regulatory processes in the energy sector with the objective to minimize unnecessary regulatory burden.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak in favour of Motion No. 434 which states:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should move to streamline administrative and regulatory processes in the energy sector with the objective to minimize unnecessary regulatory burden.

For an entrepreneur in the energy industry, negotiating the maze of government regulations is almost as great a challenge as overcoming the technical and physical problems of a program. Satisfying the demands of a multiplicity of regulatory boards and agencies, often at three levels of government, is like walking on fly paper; no sooner is one bureaucratic condition satisfied than the applicant's feet become glued to another sticky spot.

Private Members' Business

This is not unique to the energy sector. All phases of Canadian activity are mired in regulations and each successive government seems determined to pass more laws and make more rules. The old adage that the best government is the one that governs least has been all but forgotten. We are well on our way to terminal social and economic constipation.

The passion for filling out forms requiring the approval of platoons of bureaucrats is not new. This destructive waste of time and resources contributed mightily to the downfall of the Hapsburg, Ottoman and Soviet empires and was the leading cause of the collapse of the Manchu dynasty in which generations of China's brightest and best wasted away in an atmosphere of useless paper shuffling; thus the French word *chinoiserie*.

The curious aspect of energy sector over regulation is that almost everyone, including senior politicians, recognizes the problem. In April 1993 the Conservative government commissioned a review of federal regulations to "identify those that significantly reduce the competitiveness of Canadian industry" or impose needless costs on the consumers.

A report was released in October 1993 just in time for the election and some of the panel's recommendations have actually been acted on. Several sets of redundant regulations have been or are in the process of being revoked. These, however, were purely Natural Resources Canada regulations. It does not address the problem of the overlap of federal and provincial regulations, and regulatory conflict between various government departments is a much more serious matter.

Only the federal Minister of the Environment seems to be oblivious to the problem; witness her unseemly remarks and confrontational attitude during question period earlier this afternoon. This overlap, believe it or not, is most pervasive in her bailiwick in situations in which environmental protection is at stake. There is also overlap in matters affecting worker health and safety and the transportation of dangerous goods.

The multi-tiered environmental permit problem has been recognized by the Minister of Natural Resources. She has stated in an open letter to the Northern Miner that the government is committed to addressing this issue: "The goal is a single window approach".

Those words are music to every Canadian petroleum and natural gas producer and marketer and also to people in the mining, forestry, agricultural and transportation industries.

The Liberals, through their minister, have expressed a policy. Now I would truly like to see them act on it. Then we could stand back and watch the revitalization of our resource based industries.

For a classic example of regulatory overkill, I suggest we look at the Atomic Energy Control Board. Actually, I would rather not look at it since it is one of the few federal entities that continue to grow like a giant fungus in spite that its workload

has been decreasing for a decade. Be that as it may, it is the major player in the regulation of the nuclear industry, all the way from mining to waste disposal.

• (1735)

Unfortunately the AECB is overlapped both provincially and federally. At the extractive level the provincial mining departments make regulations. The provincial environment departments make regulations. The federal environment department makes regulations and throughout the entire nuclear cycle various provincial occupational health and safety divisions make regulations.

When all other hurdles have been cleared there are still municipal zoning laws to contend with. I am aware of one instance in which a proposed uranium refinery facility in Saskatchewan was killed by the local government not on technical grounds but for purely political reasons.

Then we have review panels. They have no authority, no legal standing but they can delay projects for months simply by being in session.

In 1993 a joint federal-provincial environment assessment review board spent several months studying proposals for three uranium mining developments in Saskatchewan. It made three recommendations and the Saskatchewan government cheerfully ignored one of them with the blessing of the federal government. Why did it spend all that time doing the studies? Who knows.

It is time for the various provincial and federal departments to sit down together and develop a single window permitting system for uranium mines. Developers are entitled to know before the first shovel full of dirt is dug if in terms of economic benefits versus the social and environmental costs it makes sense to proceed with a project.

The second major national player in the regulation of the energy industry is the National Energy Board which controls all interprovincial movement of oil, gas and electricity. It also controls international trade in those commodities. Conflict exists to the extent that provincial interests are often contrary to what the National Energy Board considers to be the national interest. Who can ever forget the national energy program?

On the other hand, there is a good example of federal provincial co-operation in the offshore boards which regulate what goes on under the sea. These boards could serve as a pattern and a model for eliminating the problems caused by competing federal and provincial environmental agencies.

