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(HANSARD)

Monday, November 20, 1995

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 20, 1995

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES ACT

The House resumed from June 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C-275, an act respecting the protection and rehabilitation of endangered and threatened species, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, not long ago Bill S-7 was introduced through the back door by the government and passed into law without serious thought about its long term consequences.

With Bill C-275 we again see Liberal environmental policy being brought to the House surreptitiously. Why do I say this? By a curious coincidence, a discussion document issued by Environment Canada last winter contains, almost verbatim, material now incorporated into Bill C-275.

For example, section 9 provides for the prohibition or restriction of any activity deemed threatening to an endangered species on privately occupied land under federal jurisdiction or, with provincial consent, on any provincial lands.

That clearly threatens grazing and timber leases in western Canada. Also, according to the definition in the bill of provincial lands it threatens any private lands registered under provincial law. So much for property rights.

What evidence would the environmental bureaucrats need to designate a species as endangered and its habitat as protected? Pursuant to section 4 the minister would have the arbitrary authority to declare a species endangered. Page 26 of the discussion paper recommends that scientific uncertainty should not be used as a reason not to act.

I will read briefly from this document:

In cases when high quality scientific data are not available for a candidate species, methods involving estimation, inference and projection are acceptable. The effect of current or potential threats may be extrapolated into the future as long as it can be reasonably supported. If estimates about the status of a species vary, it is appropriate to choose the one that leads the listing in the highest risk category as a precaution.

The sorry state of science in 1995 is that witch hunting bureaucrats are forthrightly recommending that the scientific method be discarded. I think the envirocrats are smoking something and it is not environmentally friendly.

That pamphlet refers to public consultation work shops to be held in cities across Canada. Consultation with whom? Certainly not with the people most likely to be affected, Canada's farmers and ranchers and their municipal councils which brought this matter to my attention.

This document and the bill spawned by it illustrate the typical attitude of Canadian urbanites that rural Canada is their playground, unfortunately cluttered by all those quaint rustics who do nasty things like cultivating land and producing cheap, wholesome food for Canada and for the world.

Much of rural Canada is lawfully owned by those who live there. Urbanite nature lovers looking for pleasant places to have picnics, build fires, ride dirt bikes and dump their beer cans should consider the convenience of doing these things on the lawns of the hon. member for Davenport or the hon. member for Hamilton East. Perhaps then those members would have a more sympathetic attitude toward our much put upon farmers.

Farmers do not have much clout in today's Canada. They made up 30 per cent of the population in 1931 but account for only 3.2 per cent today. They are the real endangered species because in the eyes of Liberal politicians and bureaucratic whiz kids they are irrelevant.

Rural people are as powerless to stop this bill as they were to stop gun control Bill C-68 which the House shoved down their protesting throats last June with no significant input from them. With their feeble numbers they do not matter to a government preoccupied with the electoral map. Like Napoleon, Liberals measure the importance of a group by the size of its battalions.

Legislation of this nature can be counterproductive because it casts Environment Canada in an adversarial role. For example, any farmer with burrowing owls in the pasture would have to be demented to report their presence to anyone. I do not think that we in Canada will ever reach the point that has been reported in Oregon where it is claimed that some woodlot owners shoot

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spotted owls on sight. When someone's livelihood is threatened, who knows?

Most rural Canadians, especially ranchers in the west, have been very good stewards of the land and most are appreciative of the wildlife which sometimes grazes on their crops and competes with them for native forage. As a result, wildlife populations in the rural west, especially in my riding, are immeasurably larger than they were 50 or even 20 years ago.

• (1110)

Canadians like to poke fun at the endangered species lunacies of our friends south of the border. It has been 17 years since the Tellico dam project in Tennessee was stopped to protect the habitat of the snail darter, a species remarkably similar to scores of others which, in the fullness of geological time, has become extinct. The silliness took place because under the stringent conditions of the U.S. endangered species act the regulators had no choice.

If that act had been literally applied the deliberate international extinction of the smallpox virus could have led to fines or jail sentences for the public health officials who so wantonly and cruelly destroyed the species.

Tens of millions of dollars have been spent down there to preserve the habitat of various rodents, including the Choctaw-hatchee beach mouse in Florida and the kangaroo rat in California.

When the U.S. fish and wildlife service learned of the presence of kangaroo rats on 800 acres of Cindy Domenigonis' California farm it would not allow her to work her land for three years. That is the direction in which Canada will be heading if this so-called private member's bill becomes law.

Bill C-275 epitomizes the Liberal propensity to regulate, control and run roughshod over individuals who do not have big battalions at their command. I oppose it and I urge anyone who believes in sound science, effective conservationism and the rights of rural people to oppose it as well.

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if there is doubt whether a species is going to be extinct then we want to make sure we make the right decisions and err on the side of caution. I am pleased to speak on Bill C-275, sponsored by the member for Davenport, the chair of the environment committee.

The paddlefish, the swift fox and the blackfooted ferret have one thing in common: they no longer exist in the wild in Canada. The Labrador duck, the sea mink and the blue walleye have one thing in common: they no longer exist at all.

The eastern cougar, the salish sucker, the right whale, the white prairie gentian and the spotted owl are all endangered in Canada. The white-headed woodpecker, the blue ash, the western Atlantic harbour porpoise and the spiny softshell turtle are threatened. The polar bear, the eastern bluebird, the orange spotted sunfish, the pugnose minnow, the prairie rose, the blue whale and the trumpeter swan are vulnerable.

Two hundred and forty-four species of wild fauna and flora are at risk in our country. They suffer from loss of critical habitat, overharvesting, the introduction of foreign species, climate change and contamination from toxic substances.

The time has clearly come for the federal government to set legislation to protect endangered species. The protection of endangered species is the responsibility of all sectors of our society and all citizens in our country. We need legislation in which all Canadians feel a vested interest.

Legislation would call for regulations on the killing, wounding, capturing, collecting or distributing of endangered plants, fish, mammals and embryos. Legislation would also call for Canadian controls on the buying, selling and international trafficking of endangered species.

Canadians want us to throw the book at anyone who tries to make a fast buck from illegally importing or exporting endangered species.

The committee on the status of endangered wildlife in Canada, an arm's length scientific body, would assess species at risk on an annual basis. The Minister of the Environment would be required to establish a list of the species at risk in areas of federal jurisdiction. Response statements outlining planned actions would be mandatory. Recovery plans if required would be prepared within two weeks for endangered species and within three years for threatened species.

• (1115)

Legislation would also permit emergency measures to be taken to conserve and protect species requiring the equivalent to emergency ward treatment. Legislation would authorize the Minister of the Environment to establish funding for conservation agreements with other governments, organizations and private landlords in partnership efforts to preserve endangered species. Legislation would also authorize tough enforcement and severe penalties.

The federal government has a responsibility to set a benchmark for effective endangered species legislation in all of Canada's jurisdictions. That is not enough. We have a responsibility to work with the provinces, the territories and aboriginal people to ensure a comprehensive national approach to the protection of endangered species in all parts of Canada. The federal government is committed to doing its part in this shared enterprise.

Acting alone, the federal government cannot come close to solving all the problems. I want to congratulate Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick for already passing legislation on behalf of endangered species. I also want to congratulate Alberta which has committed to introduce legislation. I particularly want to congratulate wildlife experts, environmentalists, farmers, fishermen, foresters and the mining, pulp and paper and petroleum industries. They are the people on the front lines. They have acted in good faith despite their often divergent interests.

Farmers and aboriginal people, the stewards of the land, must be treated fairly by the new legislation. The maximum number of Canadians must participate in protecting endangered species. We must have a national safety net for species at risk.

As we move toward new endangered species legislation, a very large part of the credit must go to young Canadians. Students from throughout the country have kept the pressure on the government. They have collected petition after petition and they have sent to the Minister of the Environment thousands and thousands of carefully considered individual letters and drawings. We want the continued help and support of Canada's young people in preparing a final bill.

The government's proposed legislation is already on Environment Canada's green lane on the Internet. We look forward to receiving feedback. We want the best possible law to achieve economic growth while preserving the diversity of genes, species and ecosystems that are the biological foundation of the world. We owe that to the endangered species. We owe that to future generations of Canadians.

Ms. Maria Minna (Beaches—Woodbine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to support this bill today.

Canada has a strong reputation in the world in matters of the environment. Indeed, Canada is involved in many international projects to help save the environment, the ecosystems and the species which allow people in the rest of the world to live decent lives in a rich environment.

[*Translation*]

People in other countries are convinced that our actions show leadership in protecting the planet's biodiversity and species.

The fact is that the human beings with whom we share this earth are counting on Canada to show them the way. We must ensure that our actions are up to our reputation.

[*English*]

People in the rest of the world have faith in Canada's fundamental decency and commitment to protecting planetary biodiversity. The world believes that we care and that we are acting. Quite frankly the world does not know that Canada is one

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of the few countries in the world without federal legislation on endangered species.

We have also been moved by Canada's kids. They know we do not have federal legislation and our children through their program "There Otter Be a Law", have been a driving force in pushing Canada to do what it needs to do to protect endangered species.

In my riding I have a classroom of kids who have worked very hard in the last year to protect the bowhead whale. They have sent petitions. They have written letters to the Minister of the Environment and to myself. I have made statements in the House. Today we have a sanctuary for the bowhead whale which is absolutely wonderful. These children have been extremely gratified. When I met with them this week in my riding to tell them what had happened, they felt they had had a wonderful impact on the issue. This is great because they learn a little about democracy. They also felt that it is possible to fight with facts and they felt very gratified. It was very worthwhile.

• (1120)

Since we began looking at protecting endangered species in federal legislation, we have received more than 5,000 individually written and carefully thought out letters from students calling for swift action to protect endangered species.

The classes are in every riding. There is a class also in Iqaluit working on the issue of the bowhead whale. The class in my riding is hooked up to the Internet to work with the class in Iqaluit to discuss the issue of endangered species.

This is a wonderful way to connect Canadians across the country. These children are working for the future of their environment and their space. They have started now connecting and talking to one another in parts of the country. That is one of the most worthwhile things that we can encourage.

Therefore we, as the adults of this country, can only but follow the example. We can no longer leave it up to the children.

In every province and territory and in communities big and small, when we meet with public and high school students, they want to know what governments, businesses, environmentalists, farmers and scientists are doing to ensure a bright future for the beluga whale, the prairie rose, the porpoise, the whooping crane, the leatherback turtle and the polar bear.

[*Translation*]

We all know, I think, that the future of endangered species has become a major concern not only for young people but also for the whole Canadian population. Canadians clearly understand federal responsibilities with respect to cod and halibut, as well as the economic consequences of the extinction of marine species.

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[English]

In the last few weeks every Canadian watched as our skies filled with migratory birds leaving Canada. That rite of fall is part of Canada's psyche. Canadians love those species and regard them as part of what makes us a country.

Canadians understand that when a species disappears, it disappears forever. They do not want Canada to be responsible for making that happen. Canadians understand that when a species disappears, the world loses and when the world loses, humanity loses.

When we deal with the world's environment, we speak of common but differentiated responsibilities. We need to find a means to fulfil both our common responsibilities and our differentiated responsibilities.

For our part, that means we must push for a solid, co-ordinated and co-operative national approach to ensure the survival of species. That is our common responsibility. It also means that the federal government must fulfil its differentiated responsibilities by showing legislative leadership in areas of federal jurisdiction.

Every jurisdiction and every landowner have common but differentiated responsibilities. Each of us must show the maximum leadership possible in our own sphere. We do not need to point fingers at each other. We need to point ahead.

The Deputy Speaker: There being no other members wishing to speak, the hon. member for Davenport is entitled under our rules to briefly sum up.

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to make two points. It is customary to thank colleagues on all sides of the House for their intervention, particularly the member for Bourassa, the member for Madawaska—Victoria, the member for Kindersley—Lloydminster, the member for Simcoe North, the member for Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, the member for London—Middlesex, the member for Comox—Alberni, the member for Laurentides, the member for Brandon—Souris, the member for Bramalea—Gore—Malton, the member for Brant, the member for Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, the member for Beaches—Woodbine and the member for Waterloo.

The intent of this bill is to protect biodiversity. That has been repeatedly indicated by those who want to accept what is its real intent. It aims as well as we can through words and proposed legislation to identify, protect and rehabilitate threatened and endangered species of flora and fauna.

• (1125)

We cover the Canadian territory as we know it. We are well aware that nature does not respect political boundaries. There is

a distinct responsibility for any government that flows mainly, as some members have recognized, from the fact that Canada was the first nation to ratify the biodiversity convention in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. As many members have quite rightly pointed out there is a responsibility at the provincial level, at the municipal level and at the federal level because of federal lands, interprovincial movements and international commitments.

Therefore the three levels of government together could do something useful for the benefit of future generations and for the benefit of nature, wealth, for the benefit of le patrimoine, as they call it in French, in terms of protecting threatened and endangered species of flora and fauna.