To get back to the environmental agencies, they are not energy regulators per se but they have a tremendous impact on the industry. There are instances of projects being environmentally approved at the provincial level only to have further studies and interminable delays demanded by a federal department. I am sure other hon. members will have something to say about that.

Private Members' Business

The energy industry needs relief, not so much from taxes as from the ocean of paper it is required to swim through. An industry that accounts for 7 per cent of our gross domestic product and which directly or indirectly provides employment for 620,000 people is entitled to reasonable consideration and rational treatment.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise to address the motion put forward by the hon. member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia.

My colleague has informed the House about steps the government is taking to reduce regulatory overlap and duplication in the Canadian nuclear sector.

[*Translation*]

I would like to take this opportunity to give the House an overview of the initiative undertaken by the government in other sectors of the energy industry in order to meet these objectives.

[*English*]

Before I do, however, I remind hon. members that the very basis for these efforts is the government's commitment to a market oriented energy policy. We believe the energy industry must have the flexibility to adapt to changing market circumstances if it is to continue to contribute to Canada's economic prosperity. That means keeping government intervention in the marketplace to a minimum.

● (1740)

Nevertheless, there is a need for regulation in the energy industry just as there is a need for regulation in other sectors of the economy. As my colleague noted, the challenge is to achieve a regulatory framework which protects the public good but does not unnecessarily inhibit the industry. Achieving this balance requires the government to be constantly mindful of the impact of its regulatory activities on the industry.

The agency primarily responsible for regulating Canada's oil, gas and electricity sectors in the areas of federal jurisdiction is the National Energy Board, the NEB. The board was established in 1959 under the authority of the National Energy Board Act, and for the past three and half decades it has done an excellent job in meeting the needs of both government and industry in administering a reasonable and balanced regulatory regime.

Under the act the NEB sets tolls and tariffs for oil and gas pipelines and also approves the construction of pipelines and designated power lines under federal jurisdiction. The board also authorizes the export of oil, gas and electricity and the import of gas.

The National Energy Board is an independent quasi-judicial body which reports to Parliament through the Minister of Natural Resources. It is comprised of nine members, all of whom are appointed by governor in council.

Matters relating to tolls and tariffs, minor construction and short term import/export orders are the exclusive jurisdiction of the board. However, decisions requiring certificates of public convenience and necessity and export and import licences must be approved by the governor in council.

The NEB has proven to be an extremely effective regulatory body. In my view the board will be even better positioned to meet industry needs in the future as the result of recent initiatives it has taken to modernize, streamline and simplify its regulatory processes and requirements. These initiatives are in direct response to 13 recommendations the board received in October 1993 from the Minister of Natural Resources advisory panel on regulatory review.

I am pleased to inform the House the board has moved swiftly and effectively to address each of these recommendations. For example, the NEB has revised many of the processes and requirements for filing information with the board with the overall objective of easing the administrative burden on industry. Among other things, the board is implementing an electronic regulatory filing system for all regulatory filings. As well, it has taken industry views into account in revising its guidelines for the filing of information by companies applying for certificates of public convenience and necessity.

The board's guidelines for preparing a social economic impact assessment for pipeline projects have also been revised to reflect new legislative requirements and to avoid overlap and duplication with other statutory requirements.

The National Energy Board has also demonstrated its ability to adapt to change in the natural gas market by revising its rules on how gas can be moved on pipelines. Earlier this year the board decided to end its ban on selling pipeline transportation rights at prices above the regulated toll, which will help ensure the available capacity is allocated in the most efficient manner.

The board also decided against requiring that available pipeline capacity be posted on electronic bulletin boards since this secondary transportation market has been working well without any such regulation.

In August 1994 the National Energy Board issued revised guidelines which will make it easier for pipeline companies, producers, shippers, consumers and governments to resolve tolls and tariff issues through negotiation rather than formal NEB hearings which are costly to all parties.

Private Members' Business

In another cost saving measure for the industry, the board decided to set the cost of capital for group 1 pipeline companies for multi-year periods rather than on an annual basis. This will reduce the expense associated with annual hearings for each pipeline by reducing the length of the hearings.

The National Energy Board is also endeavouring to reduce overlap and duplication by working more closely with provincial regulatory bodies.

• (1745)

For example, the NEB and the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board have signed two memoranda of understanding, the first to implement a mutual aid agreement for pipeline incidents in Alberta and the second to establish a common reserve data base.