We know that species when severely threatened disappear from the face of the earth. There is a tremendous concern about the rapidity of this trend. This bill cannot go beyond the scope and the jurisdiction of the federal government. I would like to allay the fears of some members who had spoken earlier about this aspect.

It must be stressed that the bill is being examined by Parliament at a time when the member for Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis and the delegation he led to Indonesia has managed to bring Canada to the forefront of global efforts to protect biological diversity. As we all know, last week Canada won a competition in Jakarta. Montreal will be housing the United Nations secretariat on biological diversity. It is a tremendous development for which we are all proud and for which we would like to congratulate our colleague for Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis.

The secretariat will monitor the 1992 biological diversity convention. It should be remembered and stressed that it has been signed and even ratified by some 150 nations. We are moving ahead with other nations, as well we should. The goal of the protection of the earth's plant and animal species is becoming an urgent item on the agenda.

To conclude, I would like to again thank the members of the House who have participated in the debate and have endorsed the initiative which aims to ensure strong federal legislation on endangered species and preserve biological diversity as it is prescribed by the convention ratified in 1992. It aims at showing respect for other living organisms and ensures that we maintain a rich and diverse ecosystem for the benefit of present and future generations.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, a point of order. Prior to you putting the question, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following. I seek the unanimous consent of the House that any recorded division that may be asked for later this day, in other words in very short order, on Bill C-275, be deferred until the end of Government Orders on Tuesday, November 21.

Government Orders

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

• (1130)

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion 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 yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to the unanimous order made a moment or so ago, the division is deferred until Tuesday, November 21, at the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders, at which time the bells to call in the members will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I think you would find consent to suspend until twelve o'clock noon, at which time we will commence Government Orders.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to suspend the sitting until noon?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11.35 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 12.03 p.m.

[English]

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
DEVELOPMENT ACT

The House resumed from November 10 consideration of the motion that Bill C-96, an act to establish the Department of Human Resources Development and to amend and repeal certain related acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to put before the people of Canada what I consider to be one of the most disconcerting aspects of the financial situation our country finds itself in today.

Make no mistake that what is happening in Canada today is a result of circumstance. It has far more to do with circumstance than it has to do with ideology. We are talking about how to get about getting the country out of the financial mess it is in. As everyone knows, we are in a financial mess federally and provincially.

• (1205)

As was so clearly illustrated in the *Globe and Mail* on Saturday in an excellent article on individual and family debt, Canadians by and large are in a financial mess personally. The *Globe and Mail* article stated that the average family consumer debt in Canada equals 88 per cent of disposable income. This is up from approximately 60 per cent 10 years ago.

The net result is that our federal debt is up, our provincial debt is up, the debt in most municipalities is up and individual credit card debt is up. We find ourselves paying more and more for less and less. All we have to do is add zeros to see that the financial situations of the country and the provinces really are no different from the financial mess most citizens are in.

I can speak with some assurance in saying that most Canadians and certainly those Canadians with whom I am familiar find themselves in an increasingly difficult financial situation. Our incomes have remained fairly stagnant but the cost of living has continued to escalate, even though it is escalating more slowly. We find ourselves being pinched and businesses are being pinched for profit.

What do we do? How do we go about extricating ourselves from this horrid mess? One way the federal government is doing it is definitely a step in the right direction. It is amalgamating the various cash transfers from the federal government to the provinces which are paid in support of people. The transfers used to be separate under education, health, welfare, et cetera and were sent to the provinces with strings attached. These moneys which were transferred to the provinces had to go to individuals specifically and we could track where the money was going.

Government Orders

That was changed in the last budget. Under the Canada health and social transfer act, this money was pooled and is being transferred to the provinces with strings attached. The strings are rather tenuous and not direct. It is pretty difficult for the federal government to tell the provinces: "We gave you the money. These are the national standards to which you must adhere in order to get the money". I do not think the federal government has any right, responsibility or place to send this money to the provinces with strings attached. Who does it think it is kidding? It is our money anyway and it is just being recycled by the federal government.

At any rate, the Liberal government opposite finds itself in the situation where it will be transferring to the provincial governments and then to the people, \$7 billion less this year than it did last year. If we think that is tough, wait until the next budget. We still have at least \$20 billion to go in the reduction of transfers before we get to a neutral position and we stop going further into the hole. This is the first scratch, the first attempt at fiscal responsibility in the country.

Some provinces in Canada, most notably Quebec, have yet to cross that rubicon. Quebec is still going along blissfully without considering its provincial debt which is \$5.7 billion in deficit this year. Just wait until Quebec begins to address that problem.

We recognize the necessity of addressing the debt problem responsibly on federal, provincial and personal levels. How do we go about making sure that the most vulnerable people in our society are protected? That is what I would like to speak to. There has been built in this foundation the necessity for objectively and realistically looking at what we can do to ensure that those who are the weakest and the most vulnerable are protected and looked after in the true Canadian spirit. This is one of the values which is pan-Canadian, a value we all share regardless of our political persuasion.

• (1210)

We share the value that the weakest and most vulnerable in our society should be and will be protected. We are also very much of the understanding that the most privileged in our society are going to have to pay a premium to ensure that those who are the weakest are protected. That is the way it works and that is how we get social order. The only way we are going to have a society that works is if we are prepared to share. I do not think anybody seriously questions that.

What is being seriously questioned is whether or not people have a right to say: "We have always done it this way and therefore, we are always going to continue to get it this way". We are going to have to change things dramatically in order to make sure we are able to live within our means nationally. Recognizing and understanding this and accepting that we are going to accept change, that we are going to have to work with it, how do we go about making sure that those who are least

capable of looking to this change and the most vulnerable are protected?

I have looked at this very carefully over the last few months as a member of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons. The government has seriously fallen down in its fiduciary responsibility to make sure that the most vulnerable people are at least to a modicum consulted before change happens and that they feel some sense of confidence that when this necessary change takes place they will be protected.

To my knowledge, the government has not convened one single solitary meeting with the provincial governments responsible for delivering the programs to those persons with disabilities; people in wheelchairs, people confined to their beds, people who cannot get around, people with learning disabilities, people with mental or physical disabilities, motion disabilities. These people who are the most vulnerable have not been consulted through the provinces which are responsible for delivering the care and the services.

The national Parliament has said that in the total basket under the Canada health and social transfer \$7 billion less is being transferred to the provinces than was transferred last year. That money has to go to education, welfare, a whole myriad of purposes. One of the purposes is persons with disabilities.

People with disabilities already feel vulnerable. Imagine how people with disabilities feel when they see that funding is going to be reduced by such a substantial amount. They are the most vulnerable of the people in the categories to which the funding is going to be reduced.

The federal government has not done a thing. There has not been one meeting with the provinces to say that it recognizes the relationship between the federal government, which is responsible for funding, and the provincial governments, which also fund, but in addition to delivering the programs deliver the bulk of the money necessary to support these programs. How does the member suppose vulnerable people feel if the federal government has not convened one meeting with the provinces to say: "We recognize there are changes coming in the way we fund these programs. Things of necessity are going to change, but let us work together with the consumer groups in the disabled community to make sure the people are protected".

Over the last couple of months witness after witness after witness have come to the committee. They said that because of funding cuts there are people in our country today who are mobility impaired, who cannot get out of bed by themselves, and have been lying in bed in their own waste for hours and hours and hours. There is no funding for people to come in and help them change their linen or even get to the bathroom. This is happening in our country.

• (1215)

We as parliamentarians have a fiduciary responsibility. How we treat the least among us is a measure of the worth of society, the greatness of society. We must look to the most vulnerable

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people in society and ask how we are treating them and, if we were in that position, how we would want to be treated.

When speaking to people in wheelchairs in the disabled community we realize that any one of us as Canadians could be in a wheelchair tomorrow morning. We need to think about how it would be for us if we were in that position. We must give some extra thought to the absolute necessity of reducing funding to people and transfers to people from all orders of government so that we protect the weakest and the most vulnerable among us.

I appreciate the opportunity to put these comments on the record.

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the debate on Bill C-96, an act to establish the Department of Human Resources Development.

I was quite taken by the member's remarks about looking out for the most disadvantaged. I have stated repeatedly in the House the essence of government. We in the Chamber should not be spending most of our time ignoring the advantaged because they form a very important part of the economic equation of the country. However, we in the House are supposed to be the people who speak for the most disadvantaged. That is the essence of why we are in the Chamber.

I was touched when I heard the member for Edmonton Southwest talk with caring, sensitivity and compassion about the most disadvantaged in the country. I should like to put a question to him and expand my thoughts that are driven by the set of core values of caring, compassion and approachability. I am sure the member believes the same set of principles should apply to young people who are out of work or anyone who is out of work in the country.

Could the hon. member consider building on that same traditional value system by saying that maybe as a government at this moment in time our focus has been too much on the right wing agenda, too much on the cutting, the slashing and the tight fiscal framework to a point where we have basically lost sight of the most disadvantaged? In this case I focus on people who do not have the dignity of getting up in the morning and going to a job, of having enough money in their pockets to pay for their kid's hockey stick or their daughter's clothes or food. Perhaps as a Chamber we should review our right wing agenda and go back to looking after the disadvantaged in a more aggressive way.

• (1220)

Mr. McClelland: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member opposite for the question. I assure everyone here that it was not a set up question. I appreciate the question because it strikes at the heart of what is the difference between members on this side and

members opposite. We virtually share all the same values but we do not share how we go about achieving them.

From discussions with members opposite I know the vast majority of representatives in the House share common values. How do we go about providing the kind of society the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood is talking about? How do we get young people working? Why is it that kids cannot play hockey? Why can their parents not afford it even if both parents are working? Why is it so expensive? How do we go about ensuring that everyone can participate in our wonderful nation?

The root cause of the problem can be found in *The Canadian Global Almanac* for 1996. It shows the per capita accumulated federal debt. In 1975 it was \$849 and the interest per capita was \$139. Today, 20 years later, the debt per capita is \$17,381 and the interest per capita is \$1,299. If we multiply that by four members of the family, it does not take very long to realize that we do not have any money.

We could then consider provincial debts and at our credit card debts as families. It costs 15 per cent, 16 per cent or 17 per cent to service credit card debt. We have the situation where most of us as a country, as provinces and as individuals are using today's income to pay for what we have already consumed in the past. Therefore instead of the money being used to purchase goods and services it is being used to service debts.

It makes us wonder when we read the paper today and see that all five of our national banks have record profits. They have \$5 billion worth of profit. How do they get that money? They get it from the interest on the debt. The debt goes up and the interest goes up. The amount of interest goes up in real terms even if the rates do not increase. The banks get richer. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

People who are able to make financial investments get more money through investing in passive capital investments where there is no risk than people who risk everything they have to start a new business. They put every nickel they have including their homes and everything else into a business to get it going. And what happens? They pay tax after tax after tax.

I sat next to a person travelling from Vancouver to Ottawa yesterday in an aeroplane. He is in the garment business. He is also in the sports and recreation business. He has a fitness business. He is getting out of the fitness business. He said the problem was that it costs \$33 a month for people to come to work out. People do not even have \$33 a month that they can spend. It has to be dragged out of them. People just do not have any money any more.

Why do we not have the ability to create employment, especially entrance employment for young people, generation X? If they are not gainfully employed they will waste their time, get involved in crime and all other social ills. It is that people do

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not have enough money to invest in anything other than necessities. Therefore businesses cannot sell, manufacturers cannot manufacture and shippers cannot ship.

Until we deal with the root cause of the problem, which is that we are all broke because we are paying interest on money we have already spent for goods and services, we will not get ourselves out of this mess. We cannot borrow our way out of this mess. If spending money we do not have worked, everybody would have five jobs.

• (1225)

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I should like to pursue this thought with the member because I obviously do not see it the way he does.

I have a difficult time understanding the derivatives section of the Royal Bank of Canada. I use the expression its private casino where they play with derivatives and sometimes even bet against the Canadian dollar. I have a difficult time understanding how the derivatives section of a bank can find an average of \$30 billion a day to play with and make money. That is one bank. It is said that the derivatives game in the world now involves a trillion dollars a day. This money is being pushed. It is paper pushing all over the world. There is no production related to that trillion dollars a day.

I find it difficult to accept that our largest bank can find \$30 billion a day to gamble in pushing paper alone. Yet the small business float for a whole year for the entire small business sector is only \$28 billion. I am only talking about one bank.

The issue is not that we must eliminate waste and watch our spending. When we talk about debt we should not avoid talking about the tremendous assets in the country: our resources, our water, our infrastructure and our educated people. We are talking about human resources. Our human resources are recognized as the best on the planet. We have to measure that into the economic equation.

Would the member not agree that when we talk about getting at root causes we must talk about who is controlling all the capital, who is pushing all this capital around the world and preventing a sufficient amount of it from being distributed into the economy where there is true production in the manufacture of goods and services? Does the member not think that is a debate we should have in the House?