Under the first MOU, when an incident occurs on an NEB regulated facility the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board will, at the request of the National Energy Board, provide emergency response assistance. If the incident involves a provincially regulated pipeline the NEB will be available to provide emergency response investigation assistance. The end result will be a faster, more effective response by both boards to pipeline incidents in Alberta.

Under the second MOU the NEB and the AEUB will share geological and reservoir information for natural gas and crude oil pools. The sharing of information will result in a common reserve data base for Alberta. The beneficiaries of this most efficient method of maintaining estimates of reserves will be the oil and gas industry and the taxpaying public.

[Translation]

I could go on and on about the efforts made by the National Energy Board to reduce the overlap and duplication and to streamline the administrative requirements. However, my goal here is only to give the hon. members an overview of the recent measures taken by the Board to improve the regulatory framework for the oil, gas and electricity sector.

[English]

I would urge the hon. member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia to seek a full accounting of the NEB's regulatory reform initiatives directly from the board. I believe he will be impressed with the progress that has been made to date. The record will clearly indicate that this government not only endorses the objective of reducing the regulatory burden on the energy industry, but it is actively pursuing that objective on a day-to-day basis.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Deshaies (Abitibi, BQ): Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to the motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—As-

siniboia: "That, in the opinion of this House, the government should move to streamline administrative and regulatory processes in the energy sector with the objective to minimize unnecessary regulatory burden".

I think the hon. member's motion is particularly relevant at a time when one of the items on the government's parliamentary agenda is Bill C-62, the Regulatory Efficiency Act, and in fact I hope members of all parties will work together to find an effective way to make regulations flexible and refrain from policies that are counterproductive.

The motion of the hon. member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia deals indirectly with a set of regulations that are so rigid they often cause more harm than otherwise in the energy sector. The hon. member's motion could also apply to other areas as well and in fact to practically any area of human activity, since almost everything we do is regulated.

This motion also leads us to question the advisability of having so many levels of government, each with their own regulations, federal, provincial and even municipal. All these levels of government have their various departments, each with the authority to veto the other's initiatives, which means that obtaining a single permit may be a very lengthy process. In this respect, the director of a new mining development, the Troilus project north of Chibougamau in Quebec, pointed out in an interview with Radio-Canada that he needed no less than 37 certified permits before he could start his project.

On the basis of his own experience with the Troilus project, he also said in the interview that he realized why Canada now ranked only fifth in the world as a country that was attractive for mining exploration. It was mainly because of its undue regulatory burden. Although he made it clear that he was not in favour of more flexible environmental regulations, he did point out that competition between various levels of government and various departments made the work of developers unnecessarily complex and was not conducive to economic development.

At the federal level, the number of regulations is impressive. It is enough just to flip through the 14,420 pages of the *Consolidated Regulations of Canada* of 1978 and the 4,277 pages of the *Canada Gazette*, part II, for 1994 alone.

• (1750)

The regulatory process, which is intended among other things to lighten the legislative process of which it is a part, has had the opposite effect over the years, adding to the number of standards without necessarily improving quality.

There are therefore a growing number of increasingly complex and technical regulations, and this has resulted in a considerably more complicated administrative burden for Canadian taxpayers. It would be appropriate to assess the impact of

this situation upon the competitiveness of Canadian businesses and even upon the Canadian economy as a whole.

I would like to cite one example of a situation in which two legitimate objectives are at cross-purposes in responding to two different safety requirements, the example of an infant crib with a drop side to make it easier for disabled parents to use. Such a crib cannot meet crib safety standards, which require the sides to be fixed, when the side needs to be lowered to ensure safe access for disabled parents. This regulation runs counter to the needs of disabled parents and presents an enormous obstacle for them.

One could readily imagine some mechanism to reconcile these two objectives, if a worthwhile instrument for doing so were created, instead of stupidly allowing the regulations to control the situation.

As the member for the Abitibi region I have often had to intervene in order to help speed up the administrative process for projects held up by the application of outmoded regulations. For example, the Grevet mining project near Quévillon in the Abitibi region had to wait 15 months to obtain environmental approval.

In order to get these approvals, authorizations from the Departments of Environment and Indian Affairs, among others, also had to be obtained, because the area is close to the James Bay reserve and the Cree territory. Here again, we can see that the federal government, by interfering in provincial jurisdictions, is creating overlap that only makes regulations more cumbersome, so that processes needed to administer them are more complex and more confusing.

This is not new, at least for the official opposition, that has spent a lot of its energy trying to make the federal government understand that its policy of centralizing everything too often causes more harm than good.

The oft-requested creation of a single window for permits or any other activity requiring the cooperation of several governments or departments has become more than essential and our economy's viability depends on it.

In the energy sector, the situation is no different. At the national level, a number of major players are involved in the regulatory process and somehow competing with each other. The federal government, through the National Energy Board or Natural Resources Canada, also adopts regulations, thus adding to the competition between federal and provincial environmental agencies.

This undue regulatory burden has a disastrous impact on the energy sector. My colleague from the Reform Party who showed an interest in the vitality of Canada's energy sector and the well-being of his fellow citizens is seeking with his motion to express his concern that regulations are strangling industry and, in turn, all Canadians.

Private Members' Business

As I too am concerned about the mining industry, I can say that the decline of investments in mining exploration clearly illustrates the disastrous effects of a double, and even triple layer of administration, because the excessive number of regulations is only one of the important factors in the decline of mining investments.

The mining industry is linked to the energy sector because it accounts for close to 13 per cent of the total energy demand of industry in Canada and Quebec, and it is suffering needlessly as a result of this situation. Why does the federal government let this situation, that impacts so negatively on our economy, go on?

Any businessman will tell you that a bad organization makes you lose time and, as you know, time is money, which means that in the end it could have dire consequences for the company. We are not talking about a small business here, but about an industry that accounts for 7 per cent of Canada's and Quebec's GDP or \$45 billion each year.

This is far from the single window concept which I talked about earlier and which would allow for the simplification of the administrative process. We know of projects that were approved by the provincial government but rejected by the federal government. Conflicts arise because each level considers itself to be the only one that has the power to regulate.

• (1755)

To conclude on this motion, I would say that we obviously have to rationalize without delay the administrative process and its regulations in the energy sector. Too many agencies, companies and individuals are paying the price of this duplication and these useless conflicts.

The federal government should, in the interest of everyone, simplify its regulations, leave to each level of government its own regulation-making, even if it has to resort to single windows to deliver permits when an act applies to a provincial area of responsibility.

It is a good thing that the rest of Canada has begun to talk about rationalizing the role of each government. In Quebec, we have been asking for that for a long time.

[English]

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and speak to my colleague's motion.

The streamlining of regulations has certainly for many years been a popular political topic in Canada. Governments have been talking for years and in spite of that relatively little has happened in streamlining and reducing overlap in regulations between federal and provincial governments.

As far back as 1978, Prime Minister Trudeau entrusted the Economic Council of Canada with the task of reviewing government regulations in certain sectors. Among other things, the study was to focus on the relevance and impact of regulations. The council proceeded to look at a number of sectors, notably

Private Members' Business

telecommunications and occupational health and safety. This seems to show, as my colleague mentioned, that over-regulation is certainly a problem in many sectors other than the energy sector.

The council generally recommended that routine regulations and agreements be codified and made public at all levels of government. The aim of this recommendation was to ensure a clearer grasp and understanding of the scope of regulations.

In the second recommendation, pertaining to products and development projects, the council recommended that in instances when responsibility for a particular sector was shared between the federal government and the provinces, a single department should be assigned responsibility for co-ordinating the activities of participating departments. Of course that is the single-window approach that the previous speaker mentioned. Businesses would thus waste less time than they do when they have to deal with all the departments of government.

In September 1984 Prime Minister Mulroney announced that he was setting up a ministerial task force to review all federal government programs with a view to making them simpler and more accessible. Nineteen study teams composed of public and private sector individuals were formed and mandated to review 989 programs accounting for expenditures of \$92 billion. One of the study teams focused on regulatory programs.

Not specifically mentioned in the program review appended to the report is a list of federal programs considered problematic in terms of provincial relations. Problems identified had to do either with jurisdiction or overlap or with matters of information, policy, et cetera. Of the 134 registered programs identified, 86, or 66 per cent, were categorized as problematic in at least one province or territory, while 27, or 20 per cent, were found to overlap with provinces or territories. The task force observed the highest incidence of overlap in the case of environmental programs.

The study team reviewing regulatory programs concluded among other things that there was evidence of ongoing significant overlap and duplication between the two levels of government. It recommended that initiatives be adopted to improve the regulatory process. Specifically, it recommended that a study of overlap in the environmental sector be conducted. Moreover, the task force called for an immediate review of the overall burden imposed by the various levels of government. It concluded that Canadians were over-regulated and that it was important to cut down the number of regulatory levels.