Mr. McClelland: Mr. Speaker, I do not pretend to know enough about the derivatives market or international finance to be able to respond thoughtfully to the question.

I have a general sense of unease and malaise about the lifeblood of our economy. I do not know it well enough to speak to it therefore I will not. However I know what makes business work, particularly small business, entrepreneurial business,

because that is my background. What makes people start a business, what makes people risk a business, what makes people get up in the morning and provide employment, is a chance to make some money, a chance to be one's own boss.

I was out with one of my sons on the weekend. I said: "Always do the best job you can when you are working. You owe that to your employer. But you will never get rich working for somebody else. If you want to get rich you have to work for yourself". Not everybody will do that, but one will never get rich working for somebody else or being a member of Parliament, for that matter.

What makes people get up in the morning, risk everything they have in life and start a new business is the expectation that they will make some money at it. The problem is that it is getting more and more difficult to make money at business or even to do it. Once one has established a business and sells it what happens? How much of the money does one get to keep after paying all the taxes? It is relatively little.

We can look at the difference between passive investment, for instance investing in bank stock or investing finances with no risk, and investing in an entrepreneur with a lot of risk. What do most people do? In my case I could make a decision to invest in stocks, bonds or mutual funds at virtually no risk or I could make a decision to invest in people, which is high risk. I can invest in the people. Because of my tax situation I get virtually no return on it. I can invest in stocks and bonds and get essentially the same return but I have no risk.

• (1230)

Investing in people is by far the best way to go. It is what we need to do for our country. It is what I am going to do as well. I have a situation right here in Ottawa. A person who works with me in my office is from Edmonton. She is unilingual. She has moved to Hull. She lives and is working in Chelsea. She has taken over as a unilingual anglophone a little café, the Café Meech, in Hull near the Gatineau Park.

She has to raise the capital independently because it is not a very bankable deal. She has the fire in her belly that she is definitely going to make it work.

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Derivatives.

Mr. McClelland: The point the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood raised is so important to what we are to do as a country to get people back to work, that for first time employment for all our young people have something to look forward to, so that they feel part of the community, so that they have something rather than standing on the sidelines looking in.

The debate the hon. member opposite has suggested is a good one. It is timely. How do we go about doing that? How do we go about getting someone to risk their capital, to get their idea in gear, to get that sense of drive and ambition so that they will

start a little widget manufacturing business or a service and will hire one or two people?

That is the way we will get the country working. That is the way we will get unemployment insurance premiums down. That is the way we will take off the dependence on government and make the country work. We have to re-establish that sense of purpose and entrepreneurialism and zeal on a personal basis. country.

The Deputy Speaker: The time has expired for questions and comments, as have the five hours of debate. We are now into 10-minute speeches.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I remind the House that we are debating Bill C-96 but we are also debating the amendment to the bill put forward by the hon. member for Mercier.

That party objects that the bill does not give full and alone jurisdiction over human resources development. That phrase frightens me. Again it shows that the official opposition is pushing its hidden agenda of separating so that it has full powers, full control over human resources and other things.

I draw the attention of the official opposition to recent post referendum polls, which state that 61 per cent of Quebecers want to remain in Canada and 78 per cent of Quebecers want to see major changes to the way the Canadian federation works. It is through bills such as this that hopefully through provincial federal co-operation we can get more people to work.

Last week I had a town hall meeting. There was a qualified veterinarian in the audience. He was from another country. Sadly, he is on social assistance. He does not have a job in Canada.

Two weeks ago I saw a switch from the official opposition to the Reform Party when the member for Calgary Southeast debated this bill and said very little about it. She talked about pensions and everything else.

I was pleased to hear the member for Edmonton Southeast at least talking about the purpose of government being able to help the most vulnerable people in society. He talked about the disabled.

The Deputy Speaker: I am sure the member meant Edmonton Southwest. The member for Edmonton Southeast is the chair occupant and does not participate in debate. This small correction will not come out of the member's time.

• (1235)

Mr. Flis: Thank you for the correction, Mr. Speaker.

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I was pleased that the member talked about the disabled because it was this government in the early 1980s that set up a special task force across the country to look at how obstacles could be removed for the disabled. The work of that task force is benefiting many handicapped people today. By removing the obstacles they are no longer handicapped.

The Reform Party criticizes the bill because it does not solve any problems with the Canada pension plan, for example. We all agree there are problems with the plan. The Reform Party knows perfectly well the government takes these problems seriously. I object very strongly to the Reform Party's suggestion that the Canada pension plan is about to collapse.

The government is preparing a working paper which will set out options for reforming the CPP. We will present those options to the provinces which share responsibility in this area. With their goodwill we will negotiate a new and better plan which will meet the needs of seniors not only today but in the future.

Bill C-96 is not about pension plans. It is an administrative bill to establish a department. The Reform Party then takes advantage of this debate to decry the federal plan for gender equality. We make no apology for advancing women's equality by examining initiatives related to economics, autonomy, poverty, employment, education and training. However, this has nothing to do with Bill C-96 which is an administrative bill to establish a department.

The Reform Party members criticizes this bill because it does not radically transform post-secondary education into its strange vision of the future. However, it knows full well that Bill C-96 is not about changes to post-secondary education at all. It is an administrative bill to establish a department.

The Reform Party criticizes Bill C-96 because it does not change the Constitution and prevent the federal government from fulfilling its responsibilities for labour market programs. Even if we wanted to do that, the Reform Party knows full well that one does not amend the Constitution through an administrative bill to establish a department.

The Reform Party and Bloc Quebecois criticize the bill for intruding into provincial jurisdictions and then complain that the bill does not radically alter areas such as education where the provinces do have jurisdiction. Opposition knows full well this has nothing to do with Bill C-96.

Opposition members can try to side track the debate on this bill, throw up smoke screens and parade their own pet theories on every issue under the sun, but let us keep one thing clear. It has been said many times that Bill C-96 deals with consequential amendments to a variety of legislation related to the reorganization of government departments. That is all it does. It is not intended to change the world.

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This does not mean the world does not need changing but let us keep a proper perspective on the task at hand. The task at hand is providing Canadians with a department that supplies them with essential programs and services, a department that has been remarkably successful over the past few years in bringing our labour market and social programs out of the past and into the 21st century.

Bill C-96 is about the department that launched one of the biggest grassroots consultations on social programs ever seen in this country, with more than 100,000 Canadians taking part.

It is this department that made the first major changes to the Canada student loans program, changes the Reform Party seems to have ignored. As a result of these changes over 13,000 high school students are getting special grants to pursue their education. One hundred thousand underemployed graduates, twice as many as before, are getting expanded interest relief. The program is costing taxpayers less while students are getting a better service.

It is this department that is pioneering an approach that puts programs and services into the hands of local communities with tools and resources that can be customized by communities to meet their needs.

It is this department that is building the most decentralized service delivery network in any government moving from 450 to 700 points of service, moving it to rural communities across Canada; people can get help where they live.

It is this department that is providing Canada's seniors with four times as many offices where they can get personal service. This is what Bill C-96 is about. It would be useful if the Reform Party and the Bloc Quebecois would talk about the bill and look at what is really going on in the department.

• (1240)

When the member for Calgary Southeast complains that the bill does not eliminate overlap and duplication between federal and provincial services, she should look at the real progress the department is making in building new partnerships with the provinces, with the private sector, with communities across the country. Look at what we are doing in the real world; the work with provinces on pilot projects that test the joint delivery of federal and provincial programs. These are designed specifically to improve efficiency and eliminate overlap and duplication.

Let us get constructive and talk about moving forward that effort. Let us encourage the provinces to join with us in the new agreements that will clarify roles and responsibilities, as we have invited them to do. Let us look at the very essence of Bill

C-96, the focus on a better integration of programs and services that is so critical to this effort. By passing Bill C-96 without delay we can move on to address these concerns more efficiently.

Let us not hold up change on the pretext that change is not happening fast enough to suit the Reform Party. Let us not pretend that change is not taking place right now. Everyone in the House knows that real reform in our social and labour market programs is taking place and will continue to take place.

Bill C-96 does not do everything but it is an important step toward getting the architecture right, establishing a department that can provide the highly integrated, focused programs and services Canadians need.

Of all the comments on Bill C-96 from the Reform Party, I can find only one based on fact. Bill C-96 does not require an annual report to be tabled from the Department—alleluia.

Members of the Reform Party appear to be equivocating on this issue. For example, they praise the decision to eliminate the annual report from the department of public works as a move towards greater efficiency, and yet they condemn the elimination of annual reports from Heritage Canada. Let us hear some consistency from the Reform Party.

The government's own view is clear. We want to handle the question of annual reports in the most efficient manner. Section 157 of the Financial Administration Act calls for the elimination of annual reports when the information they provide is duplicated in public accounts or the estimates. That applies in this case. Members of the House will still have access to the information they need to monitor departmental spending through these other resources.

For a party that professes to want grassroots control over programs, the members opposite seem surprisingly tied to the old ways of doing things, or to doing nothing. Bill C-96 is not a defence of the status quo or of outmoded ways of doing things.

The government does not pretend that by passing this bill it can achieve everything it wants to achieve overnight. It is one step along the way. It would be foolish to hold back, to block this important step forward simply because it does not do everything at once. It would be equally foolish to block this step forward because we are afraid of change.

Whatever the Reform Party may think, Canadians want change. We saw that in the referendum, we see it post-referendum, and the government has addressed this. The old ways no longer work. By bringing about change, it does not mean it has to be constitutional change. The way we share services with provinces is a good place to begin.

The government is giving Canadians change, not just rhetoric. With this bill we can move forward. With this bill we can get on with the real challenge of building a more efficient, effective form of government for Canada.

I remind the official opposition and the Reform Party of the realities of today. When I was seeking a job in 1956 after I finished teacher's college, there were about a dozen boards of education that wanted my services. One board was hiring 600 teachers at a time; another, 500 teachers. Boards were recruiting teachers in England, in Australia, in New Zealand. Today teachers graduating with much higher qualifications than I had cannot get a teaching position. They can hardly get their names on the supply list.

• (1245)

There was a time when teachers complained because they did not pay unemployment insurance. The government of the day insisted that teachers should pay unemployment insurance. As a teacher, I supported that move because you never know when you might be unemployed and this is an insurance scheme. Teachers then started paying UI. Today many teachers are benefiting from that.

Because of the changing nature of the workforce and the competitiveness, more and more workers are going to have to move from province to province and require training and retraining. I hope we can count on the official opposition and the Reform Party to give this bill speedy passage.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on Bill C-96.

As you probably know, barely one month has gone by since the Quebec referendum and already another federalist mask is dropping. Bill C-96 is one of those masks. This government waited till after the referendum to bring this bill back and try to go ahead with it.

Far from signalling the federal government's withdrawal from manpower training, this bill will allow even greater interference in a provincial area of jurisdiction. This government is going over the heads of the provinces. Quebec has been asking for many years to be given full and complete jurisdiction over manpower training. In December 1990, labour and management partners in Quebec joined in a co-operative effort and unanimously took position in favour of repatriating all federal funding for manpower training. There is a consensus in Quebec, and a rather telling one at that. Even the Liberal Quebec government in office at the time agreed with its partners. So, this is not a separatist initiative but rather an opinion shared by the public at large.

Why then does the federal government not listen? Because this government has only one thing in mind: to gain total, perfect control, up, down and sideways. It wants to have all of the

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powers, even in an area like this one, in which its poor performance is legendary. This is just one more stepping stone.

This government should know that all its centralizing actions ultimately affect people, of course. And it is with people in mind that consistent policies should be developed, and for people that manpower training is offered, so as to increase our manpower's performance.

• (1250)

Here is more good news: last Friday, the Chicoutimi-Jonquière region, in my riding of Chicoutimi, was once again declared the winner because it has the highest unemployment rate in Canada. How nice. How very nice. This shows how incapable this government is when it comes to manpower training.

People in my riding are increasingly tired of winning this dubious award month after month, year in year out. What can the government do to help our economy get out of this mess? It must provide a consistent manpower policy. When faced with unemployment, people must know where to go, and not only to claim UI benefits. I am referring to employment centres, which have now become places where people go to claim UI benefits. People are well aware of that. However, they do not know where, in the future, they will go to find jobs.

The key to the future is a good training program for people in the labour force based on the requirements of the region in which they live. It is certainly not here in Ottawa, far from my region and others, that public officials can determine the best training programs for my constituents. They are too far away, and they do not know about our specific needs. Therefore, the decision making process regarding manpower training must be closer to those concerned.

Bill C-96 will certainly not settle this issue once and for all, far from it. Given the way things are going right now, people in my riding will be even more concerned. In addition to giving powers to the minister, this bill bypasses the provinces. It will give Ottawa the required judicial and legal basis to justify interfering in and encroaching upon manpower training.