So members can see that this is certainly not a new subject in Canada for political debate. It has been ongoing for years and years. It is the general consensus, I think, with all parties in Canada that all sectors are over-regulated. As we mentioned,

today the energy sector is certainly one sector that is over-regulated.

In the spring of 1986 the government adopted a federal regulatory reform strategy. It called for all new regulations to be subjected to economic and social cost analysis. The public would henceforth be informed and involved in the regulatory process. For one thing, the process would not take so long. Furthermore, the current regulatory process would be streamlined to improve efficiency. These are very familiar terms, which we have heard many times.

• (1800)

One of the 10 guidelines for reform deals directly with the issue that interests us here. In the view of existing regulatory burden and the need to eliminate needless duplication, co-operation with the provinces was deemed to be a government priority.

To prove how serious it was, the government moved in the summer of 1986 to create the ministry of state for privatization and regulatory affairs. Although each department continued to be responsible for its own regulations, the office of privatization and regulatory affairs was put in charge of promoting the government's regulatory objectives.

With respect to program efficiency, considerable progress has been made since the strategy's adoption. For example, the average timeframe for regulatory approval has dropped substantially since the development of this office. According to the office, better inspection and enforcement mechanisms have been developed and overlapping regulations have been eliminated, at least to some degree.

Since 1987 the government has also released an annual federal regulatory plan. This publication gives an overview of forthcoming regulations. In each instance the purpose of the regulation is mentioned, along with the impact it will have.

The federal regulatory plan also includes a regulatory evaluation plan. In 1988 the office published a paper listing all the regulatory reviews and reforms undertaken by different departments. In all, 77 initiatives were identified. In 1991 the office was disbanded and responsibility for regulatory affairs was assigned to the Treasury Board.

After this general history and overview, we are still left with the same problem in the energy sector as well as in many other sectors. The reality of the 1990s is that we do not want complex and bureaucratic solutions to the problem of over-regulation. We need to adopt a different philosophy. Our primary focus has to be to simplify and eliminate regulations wherever possible. For those that remain we need to share the administrative responsibility with other partners. While quality and service have to remain a primary objective, we expect there will have to be a significant shift in the degree and type of interaction between the federal and provincial governments that create these regulations, regulatory boards that oversee them, and the

industry that must comply with them and in some instances be burdened by them.

The best way to examine the effects regulations have on a company is to look at a specific example of what I have been talking about up to this point. The National Energy Board was faced this year with an application by Foothills Pipe Lines Limited to construct the Wild Horse pipeline, which is an interconnecting link within Alberta from the Nova System to the proposed Altamont pipeline at Wild Horse on the Montana border.

The nature of the application and Foothills' approach to the National Energy Board raises fundamental questions with respect to the approval process for future pipeline facility expansion. Foothills' application stretched the limits of conventional National Energy Board facilities approval requirements in several important areas.

Under established approval procedures, a pipeline applicant must demonstrate that the facilities are needed, that there is a reasonable expectation they will be used for a significant portion of their useful life, and that tolls will be paid. The requirements are manifested in the demonstration of five aspects of supporting evidence: adequate supply in Canada to maintain incremental deliveries over time; a market assessment of sustainable demand for incremental gas volume; firm shipper contractual commitments for the new capacity for an extended term; specific contract market commitments to purchase the incremental gas; and specific dedicated supply to service these market commitments. The last two have been subject to some relaxation in other recent applications as

long as a binding, firm shipper contract for the new capacity was in place. Where the application represents an expansion to existing facilities, rolled in tolling treatment has almost universally applied.

That is what Foothills was facing in the regulatory process in getting approval for this rather insignificant pipeline extension. What Foothills was seeking was pre-approval and certification to build facilities without demonstrable market support. As an alternative to outright approval, Foothills indicated that it would accept a conditional certificate that would require some further demonstration of shipper contractual commitments prior to construction.

As time is short, I will not go into more detail on the specific proposal. The point is that when the gas market was hot and Foothills wanted to build the extension on the pipeline to service that market the regulatory procedure was so complex and cumbersome that the market in reality was dried up before the regulatory approval system could be put into effect.

Therefore, in effect what we are talking about today is the streamlining of this regulatory process.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): There being no further members rising for debate and the motion not being designated as a votable item, the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped from the Order Paper pursuant to Standing Order 96(1).

It being 6.06 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.06 p.m.)

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