This is confirmed by clause 20, which provides that the minister may enter into agreements with a province or group of provinces, financial institutions, municipalities and such other persons or bodies as he considers appropriate. Since the minister is in charge, will financial support follow, or is this just a ploy by the federal government to shift its problems?

This bill does not make it compulsory to reach an agreement with the provinces. Again, the number of stakeholders is being increased at a time when joint action is taking place in this sector. The bill will make things even more complicated for those involved. Dividing budgets among a variety of groups, chosen, goodness knows how, by the minister, is not the way to establish any degree of cohesion in training programs.

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Will these groups have the necessary expertise? And when will the single window approach materialize? This is not the first time the Bloc has brought up one-stop service. As it now stands, Bill C-96 does not guarantee it.

• (1255)

I believe that is what could make the difference. The single window approach is essential. It would ensure that the reform would be focussed on the individual. Making the individual the focal point of the reform cannot help but be beneficial from the job creation point of view.

It is also beneficial for our young people, who do not always know what training would be best for their future. For years Quebec has been demanding full jurisdiction over manpower. There is plenty of proof that the federal government has missed the boat in the way it has managed this.

Mr. Speaker, you are indicating to me that I have only a few seconds left, so I shall close with the following remark. Last October 5, in response to a question on this bill from the leader of the official opposition, the minister stated—and his words are recorded—that we ought to have read the bill.

Let me assure you, Mr. Speaker, we have read the bill. And not only Quebecers have read it, moreover. The Minister of Human Resources Development should—and these are my closing words—redraft his bill. I shall vote in favour of my colleague's amendment.

[*English*]

Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak this morning on Bill C-96.

Clause 3 of the bill states:

There is hereby established a department of the Government of Canada called the Department of Human Resources Development—

Perhaps the most remarkable part of the bill is the very name of the department it creates: "Human Resources Development". Those three words stand for one of the most critical challenges and also one of the greatest opportunities facing Canadians today. They stand for one of the most basic beliefs underlying the government's commitment to Canadians.

We believe that Canada has enormous potential, economically and socially. We believe that people, our human resources, are the key to unlocking that potential. It is the talents and skills of people that have made this country one of the most prosperous nations on earth. It is those same skills and talents that will secure for Canada and Canadians a prosperous future.

By investing in people, by developing our human resources, we want to ensure that every Canadian has a chance to take part in the future. We want to ensure that every element of the social

programs works toward that goal. That focus is what the new department is all about. It is about helping the people who need help the most, by giving them the tools they need the most, by giving them a chance to overcome the barriers of poverty, a chance to gain access to good training and skills and a chance to get good jobs.

Throughout the social security reform consultations we have been asking Canadians how to focus our social programs better to achieve that goal. It has been going on throughout the Department of Human Resources Development over the past year as departmental officials have worked to sharpen the focus of programs and services to make them more effective. It is going on right now as we develop the new human resources investment fund, which will lead to greater decentralization in this area. We will be working more with our partners at the local level and will be reducing the 39 current programs to a handful which can be hand tailored to local needs.

Social security reform will continue to evolve as the government prepares legislation to refocus the UI program and integrate the lessons it has learned from consultations into departmental operations.

If members want to see social security reform in action as an example of focusing resources on investing in people, they can take a look in my riding at the Bedford Professional Training Services. With this program each project consists of a mix of classroom and on the job training in modern office management. Many of the trainees are older workers who have been displaced from their former employment. In addition to learning new skills, they must deal with low self-esteem, grief, embarrassment and frustration which accompany a midlife job loss, as we all know well. A strong counselling component is built into the training package to address these issues.

• (1300)

The co-ordinator of the program, Fran Hill, is to be commended for her excellent work. In fact the placement rate for this program in its first two projects was 90 per cent. Ninety per cent of those people who were actually in the program were placed in jobs. That is excellent and is to be commended. One former trainee has successfully started her own business and is now employing another of Fran's graduates.

These people do not want handouts from the department. They want jobs and they want help getting the tools and skills they need to get on with their lives. That is what they are getting at places like Bedford Professional Training Services. They are getting a second chance at education and learning skills for new jobs. That is just one example of the strategic initiatives we are undertaking to refocus the department's resources away from the status quo toward real, productive and meaningful change.

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I will give another example. Let us look at the communities of Lucasville and Upper Hammonds Plains which are two minority communities in my riding of Halifax West. These communities have benefited tremendously over the past two years working closely with the Bedford Canada Employment Centre.

Through a section 25 program a UI recipient prepares a strategic development plan. Right now they are arranging for community consultation on this plan but they will soon begin the initial stages of implementation. Part of that plan involves tutoring programs which have already begun and have been very successful.

Through the Youth Services Canada summer program, students, including eight from the summer program and four in the career placement program, did two activities. The first involved recreation services in the communities. The second involved renovations of homes, churches and community centres in those communities but according to priorities which were established at the local level by the people in those communities. That is a very important point.

The curriculum they used was developed with funding by the delivery of systems project of the department. The curriculum works to improve educational standards. It gives the area the capability as a remote learning centre. It will actually start in the middle of this month.

There are many examples like these across the country that reflect the new focus and direction of the department. We can see it in the assistance that thousands of Canadians receive every day in our network of CECs, Canada Employment Centres, across the country. Thousands of Canadians who need help to get the training, the jobs and income support they need are helped in these centres.

We can see it in the hard work and dedication of some 30,000 departmental employees. I want to mention one in particular with whom I worked over the past couple of years and who retired this summer. Keith Cameron was the manager of the Canada Employment Centre in Bedford. I was very impressed by his commitment to the community and his commitment to work.

In fact on Canada Day in 1994 I visited Upper Hammonds Plains. There on a day off was Keith Cameron coaching the local ball team. If that is not commitment to a community that needs assistance and needs involvement, I do not know what is. To me that shows the kind of dedication and commitment of many of the employees of the human resources development department. It is an excellent example for others to follow.

Day in and day out, people like Keith Cameron and other departmental employees are working with people who are

looking for jobs. They help mediate labour disputes. They help communities with economic development. They help young people get started in the world of work and help seniors benefit from income support programs.

This new focus of the department is an integral part of the human resources investment fund established in the last budget. They work closely together. The whole point of this fund is to make the most flexible use possible of our resources to ensure that people get the support and services they need to find jobs, jobs that they want desperately.

● (1305)

For example, this fund will support the government's commitment to child care, a crucial measure to help unemployed parents find work and get training. We made a commitment to co-invest with the provinces in child care and we will live up to that commitment.

We are also working to improve the child care that is available to aboriginal peoples. Our officials are working with a team from the First Nations. Together we are making good progress. The government hopes to have a new program in place this fall.

Additionally the department has launched the child care visions fund with \$5 million annually. The money will be used to help support new research and development in this area which is so very important to Canada's future human resources potential.

These are some of the ways the new focus of the department is reflected in concrete action. In the immediate future one of the government's top priorities will be to integrate this focus into the unemployment insurance program with a major overhaul of the program.

A few weeks ago the Minister of Human Resources Development spoke to the human resources standing committee about the direction this overhaul is going to take. A key objective of the overhaul is to transform the UI program to focus on re-employment not unemployment, on jobs not joblessness. This means finding ways to remove disincentives in the program that hamper job creation and discourage workers from returning to the workforce. It also means simplifying the system for both workers and employers, making it easier to work with and less costly to administer. It means integrating the UI program with a variety of tools to help people get back to work.

The government will introduce legislation to reform UI in the next few weeks but the department is already working on the basic operational changes needed to make the integrated employment program work and succeed. This means streamlining the current 39 separate programs and services that are delivered through CECs across the country and integrating them in a way that allows the communities to implement them in different ways. That seems to be very appropriate.

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The objective is to ensure the department's energies are driven not by program rules but by the needs of individual Canadians in different parts of the country. There will be much more room for discretion and judgment at the local level which is important. If we want to tailor re-employment programs to fit local needs, we must have that kind of local discretion.

Bill C-96 does not in itself accomplish these changes. What it does is consolidate the administrative framework for changes that have taken place, are taking place now and will continue to take place in the future. It reflects the basic focus that underlies the government's approach to social and labour market programs. It is this focus that will help to develop Canada's human resources giving those who need help the most tools they need to work and prosper in the future.

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I join the debate on Bill C-96, a bill which sets up the Department of Human Resources Development. I would certainly hope the kinds of remarks and words my hon. colleague across the way has just expressed will come to fruition, at least in part.

This bill, which is a structural kind of bill to set up a department, takes place in the environment we find ourselves in as far as Canada and the world is concerned. It deals with things such as the fact that we live in an information society. Taking place around us is a technological revolution toward a knowledge based economy. There is the globalization of politics, industry and trade. There is a move toward the devolution of power to individuals. There is a gradual recognition that the past is not a model for the future.

There is an express need now for a new federalism. We are very well aware of that having just experienced the referendum in Quebec. All of society must be involved, not just the elite. This hinges on a very major part. We need to recognize that if we are going to have real change in our country, it is going to come from the rank and file. It is not going to come from the top down. We have had enough of that. That model is not working, has not worked and will not work in the future.

• (1310)

What do we need? This is where the bill lacks a lot of its input for Canada's society and for the government. Canada needs the development of people. We need an innovation and technology orientation. We need to have an infrastructure in science and engineering. I will only deal with those three areas. Many more ought to be addressed but those are the three I will limit my remarks to this afternoon.

If we are going to develop people successfully, the number one requirement as we move from the old society to the new information and knowledge based society is the ability to change. Individuals will have to have the willingness and motivation inside them to learn continually and to do so in all aspects of life.

I was rather impressed with the Electrical and Electronic Manufacturers Association which has a very interesting set of requirements for people who need to be up to date in their industry. The association says that some of the best programs are those developed by the industry on the shop floor as the best learning takes place on the shop floor.

Those are the two elements: the ability and willingness to change and subsequently the willingness to learn and to do so on a continuing basis. It goes beyond that. We need to develop people who have the ability to handle the technological and social aspects of living and working. We are developing some very competent people in the technological area. We are not developing them as a balanced position in terms of handling their social and other situations.

Let me alert the House to the findings of *Maclean's* magazine which just did a poll ranking all the universities in Canada. It became pretty obvious on listening to various people that what individuals require today is the ability to do technical work very effectively and at a very high level. However at the same time they need to be able to balance their home life and their primary relationships with other people. We need this balance in people but we need more than that. We need technological development in areas that are not presently being developed.

It was rather interesting to listen to some of the captains of industry say that they need emphasis, willingness and ability in people who deal with computers and the skills required to do that successfully.

Today there is the breakdown of our families. If there was ever a need for the family to be strongly structured it is in this situation where constant learning is required. When there is a need to change there has to be a place where there is quiet, comfort and security. That comes from strong interpersonal relationships which are best found within the family. As we develop these other aspects, the high technical skills, we need to develop the reason and the basis for strong families and strong primary relationships.

In order to achieve that what is necessary? We need a balanced education system, one that encourages an entrepreneurial spirit which shows people how to be entrepreneurs. We live in a culture that encourages entrepreneurship and rewards the risk taking that is incumbent upon those who venture out in their own businesses. We then need to develop that skill and ability for people to blend economic and management awareness with science and technology.

It is so easy to become focused in a very narrow area of a science or technology and forget that unless we can manage people it does not matter how good we are at running machines or computer programs. We have to learn to manage people. In the new high tech industries that seems to be the area which is most in need of development.

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It goes beyond that. We need to have a balance among educational institutions. There are hundreds of universities in this country. They seem to spring up all over the place. It seems to me that parents want their kids to go to university. That is the best. The summum bonum of all education aspirations is graduating from university, preferably with a Ph.D. That is not necessarily the requirement for technological development. We need to balance our institutions so we focus on the highly academic skilled people but also develop the person who can do the actual technical stuff of putting a computer together, of writing a computer program, of recognizing the interrelationships of computer networks and things of that sort.

• (1315)

We need more than just university institutions. We need other post-secondary institutions. We have technical institutions such as BCIT, the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology and institutions of that nature, but we need a group that goes in between those as well, which brings a level of sophistication and understanding of a Ph.D. but that is not a Ph.D. in the academic sense, but rather in the technical and science sense, as contrasted with existing university programs.

There are two specific suggestions I now draw to members' attention. The first is it is necessary for us to examine, validate and help diffuse or reject research studies prepared by other organizations and build on valid work by undertaking or commissioning research to study the linkages between education and the economy, the forecasting of skill requirements, international comparisons, quality of education and training, gender and equity policies, student learning styles and core curriculum.

The second is to facilitate linkages between all levels of the education system: business, labour, government, the community, social services, non-governmental organizations. If we move into that kind of environment we will do away, or at least certainly reduce, the town/gown conflict that exists now between the university professor on one hand who rests primarily on his seniority to maintain his position rather than on new ideas. We have some wonderful professors who have great seniority and who rest on that thing. A lot of them need to change their lifestyle and have a new orientation.

We also need to develop a receptivity among our companies, our various industries, that they will take and integrate into their operations the best practice technologies. Then we can play the leadership role that Canada is capable of in the development, commercialisation and marketing of technology. The challenge is ours. We can do that.

Another area I draw attention to is developing the science and engineering infrastructure. We need to again emphasize the excellence required in education, the excellence in skill development and a vibrant research department.

The complexity of the relationships among research, education, skills training, innovation and competitiveness is not to be denigrated. It is extremely difficult and it is the one area where we have not done a good job. This bill should have addressed those kinds of things. It did not.

Universities, community colleges and technical institutes must re-examine their missions, establish clear goals and improve the mobilization, allocation and management of their resources to achieve these goals.

Consideration should be given to the complementarity between the program offerings of colleges and universities as well as to greater differentiation between the roles and missions of each institution. Concurrently there must be a review of post-secondary funding in view of redefined missions. This review should result in a clear definition of goals, outcomes and increased accountability.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (Secretary of State (Science, Research and Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a pleasure to be here today as the member for Portage—Interlake in Manitoba and speak about Bill C-96, the act which will formally establish the new Department of Human Resources Development, a department for which my close colleague and fellow Manitoban, the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, is responsible.

Some might ask why the Secretary of State for Science, Research and Development would be particularly interested in talking on Bill C-96. There are several reasons. First and foremost, the bill brings together people and resources in a new way, a way that will position the Government of Canada to play a more effective role in human resource development.

The bill is central to a redefinition of the role of government in Canada, a role that improves the ability to form partnerships, to share resources, to enhance local and national understanding of the issues and to use national networking and research to ensure effectiveness and accountability.

• (1320)

It is a paradox perhaps of our age that governments, like computers, must cost less and do more at the same time. Sharing powers through partnerships, bringing groups and resources together at the local level is the process this bill enables, a process essential to meet the challenge of our times.

Government Orders

The process is now operating in many locations across Canada: at the new Learning Centre in Portage la Prairie, at the Learning and Life Centre in London, Ontario, at le Centre de ressources humaine de Matagami in Québec, and in many other areas.

Sectoral partnerships like the Automotive Repair and Service Council, the Canadian Steel Employer's Council, partnerships with industry leadership, are further examples of sharing, decision making and resources through partnerships.

[*Translation*]

Decentralization and a sharing of powers through partnerships, a regrouping of stakeholders and resources locally, this is what the DHRC is about and this is what Bill C-96 will enable us to continue doing.

[*English*]

We now live in the knowledge age, a time when an understanding of science and technology is vital for the development of human resources. This has happened for several reasons. More and more of the employment and the business opportunities of today depend on a knowledge of science and technology.

Over the last five years there has been a net gain of more than a million jobs for those with a college or university education but a net loss of more than 600,000 jobs for those with only high school training or less.

Employment in some science and engineering based areas, computer science, software engineering, advanced materials, biotechnology, environmental technology, are now and continue to be among the fastest growth areas for employment. Just being able to use a computer well in one's job has been estimated to provide a 15 per cent additional income benefit compared to a similar worker without such skills.

Science and technology are important as well because they are increasingly essential for the efficient delivery of government services. In Portage—Interlake constituents have historically often had to travel long distances to get to the nearest Canada employment centre.

Constituents from Ashern, Gypsumville, Dauphin River, Peguis, Fisher River, Jackhead and many more communities have had to travel two, three, four hours one way to get to the nearest Canada employment centre.

Fortunately due to the advance in technology and the foresight of the Minister of Human Resources Development it will not be long before employment kiosks are much closer so that increasingly constituents will be able to receive effective service in their own communities, as the citizens in Stonewall in my riding already do.

We look forward to the day when such service will be provided cost efficiently over the Internet to all people in their own communities. The government's community access program is providing rural communities across Canada the opportunity to get connected and to be served effectively at home.

Science and research are also increasingly essential to the design and the implementation of programs through the human resources development department.

As the National Advisory Board on Science and Technology emphasized in its report "Health, Wealthy and Wise", all levels of government need to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs and the efficiency of their delivery. They need to begin to understand the underlying causes in order to reduce the overall demand for remedial social programs.

NABST further emphasized that social science humanities research may be the key to responding to these issues. NABST singled out the self-sufficiency project of the human resources development department as an example of the sort of critical action research needed, testing by doing.

Numerous strategic initiatives now being undertaken by the human resources development department follow in the same fashion. Examples include the taking charge initiative in Manitoba, helping single parents on social assistance, and the improved access to child care initiative in British Columbia, a four-year project to test new ways of delivering and developing child care services.

• (1325)

[*Translation*]

The Government of Canada is not taking the lead in any of these initiatives. We do not want to take the lead. It is the results of these partnerships that interest us.

[*English*]

It is the creation of the human resources department in its present structure and the leadership of its present minister which have allowed the effective integration of sophisticated social science and program design so that we can expect to see for the first time with the upcoming reform of the unemployment insurance system an overhaul which has effectively used science based testing to ensure a better and far more effective program.

Science and technology in the development of human resources are only effective to the extent that they are used wisely and are balanced by the ability to develop critical human elements, ethics, discipline, creativity, hope, courage, self-esteem, compassion, tolerance, diversity, co-operation and team work.

It is also these elements which are important and can be nurtured within the focus of the new department which is focused on co-operation and partnerships, sharing resources and decision making, targeting these values. Our bottom line is that we must advance in the development of human values even as we advance in science and technology for economic purposes. To make wonderful developments in science and technology for economic goals alone but to fail to make the same developments in social and human sciences would be like a see-saw with all the weight on one side.

Government Orders

In this context it is appropriate to mention today, national child day, the important role the newly developed human resources development department can and is playing in nurturing the children of Canada.

Let me use an example of an effort in my riding of the newly opened learning centre in Portage la Prairie. It offers technology to help provide citizens with an alternative learning mode, including self-directed computer based learning, for all levels from grade 4 through first year university. The facility is of relevance to single mothers and their children.

As noted in the statistics reported last week, some 56 per cent of single mothers in Canada live in poverty. These mothers and their children deserve and need our attention. At the Portage learning centre they are receiving it. It is coupled with a day care facility which enables single mothers to be full participants and to learn new skills and to enhance their success in the participation in the job market and to enhance their income.

This example and many others like the improved access to child care initiative I mentioned earlier are important building blocks for our society and our children tomorrow.

Let me now return briefly to the theme I began with, a new department with a new approach, decentralized in that it shares resources and decision making in the most effective ways. This approach allows the rapid emergence and development of creative local initiatives to respond to local needs, and yet at the same time provides a nationally networked department which can share experiences, best practices and test results from new initiatives from one end of Canada to the other.

[*Translation*]

Today, the government has begun an in-depth reform of our labour market and social security programs, by creating a system of employment for the 21st century.

[*English*]

As a government we started the process of reform from the ground up. We have engaged almost 100,000 Canadians directly in deciding how to deal with unemployment insurance, how to deal with job programs, how to deal with issues like employment equity and child care.

The result will be a job system built by Canadians for Canadians. The result will be a system preoccupied not with turf wars but with results and getting things done. The result will be a system run by partners who can get those results. The result will be a system that favours the creation of employment in the wealth creating private sector rather than enlarging the government sector.

That is what Canada needs and that is why the government is creating through Bill C-96 a new Department of Human Resources Development and ensuring its mandate.

• (1330)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux-Montagnes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as soon as the all clear sounded on October 30, the government rushed to release a flood of centralist and/or anti-social bills. These bills had been ready for some time, but it would have been poor timing to table them before the referendum and in the process cause many voters in Quebec to turn away from that great and beautiful Canada of ours in the privacy of the voting booth.

It was a close call for Ottawa, but now that it has managed, just barely, to negotiate this rocky stretch, the government can at last heave a sigh of relief and calmly pursue its usual goals. Can a leopard change its spots? Of course not. So, full speed ahead, towards an even bigger and more beautiful Canada which, according to this government, means even more centralized and antisocial.

The promises to decentralize, made in a prerferendum panic, are now gone with the wind of victory, slim though the margin was, and too bad for the believers who naively voted no.

Remember the last days of the referendum campaign, when the polls made them break out in a cold sweat and federalism's big guns sang the hymn to decentralization. They understood what we wanted, they chorused, and they loved us. Time would tell. From now on, provincial jurisdictions would be respected. If we voted no, there would be no more wicked ministers trying to graze in the greener pastures of provincial jurisdictions.

After the majority voted no, the very first thing this government did, as if to make it abundantly clear to those who had not yet understood how they had been tricked, was to table the bill before the House today. A real masterpiece of centralization and leap-frogging over the heads of the provinces. The no side won, which means there is no longer any incentive for Ottawa to respect us. Here comes the first wave over the dam, Bill C-96, loaded with new powers Ottawa has the effrontery to assume in the field of manpower training, thus ignoring not only its own promises but also a general consensus in Quebec including even the Liberals.

Until now, the minister could not sidestep the provinces altogether in this area, to enter into agreements with financial institutions, persons or bodies, as the minister considered appropriate. This was of course intolerable. It was high time the referendum was over with, so the government could finally do something about this. Otherwise, people would start thinking that Ottawa respected the powers of the provinces.

Government Orders

Some will say that one swallow does not a summer make. One centralist bill is not necessarily a harbinger of all out centralization. It is true, but, believe me, you can trust the government, a whole flock of swallows is on the way. Bill C-96 is merely a forerunner, Bill C-95 is already peeking out from behind it. This bill not only gives birth to the Department of Health, it is giving it as a christening gift comfortably broadened ministerial powers.

Before long, we will also be seeing Bill C-98 with which the government is giving itself environmental control over the oceans and also the waters that flow into the ocean. Now, since all waters flow into the ocean—

In short, ever shrinking transfers to the provinces and ever expanding involvement in provincial jurisdictions. Pay ever less and control ever more: this is the incredible policy of our colleagues opposite. How long, we wonder, will the other provinces meekly go along with this little game.

• (1335)

If they accept another round of cuts to their rights without flinching, it makes little sense to me, but, after all, it is their business. However, this steam roller of a centralizing and antisocial legislation whose rumblings we hear, this campaign that they have just boldly launched against provincial prerogatives now that they have nothing more to fear, this bellicose rumour arising from the ranks of the Liberals, can you see how clearly it is revealing the intentions of the Prime Minister when he talks about unearthing old legislation that has fallen into disuse?

The aim, as everyone will see, is to prevent Quebecers from holding a third referendum when the time is right. All the Quebecers who were misled into voting no because they believed in the promises made are very likely to change sides, do you not suppose, and vote yes after the steam roller has gone by. At that point we will be able to assess the damage done to the social safety net and to provincial jurisdictions. What kind of reaction can we expect from Quebecers faced with the inflated arrogance of the federal government as it sports the new powers it has snatched from the provinces like new plumage?

One day we will be sovereign, because one day a majority of Quebecers will understand. Believe me, they will not be misled again by excessive flattery before the referendum only to be pistol whipped after. This is why those opposite want nothing to do with a new referendum. Bill C-96 will at least begin to open the eyes of the half of Quebecers who have yet to understand.

[English]

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C-96, a bill which talks of partnership, of collaboration between the federal and provincial governments, of the need to develop our greatest asset, human resources.

I know firsthand from my constituents in Saint-Denis that we must develop efficiently this important resource in order to meet the challenges facing Canada in the 21st century.

Questions have been raised about the powers granted to the minister in this bill, specifically with respect to clause 6, which sets out the mandate of the department. They suggest that somehow this clause allows the federal government to intrude on matters of provincial jurisdiction. I find myself puzzled by some of those questions. I wonder if we are all reading from the same bill or do some members opposite have their own private version that they would like to share with us.

In my copy of the bill, clause 6 has a very important and very clear phrase that puts definite limits on the minister's powers. It limits those powers to "matters over which Parliament has jurisdiction". What part of that phrase is unclear?

By some kind of hocus-pocus, members opposite read that phrase and it comes out "matters over which the provinces have jurisdiction". That is just plain nonsense. It is not what the bill says. It says just the opposite.

[Translation]

In fact, Bill C-96 does not affect federal and provincial powers in any way. It does not give the minister any extra powers or undermine those he already has. All the powers now granted to the minister under the law will remain the same.

Bill C-96 does not create any new programs or bring any substantial changes to those that already exist. All programs and services in effect the day before this bill is passed will remain the same.

There is no ambiguity in this. There is no doubt whatsoever. Whichever way you look at it, this bill does not grant any new powers. This encroachment exists only in the fertile imagination of those who would like to see such an encroachment.

[English]

Perhaps some members would be more comfortable if clause 6 spelled out in laborious detail all the specific programs offered by the government. That is certainly an option but it is an option the government decided would be ill-advised and counterproductive.

We are dealing with a very large department and with a wide range of programs and services. Enumerating all those programs point by point would take pages and in the end nothing very positive would be accomplished.

• (1340)

The whole direction of the department, of the government, of governments at all levels and indeed most business organizations is to stay flexible and ready for change. At a time when flexibility, streamlining and efficiency are so important, it makes sense to set out the responsibilities of the department in a better way. That is what clause 6 does. It sets out the basic objectives of the department: enhancing employment, encouraging equality and promoting social security. These objectives

are very clear. They are very important and are within the jurisdiction of this Parliament.

The people who use our programs every day, whether they are in Newfoundland, Quebec, Manitoba or British Columbia, do not want the federal government to shirk its responsibilities. I trust that no one in the House is suggesting that we do so.

At the same time, we all recognize that there is room for more productive partnerships between all levels of government. We recognize the need to clarify roles and responsibilities in labour market development. That is why we have made it very clear that as we proceed with social security reform, as we put a new unemployment insurance program in place, as we develop a new human resource investment fund and the Canada health and social transfer, we are open to change.

We are willing to take a hard look at who is in the best position to deliver programs and services most efficiently. It may well prove that some programs managed now at the federal level can be better managed by others: the provinces, private sector partners or community groups.

The federal government wants to work with Quebec and all provinces with an open mind. We are really not interested in turf wars. We are interested in working with our partners in a constructive way to meet common goals and serve Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Let us consider the agreements already concluded between HRDC and Quebec: the interim Canada-Quebec agreement on certain manpower development measures; the agreement on the implementation of a deal affecting welfare recipients; the Canada-Quebec agreement on agricultural employment; the block funding granted Quebec under the Canada student loans program, to name but a few.

These umbrella agreements may not be perfect, but they work. They directly affect the lives of thousands of people in that province.

[*English*]

The whole thrust of HRDC activity is to strengthen those partnerships and to decentralize power away from the centre to the local level. Labour market programs and services are already among the most decentralized of all federal programs. We are decentralizing them even further with a new, modern service delivery network firmly rooted at the local level in communities across this country.

Government Orders

The federal government is also committed to working with the provinces to provide the most flexible services possible to Canadians.

[*Translation*]

For example, the Canada transfer for health and social programs will give Quebec another source of funding for measures such as the parental wage assistance program or PWA, which cannot be funded under the old system; the provincial sales tax rebate to welfare recipients, which does not come under the old system; a nutrition program for disadvantaged children, which cannot be funded under the old system either; as well as transportation services for handicapped people, without having to assess the needs as would be required under the old system.

[*English*]

Because clause 6 of Bill C-96 sets out the department's mandate in terms of general objectives rather than the minute details of existing programs, we will have this kind of flexibility. It provides a basis for a more efficient department and clears the way for continued evaluation and reform down the road.

[*Translation*]

Diverting the course of the debate on this bill by inventing jurisdictional problems—by finding in clause 6 words that are obviously not there—is doing a disservice to thousands of Canadians across the country who benefit every day from the services provided by the Department of Human Resources Development.

It is doing a disservice to the million Quebecers throughout that province who rely on and use this department's services, to the people who come to our human resources and student employment centres, who register in our employment programs, who receive unemployment insurance, who benefit every day from the \$14 million that HRDC spends in Quebec on an annual basis.

• (1345)

[*English*]

Canadians are entitled to the best possible services. They deserve the kind of integrated, focused, practical programs that HRDC is working to deliver, and Bill C-96 is important to that effort.

Let us not sacrifice good, productive service on the altar of rhetoric. In the end all levels of government are striving for the same goal: to help people find and keep good jobs. That is what is important. That is what we promised as a party and that is what we are delivering as a government.

I have numerous examples in my riding of programs that work. Young people who had no future, who had no hope for the future, are now in programs financed by the department. I have the example of 13 young high school dropouts who are now in a program that is a collaborative effort of the federal government and the private sector. All 13 of them will have jobs the minute that program ends.

Government Orders

We need to consolidate the progress we have achieved in integrating social and labour market programs and sharpen the focus on developing Canada's human resources. More important, we need to clear the way for further progress as we launch the new employment insurance program, as we develop new programs and services under the human resource investment fund, as we work to improve programs for seniors, and as the department continues to re-engineer and streamline services to Canadians.

It is important to clear up the administrative tangles left over from earlier times. It is important to establish a clear identity and coherent mandate for the new organization to function properly. It is important to ensure that as the department looks to the future there is a solid foundation to build on. As I said earlier there are numerous programs by which we want to build a solid foundation for the young people of the country. For instance, the youth services program in my riding has helped a number of young people have hope for the future, as I said earlier.

Bill C-96 provides that foundation. We need to pass the bill and get on with the work of serving Canadians.

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the government's Bill C-96, an act to establish the Department of Human Resources Development.

The bill basically does little more than transfer legal powers from the former Ministry of Employment and Immigration to the new department. In summary, the enactment establishes the Department of Human Resources Development with a presiding minister to be appointed by commission under the Great Seal of Canada, with the powers, duties and functions as therein set out, and a deputy minister to be appointed by the governor in council with provision for employees. It also provides that a minister of labour may be appointed and that a deputy minister of labour may be designated. That is it.

With all the huffing and puffing the minister of human resources did regarding his intentions for social reform, Bill C-96, all 44 pages, does very little but change the name of the department and continue as usual.

I will comment on a few clauses I take issue with before I address the need for social reform especially for our seniors. I fear clause 6 means the government will continue to interfere in the provincial areas of social programs, in other words entrench the status quo that causes overlap and duplication.

Clauses 20 and 21 enable the minister to enter into negotiation with any group including the provinces and municipalities. The provinces are waiting for less interference in social programs. Reform would support real decentralization with the provision of power going directly to the provinces to administer at their discretion.

Then there is the matter of government accountability. If there is no annual report from the department how will Canadians have full knowledge regarding its administration and cost to the taxpayers? We are also kept in the dark about staffing in the new human resources department. Will it increase or decrease?

Canadians have waited a year for the discussion paper to come out. It seems we are still waiting. Once again the government, in this case the Minister of Human Resources Development, has failed Canadians. There is no meaningful social reform in the bill, no decentralization as the provinces have been asking for.

As Reform's deputy critic for human resources I must look at seniors' concerns. I must tell the House that seniors are so concerned about the future of their pensions that Canada's usual seniors groups have joined to create a coalition of seniors for social equity. The coalition consists of five major national seniors groups concerned in a large part about the future of income security programs for the elderly. It is hoped that by giving seniors a strong voice the coalition which claims to represent 500,000 seniors across Canada will ensure that government considers the wishes of seniors. The paper was written a year ago. I must consider the remarks of one senior spokesperson who stated:

When our coalition was formed, we set ourselves some rigid criteria. We decided that we, as seniors' organizations, have to face the hard facts. We have to recognize that the deficit and growing government debt are real. We have to recognize that the elderly population is growing faster than the population as a whole and that government expenditures on the elderly are increasing.

We recognize that seniors, like others in society, may have to pay higher levels of taxation and receive lower levels of government services. The seniors of today have always paid their fair share to society and will continue to be willing to do so. What they object to is being singled out to pay more than their fair share. Seniors recognize that, with due consideration and consultation, some changes may be necessary to the income security system for older Canadians.

● (1350)

They stated their major concern as follows:

When change is necessary, people who can adjust must be given enough time to plan and adjust, and those who cannot must have benefits continued.

People have to know what to expect when they retire so they can prepare their financial affairs well in advance.

It is interesting to note that others in society, especially the financial experts, say the same thing. Most Canadians recognize that due to the country's changing demographic profile Canada's pension system is facing a cash flow crisis.

Government Orders

The Canadian birth rate soared after World War II, producing a baby boom generation that will start to retire around the year 2010. The number of pensioners per working Canadian will more than double by the year 2031.

This would not be a problem if Canada's government administered pensions were funded, that is if each person's contributions to the CPP were placed in an individual account and invested. Instead the CPP is funded on a pay as we go basis. For example, the funds collected from today's workers are paid out immediately to today's pensioners. Thus every time the ratio of retirees to workers increases the per capita cost of the system to workers increases in lock step.

Canadian politicians have shown little creativity in addressing the pension funding crisis and seem to believe that the rise in pension demands can be dealt with only by cutting benefits to pensioners or by raising taxes for working Canadians. If the first of these two options is chosen, pension benefits will have to be cut by over 50 per cent by the year 2031 to keep payroll deductions for CPP at their current levels.

If the second option is chosen, taxes on working Canadians will be driven to unprecedented heights. To maintain CPP benefits at their present levels payroll deductions will have to be increased from the current level of 5.4 per cent to 10.28 per cent by the year 2011 and eventually over 14 per cent. That source is from the Canada pension plan 15th statutory actuarial report of February 1995.

Health and Welfare Canada in "Charting Canada's Future", 1989, stated:

The term "demographic aging" refers to an increase in the relative weight of the elderly in the total population. The aging of the Canadian population has come about largely because of declining fertility rates and, to a lot lesser degree, because of an increase in average life span.

By the time the post-second world war baby boomers retire roughly one in every five Canadians will be 65 years of age or more, compared to approximately one in ten today. What is more, while senior citizens will form an increasingly large proportion of the population the percentage of young people will decline.

It is wonderful news that our seniors are living longer and healthier lives. However with this fact comes the realization that our social programs must change.

Unfortunately, although the Minister of Human Resources Development promised change to our social system two years ago, we are still waiting. Why is he still compiling evidence when our government's experts have had papers written on the subject for years now? Is he hoping that through more and more consultation he can stall any meaningful change until after the next election?

I wonder when politicians will realize that Canadian voters only expect their politicians to do their best while spending the Canadian taxpayers' dollars wisely. If the government starts to show that responsibility and accountability are major considerations in any social reforms program the government initiates, the Canadian public will be supportive. If politicians do their job there is nothing to fear from voters. When politicians do not do their jobs, force unwanted legislation on Canadian voters, appoint friends and party faithful to high positions, keep Canadian citizens dependent rather than helping them to be independent and productive, Canadians lose faith in their politicians.

• (1355)

Our human resources minister said it in his article "Breaking Down Barriers" in *The Hill Times* of August 31, 1995:

By changing nothing, we are condemning people to the same old rut, the same old cycle of dependency which has been holding people back for years. And what is worse by ignoring fiscal imperative, it won't be long before the international financial community is going to come in and dictate those changes for us.

If he thinks this way, why is he doing nothing? The Liberal government promised that by the fall of 1994 it would implement comprehensive reform of Canada's social programs. Instead, in October 1994 the Minister of Human Resources Development issued a paper "Social Security in Canada". To date no meaningful legislative changes have been introduced. The minister has also promised that a comprehensive paper on aging including pensions will be issued by the end of 1995.

The Reform Party has a proposal for seniors to look at. It is responsible social reform, taking a look at reforming the Canada pension plan to secure retirement years for all Canadians.

We recognize and listen to all the experts, including the chief actuary for Canada who states that CPP will be exhausted by 2015. He predicts that CPP will be gone in 20 years. What is to become of the millions of Canadians at that time who are currently contributing to the unsustainable black hole? What happens to the next generation with no hope of receiving its benefits?

The groundwork for the Reform Party's revision of Canada's social policies was outlined in the taxpayers' budget of February 1995, a blueprint for achieving both fiscal and social security for Canadians in the 21st century.

I wish there was time to go over Reform's four-point plan which addresses the seriousness of the upcoming pension crisis in Canada. Basically it deals with protection of seniors' benefits, recognition bonds, super RRSPs and survivors' benefits.

The Speaker: It being 2 p.m. we will now proceed to statements by members.

S. O. 31

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year marked the 35th anniversary of the Medical Research Council of Canada. Over 35 years the MRC has played a key role in establishing one of the most influential and efficient biomedical research communities in the world.

Canadian medical achievements are numerous, including the discovery of a gene linked to Alzheimer's disease, progress in the understanding of muscular dystrophy, and the development of an innovative approach to reducing the side effects of aspirin.

The Medical Research Council of Canada is a vast network of people seeking better care for Canadians, a fairer distribution of health care resources, new knowledge and more effective medical and surgical interventions.

The Medical Research Council is an organization truly worthy of continued federal government support.

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ATLANTIC CANADA

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, a short time ago I had the opportunity to visit Prince Edward Island. Aside from the beauty of the Island and the friendliness of the people I could not help but notice the political oppression of the system in Atlantic Canada.

Politicians use their positions to garner support through patronage and threats. For example, one day I met a provincial cabinet minister and informed him of a public meeting planned for later the same day. The minister appeared that night not to attend the meeting but to find out who else was attending. More than one person turned and walked out the door when they saw the minister.

If the people of the Island cannot openly express political beliefs and attend a meeting without fear of reprisal, we must challenge the system under which Islanders live.

The Reform Party is offering Atlantic Canadians a positive alternative, an alternative that will allow them to break free from the system of political oppression they are now forced to endure.

* * *

DIABETES AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the statistics are staggering. One and a half million Canadians are diabetic. The disease grows at a rate of 6 per cent per year. By

the year 2004 experts predict that one in four Canadians over the age of 45 will have developed the disease.

November is Diabetes Awareness Month in Canada. Most people do not realize that diabetes is the leading contributor to heart disease, stroke, kidney failure and blindness. Furthermore, most people incorrectly believe that insulin is a cure. Across Canada we spend \$200 per person annually to treat diabetes and diabetes related illnesses. That totals \$5 billion in government health expenses alone.

I commend the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation for its efforts in this, the 25th year since its formation, for continuing to fight for a cure to this disease.

During Diabetes Awareness Month let us all do our part to raise awareness and dollars to make sure that the slogan of the 1990s is achieved and truly make this the decade of a cure.

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UNITED NATIONS

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 1995 is the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. On Wednesday of this week the Secretary-General of the UN, His Excellency Boutros Boutros-Ghali, will be in Ottawa to commemorate this event.

It is fitting today to remember that Canada is a founding nation in this great institution. For me it is also fitting and a great honour to recall the contributions of my predecessor from Windsor—St. Clair, the Right Hon. Paul Martin, Sr., who was committed to the success of the United Nations and who was there at its inception.

I know that all members will join me in welcoming His Excellency Boutros Boutros-Ghali to Canada and in wishing continuing success to the UN.

* * *

NATIONAL CHILD DAY

Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we commemorate the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In 1989 Canada and other member countries of the United Nations gathered together to develop a set of formal obligations to the world's children. At that time a standard was set for nations with the best interests of the child being the primary concern in all actions relating to children.

The government takes seriously its responsibilities to better the lives of Canadian children. As Canadians we must be vigilant to ensure that the values and guarantees in the Convention on the Rights of the Child are respected.

Let us today, on National Child Day, renew our commitment to the promises we have made to the many hungry and neglected children who are depending on us to ensure their future is as bright as it can possibly be.

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OKANAGAN CENTRE

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last week I spent some time knocking on the doors of constituents.

I asked people what was of concern to them now, halfway through the mandate. Three issues were stated most frequently. Several seniors said: "I'm afraid to go out on the street alone in my neighbourhood. Several years ago I felt no threat for my own safety as I walked to see my neighbour. Today I either take a cab, my car or ask someone to come with me. Can't you do something that will discourage the criminals?"

The second issue was: "When will the government get its spending under control? I am worried that when I reach retirement age there won't be any money left for me".

The third issue came from a 16-year-old. He quoted Winston Churchill: "Democracy is the worst system ever invented except for all the rest". He talked about the problems of the Quebec referendum balloting and said: "We need to tell the government to do everything it can to punish the guilty ones and to make sure that we take all possible precautions to prevent it from ever happening again".

That is what the people are saying. I challenge the Prime Minister and every MP to get on with the Canadian agenda.

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LOUIS RIEL

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday I had the honour to be invited by the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan to join them to commemorate the 110th anniversary of the hanging of Louis Riel, a most important date on the Metis calendar.

That the Metis community would come together to mark one of the gravest crimes ever committed by the Canadian government against one of its leaders says a lot about the determination and the patience of the Metis people.

To some degree history has put Riel's contributions to Canada into perspective. The House has pardoned him of the crime for which he was executed and now he is rightfully recognized as a Father of Confederation. While we have made some retribution to Riel's memory we have failed as a nation to properly recognize the role that the Metis have had in building this country and their rightful role in its future.

S. O. 31

Riel was twice elected to sit as a member of this House and it is an honour to be in the same House as someone whose commitment to justice and to the west was so firm.

Last Thursday's ceremony was a reminder of the continuing struggle for justice that the Metis people are waging and the need on the part of Canada to redress the years of injustice. Each of us in this House has an important role to play in that struggle.

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[Translation]

STRIKING COMMITTEES

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is becoming increasingly obvious to anyone listening to the conflicting remarks made by ministers of this government that they cannot honour the promises made in the final days of the referendum campaign.

• (1405)

Unable to develop a policy that meets the traditional demands of Quebecers—demands that they had been denying for years—the best that these ministers can think of is to disguise their failure to act by striking one committee after another.

First, they announced the establishment of a phoney committee on national unity, but the ministers who were to sit on this committee did not know that they were members of the committee. They did not even know what their mandate was.

Then, a shadow committee on economic growth and employment was established. Two years after taking office, the federal ministers have decided that the time has come to start tackling the problem of unemployment. More committees and still no action. This reeks of improvisation.

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[English]

NATIONAL CHILD DAY

Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in March 1993 the Government of Canada designated November 20 as National Child Day.

The enactment of National Child Day was a culmination of efforts by Our Kids Foundation in Ottawa which convinced the government to designate a special day for children.

The adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and National Child Day reflects the growing recognition that children are important in their own right and valued members of our society. It also provides us with the opportunity to reflect on the special needs of children and the matters that concern them.

I have been collecting letters from children across the country who urge the Prime Minister to remember the promises made at the World Summit for Children in 1990 to reduce poverty and illiteracy. I have received over 100 heartfelt letters from children of all ages.

S. O. 31

We need to work together to improve the well-being of children from all nations as they are truly the future of the planet.

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NATIONAL CHILD DAY

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize in the House this country's greatest asset, our children.

In March 1993 the Government of Canada designated November 20 as National Child Day. To mark this occasion, communities across Canada are hosting a variety of activities and events to celebrate children and their families.

In the words of Dr. Benjamin Spock "children are made to love". Parents love children because they remember being loved so much by their own parents. And despite all the hard work, taking care of children and seeing them grow and develop into fine people gives most parents their greatest satisfaction in life. To reflect on children we see that this is creation, this is our visible immortality.

Today is National Child Day. It should serve to remind us all that every day is a good day to love our children.

* * *

THE SENATE

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, since the Liberal government took office two years ago, the Prime Minister has made 12 patronage appointments to the Senate. This is complicity in the degrading politics of an undemocratic, unaccountable institution.

The other place consumes over \$40 million a year from hard pressed, taxpaying Canadians. Does it actually serve a purpose or is it just a rubber stamp for bad legislation?

In the last few days the justice minister has stated that he will not accept any amendments to Bill C-68 which might be proposed by the Senate. A few weeks ago he also said that Senators should get on with their function and pass the legislation. The government cannot have it both ways.

Either the gun control amendments will be coming back from a powerful, unelected body of partisan failures, flatterers and pleaders for special interests or it is a legitimate part of Canada's legislative process.

I ask again: Does the Senate serve a purpose or just act as a rubber stamp for bad legislation?

[Translation]

NATIONAL CHILD DAY

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to mention that November 20 is National Child Day. Today, and for the third consecutive year, we are taking the time to stop and recognize the rights of children from coast to coast.

To recognize that our children have rights is to recognize also that we have a responsibility to ensure that they are raised in a proper environment conducive to growth and development.

In Canada, a country that calls itself the best in the world, more than one million children live in poverty. For a child, to be born poor also means facing higher risks of emotional and physical health problems because it clearly makes them more vulnerable to the consequences of poverty.

Let us take this opportunity to reflect on the future we are preparing for our children, and particularly on the impact that the actions we take today will have on them tomorrow.

* * *

NATIONAL CHILD DAY

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, November 20 marks the third anniversary of the National Child Day. This date was chosen to recognize two historical events, namely the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child and Convention on the Rights of the Child.

• (1410)

[English]

This convention is aimed at ensuring the survival, protection, development and participation of all children and was ratified by Canada in 1991.

[Translation]

We have a responsibility to preserve the well-being of those children who could be victims of criminal acts, abuse or neglect. By investing in child care from the early stages on, we will ensure that children do not have to go through some of the adjustment problems associated with the teenage years. This, in turn, will have the effect of reducing the financial burden associated with welfare, crime prevention and remedial education.

In conclusion, I invite all Canadians to join us in celebrating this day.

[English]

NATIONAL CHILD DAY

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is National Child Day, a day when we celebrate our children, a day of happiness, a day when every child should wear a smile.

Children are our future. As a society we must do everything we can to ensure their happiness and their ability to lead full and productive lives. Childhood is a most critical stage of life. It is during this period that we must provide proper nutrition, good health care, complete education and above all encouragement and guidance to our children.

I invite my colleagues to join with me in celebrating our kids and our future at the Cherish the Children Gala tonight at 7 p.m. in Room 200, West Block, here on Parliament Hill.

Also, join with me in wishing all those who are born on this day a very happy birthday.

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[Translation]

DEMOCRACY

Mr. Réjean Lefebvre (Champlain, BQ): Mr. Speaker, people in Quebec and in Canada are not surprised by recent statements from the Prime Minister, who is experiencing a severe panic attack. We now know that if the yes side had won the referendum, the Prime Minister would have rejected the democratic choice made by Quebecers.

The Prime Minister also said that he would take all necessary means to ensure that Quebecers are no longer consulted through a referendum on the issue of sovereignty. These two statements alone confirm an absolute lack of political ethics on the part of the Prime Minister and his entourage. But the Prime Minister went even further when he said that CBC's information services do not comply with their mandate, which should be to actively promote Canadian unity.

The Prime Minister's lack of respect for the public consultation process and for those who hold different views clearly confirms that he turns his back on democracy when it takes a direction with which he does not agree.

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[English]

TAXES

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has not cut spending by a single penny. In fact, spending is up by \$2.8 billion this year over last.

Oral Questions

The one thing that saved the Minister of Finance and allowed him to meet his deficit reduction target was that he squeezed Canadian taxpayers for another \$7.3 billion; \$2.8 billion of that was applied to the ever-rising cost of servicing our debt and \$4.5 billion was used to reduce the deficit.

Is it the intention of the Liberal government to balance the budget on the backs of the taxpayers? If it is, taxpayers need to know the costs. Their taxes will double in the next 10 years in order to pay for the ever-rising cost of the debt while reducing the deficit to zero.

By that time, the government will have killed the goose that laid the golden egg and the rich will have joined the ranks of the poor.

* * *

NATIONAL CHILD DAY

Mrs. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, November 20, Canadians all over the country will be celebrating National Child Day.

The Government of Canada designated this special day to pay tribute to children and everything they offer us today and in the future.

November 20 also marks the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. That convention is important because it deals with every aspect of the life of children and youth. The convention provides a framework to value and respect children and youth as full-fledged human beings.

In this International Year of Tolerance, we encourage all partners to pay special attention to issues such as equality, integration, sharing and understanding, especially when these issues relate to children and youth.

Today I call on all members of the House to join in the celebration of National Child Day. We must listen to our children and youth and treat them with compassion and respect. In doing this we build stronger communities and a prosperous nation.

Remember, children are important because they are Canada's future.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

• (1415)

[Translation]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the government, if there is still one over there.

Having already implied that he did not intend to respect the outcome of the referendum, the Prime Minister stated a second time that he wanted to stop Quebecers from holding a second referendum on the future of Quebec if they wished to. In a repeat

Oral Questions

performance later, he criticized the CBC's lack of partisan involvement in the referendum campaign. The CBC was too impartial for the Prime Minister's taste during the referendum.

My question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister or whoever might be so kind as to reply. Are we to understand that the Prime Minister wishes not only to stop Quebecers from deciding their future on another occasion they deem appropriate but also to control the information they will get from the CBC?

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe that we need to stress that the Prime Minister may perhaps be completely right in this, but with respect to the comment from my colleague, he is also aware that CBC President Perrin Beatty has set up a committee to examine our Prime Minister's comments, which I feel are clearly justified, and the response will be forthcoming in due course.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since the hon. secretary of state does me the honour of a reply to my questions, I shall ask her another.

Since Perrin Beatty, in keeping with the operating provisions of the CBC, has set up a committee to assess the professional conduct of CBC and Radio-Canada journalists and the manner in which the news was presented, does she not think that the Prime Minister would have been wiser to wait before nailing the CBC?

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague must be aware, the mission of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Radio Canada International is, and I quote: "[—] to reflect major current events and contribute to the exercise of democracy"—something you and others need to learn about—"to the affirmation of the sovereignty of the country and to helping the various regions to come to know more about each other, and to more accurately reflect the national identity". This has not been denied by our Prime Minister, and this is our approach to every thing we do.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the hon. secretary of state is rather surprising. She tells us in the opposition that we ought to be learning what democracy is all about, while what is at issue here is the behaviour of the Prime Minister, who finds that the CBC was too impartial in the referendum. Amazing. Amazing.

Does the hon. secretary of state not consider it rather disquieting in a democracy, when a Prime Minister initially indicates his intention not to recognize the outcome of a democratic exercise, then tells us that he want to see no more democratic consulta-

tions in Quebec, and then decides that the CBC ought to stop being impartial when broadcasting information?

[English]

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to talking about democracy, when it comes to talking about how language should be understood or one's accent, when it comes to discussing who has the right to vote and the weight of that vote, I do not think there are any exercises in democracy that need to be taken by this side of the House.

• (1420)

[Translation]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister.

Last week, the Deputy Prime Minister clearly established a link between the funding received by Radio-Canada and its news coverage. She said it did not make sense for us to pay the cost of running the corporation when there was no commitment to Canadian unity.

Are we to understand that the government wants to tie Radio-Canada's budget to a partisan performance with respect to news coverage?

[English]

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it might be very helpful if my hon. colleague would recognize we are in a significantly changing environment with respect to telecommunications, broadcasting, film distribution, marketing, et cetera.

The government spends in excess of \$1 billion for Radio-Canada, CBC, Telefilm Canada and the National Film Board. Perhaps that money could be spent more succinctly, more successfully and in a more focused way. It is for that reason that a committee was set up by the minister responsible for Canadian heritage. We should know its response very shortly.

[Translation]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would really like to know how the secretary of state can justify—since she used the word focus—the government's blackmailing Radio-Canada?

[English]

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, CBC Radio-Canada's role is to reflect our society, the people within our society. It has journalistic freedom, which is within its mandate.

I suggest the impartiality and the responsibility journalistically speaking will be determined in the report to be submitted by Mr. Perrin Beatty and that committee.

* * *

AIR CANADA

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Airbus scandal provides yet another example of what happens when a government buries its head in the sand. The most outrageous aspect of this Airbus scandal is not Brian Mulroney's \$50 million lawsuit, nor is it the righteous indignation coming from his Sherbrooke sidekick.

The most outrageous aspect of this entire thing is that it took articles in a Swiss newspaper and a German magazine to convince this government to take action. None of these are new allegations. The RCMP was investigating this matter back in 1989. Paul Palango was naming names in 1994 and the CBC was uncovering new and damaging evidence as recently as this March.

My question is for the Minister of Justice. Why did it take the work of a German newspaper to get this government to act on the Airbus scandal?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP has been active for months, as it has confirmed, in looking into these allegations. It has been doing its job. I hope the hon. member in her questions will express support for the work of the RCMP rather than this unjustified scepticism.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I support the RCMP, especially in its guarding of 24 Sussex, part of its job.

Not all governments have been asleep at the switch in this scandal. According to the federal government and in contrast to it the American embassy has been hard at work, having already accumulated a fat file on this subject which includes actual names, timelines and Swiss bank account numbers.

It seems to me the Minister of Justice could save Canadian taxpayers a great deal of time and money by simply walking across Wellington Street and asking the Americans for a photocopy of their file.

In order to help get to the bottom of this matter will the Minister of Justice make a formal request to have the American government share all relevant information and material it has gathered on the Airbus deal?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the RCMP will do everything necessary to pursue its inquiries. I suggest the hon. member do more in constructing her questions than to base them on the Insider column of the Ottawa *Sun*.

Oral Questions

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, there is more at stake here than some sort of hilarity from the solicitor general. Things have been bad enough in that department already these past couple of weeks. If anyone is being facetious here it is he.

The Canadian people deserve better from the Liberal government. What we have here are all the makings of a Stevie Cameron sequel. In writing about this Prime Minister's approach to governing, she might entitle that sequel "I am not aware of anything".

• (1425)

The members opposite were aware of the Airbus scandal for five years when they were in opposition and have been aware of it for the two years they have been in government.

Will the government commit to making public, totally public at the earliest possible date, every relevant aspect of this smelly Airbus deal?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member has confirmed, the government has been, through the RCMP, properly looking into these allegations. This began after it took office.

With respect to making matters public, surely the hon. member does not want to prejudice the investigations and inquiries already under way. If she wants to have these inquiries and investigations properly carried out, she should not suggest that things be done which might prejudice the success of those inquiries.

* * *

[Translation]

DEFENCE INDUSTRY

Mr. Jean-Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to thank the Minister of National Defence for his friendly comments in recent weeks.

By refusing to specify a certain percentage of Canadian content in the contract for search and rescue helicopters, the Minister of National Defence has paved the way for a procurement policy that from now on would eliminate any Canadian content requirements from purchase contracts for military equipment. In so doing, the government is directly jeopardizing the existence of the defence industry in Canada and Quebec.

What explanation does the minister have for the fact that barely two months ago, he awarded a \$2 billion contract, without tender, to a company in Ontario and that now, in the case of the search and rescue helicopters, he will call for tenders without a Canadian content requirement, when the aerospace industry happens to be concentrated in the Montreal region? Another example of the double standard at work.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is unaware of what I stated in my press conference two weeks ago.

While the government will no longer make acquisitions solely on the basis of regional industrial benefits, those benefits will be one criteria considered as part of the specifications and process in the acquisition of these helicopters. The member should get his facts straight.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I was aware of this as well in the contract for armoured personnel carriers which was awarded to Toronto without tender.

At a time when the government still refuses to put in place a genuine defence conversion program for the industry, does the minister realize that by getting rid of Canadian content requirements, he is directly jeopardizing the existence of the defence industry and in this case the aerospace industry which is concentrated in Quebec?

[English]

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago I was asked the same question. The hon. member obviously does not have faith in the very innovative, excellent aerospace industries in Quebec right now which I am sure will compete well in this whole contractual process.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Cliff Breitzkreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister of agriculture has stated he will not recognize the outcome of the wheat and barley plebiscite currently taking place in the province of Alberta.

Why is the minister ignoring the democratic rights of farmers to choose how they want to market their wheat and barley for export?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I have said is I do not regard this plebiscite in Alberta as the be all and end all on the issue of wheat and barley marketing. I say that for the obvious reason that grain marketing of this kind is under the jurisdiction of the federal government. It involves farmers in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and in some cases in portions of a corner of Ontario.

The issue by definition cannot be resolved by one partial plebiscite in one province alone.

Mr. Cliff Breitzkreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister during the 1993 election campaign promised a producer plebiscite on marketing barley and promised he would honour that result.

Right after the election the minister of agriculture said he favours giving farmers a voice through plebiscites which are, to quote the minister "the most appropriate vehicle by which to determine what farmers' preferences are".

Why did the Prime Minister and the agriculture minister promise producers a democratic voice when it is clear they had no intention of honouring that promise?

● (1430)

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously we have not ruled out the notion of a plebiscite in due course if that turns out to be an appropriate vehicle to resolve this issue. At the same time we have observed the difficulties that flow with plebiscites which can in fact make a difficult situation even more divisive rather than resolve a problem.

With reference to the remarks made in 1993, both the Prime Minister and I indicated that the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board should not be altered in the absence of some kind of voting mechanism among producers. That is a far cry from advocating a change in the Canadian Wheat Board.

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*[Translation]***CANADIAN ARMED FORCES**

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

While today, here in Ottawa, the families of the École polytechnique shooting victims are organizing a press conference promoting firearms control, the Minister of National Defence is still refusing to reconsider the promotions of soldiers who, on at least two occasions, appear to have celebrated this sad occurrence.

How can the Minister of National Defence justify his stubbornness in maintaining the promotions of soldiers who apparently took part in celebrations in honour of Marc Lépine?

[English]

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the hon. member, I base action on the facts.

Oral Questions

At this point in time no evidence has been unearthed that supports the contention that this dinner occurred. In fact documents which related to the investigation were turned over to the commission on Somalia and we have not found anything documenting the dinner. Investigations are going on. Obviously if such an event happened—and I have expressed in the House how abhorrent that would be if it did happen—the fact is that matter would not have been sanctioned and therefore there would be no record. To actually confirm that it took place will require some time because it will require interviews, depositions and investigations by the military police.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of National Defence aware that his obstinate defence of these soldiers against all attack discredits not only the entire Canadian Armed Forces but also the government itself?

[*English*]

Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again the hon. member has raised a matter that has not been proven. Once we have actual proof that it took place, then we can act.

In the hypothetical, I have stated in both languages in this House that such an event, were it to have taken place, would have been totally offensive, abhorrent and contrary to Canadian forces regulations.

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YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

In my riding the police are investigating a report of sexual assault against an eight-year old girl by two boys under twelve. Because of their ages the Young Offenders Act does not cover these crimes, nor do Bills C-41 and C-37.

On this morning's news, probably because of National Child's Day a priest in Ottawa spoke of his concern about the younger and younger ages of Canada's young offenders.

What does the minister intend to do about it, to hold children and their parents responsible for their children's criminal actions?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just this morning I had occasion to appear before the House committee on justice and legal affairs. I was the first witness in a comprehensive review of the Young Offenders Act the committee is now undertaking. We spoke exactly to this issue, the question of the age of the children to which the Young Offenders Act applies. I invited the committee to examine how we should deal with the cases of crimes by children younger than 12 to determine how best to

ensure that the interests of those children in society are taken into account.

I am not certain that the answer is simply to extend the application of the Young Offenders Act because we are dealing with children of a very young age. I have asked the committee to look at the evidence, to hear from witnesses and to make recommendations on how best to deal with this, if only by ensuring that in the provinces, between us, the levels of government have appropriate ways to respond to these situations, look after these children, deal with the families that produce them and ensure public safety.

• (1435)

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, if we do not deal seriously with these young offenders, we are not helping these young offenders. It is a horrific crime. Canadians are sick about this happening in their communities. When we ignore the crimes of children, we ignore their victims. We ignore those children who are committing the crimes and we ignore helping them.

Is the minister in favour of changing the ages in the Young Offenders Act to make young offenders responsible for their criminal actions?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, two of the hon. member's colleagues are on the committee before which I appeared this morning. I have expressly asked the committee to consider the very question she has raised. I want the committee to hear the evidence, consider that evidence and make recommendations that the committee believes are in the public interest.

I must also point out in answer to the question asked that this government has already acted to strengthen the Young Offenders Act. With Bill C-37 which comes into force 10 days from now, the Young Offenders Act will be strengthened to deal more effectively with serious crimes of violence that most concern the public.

I remind the hon. member of those important changes. There are more to come.

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[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

On April 5, the Dima family, Romanian refugees, was expelled to the United States, where it had originally filed a proper application to immigrate. Despite assurances by his department that the file would be processed quickly, this family, which was integrated into Quebec society, is still awaiting the response of federal immigration officials, seven months later. It now faces possible deportation from the United States.

Oral Questions

How does the minister explain the governmental red tape the Dima family has had to go through, while it waits in the United States and continues to live with the Christian Brothers in Plattsburgh?

[*English*]

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question by the hon. member which involves one specific case. I am not aware of all the last minute details surrounding the case. The member should also know that with respect to making independent applications to the province of Quebec, the province of Quebec has sole jurisdiction.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would point out that two other Romanian families have had their case settled in a matter of days or weeks: the Malaroi and the Garda families.

The Government of Quebec issued a certificate of selection on June 14. Why is it taking the minister so long to assume his responsibilities, he who was in such a hurry to issue 15,000 new certificates of citizenship just before the referendum?

[*English*]

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank members for the applause. I would do it all over again the same way.

I am not sure what the immigration critic is actually advocating with respect to individuals who want to acquire citizenship to the Canadian family. Is he suggesting we should have dragged our heels in terms of processing? Is he suggesting that those individuals should not have had the right to vote? Exactly what is the hon. member advocating?

On the one hand the member is asking for an expedited processing for one family and I will look into the latest matters surrounding that family. On the other hand he is suggesting very softly somehow that he did not appreciate the fact that those 15,000 individuals voted in the last referendum.

* * *

PRISONS

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the day of the great unity rally in Montreal, I had the tremendous pleasure of officially opening the Nova Institution for federally sentenced women in Truro, Nova Scotia on behalf of the solicitor general. This institution marks a new era of federal corrections in Canada.

• (1440)

Could the solicitor general tell the House how Nova Institution, housing incarcerated women, differs from the Kingston prison?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a basic difference is that it is one of a series of prisons for women spread across the country rather than having federally sentenced women confined to one, single, outmoded facility in Kingston, Ontario.

By having this series of regional prisons women will be closer to their families. The women will also have greater access to appropriate programming. In short, we believe the result will be a better outcome in terms of women not reoffending, thereby providing greater protection to the public and a savings in money for the taxpayers who will not have to keep housing these people over and over again.

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FISHERIES

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is practising for a new job: minister of taxation. His new access fees will dramatically increase licence costs, in some cases from \$30 a year to \$9,000 a year.

Does the minister not understand that his new access fees pose a far greater threat to fishermen than Spanish trawlers? The Spanish will go away, but these taxes will be here forever.

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would certainly hear the view of the hon. member on what he thinks the access fees should be because the Reform Party consistently tells the House that the government has to do more to responsibly control expenditures to get the deficit under control.

There are fishermen today—

Mr. Harris: Cut the spending.

Mr. Tobin: Hon. members want to hear and I know the Reform Party is truly interested in a responsible exchange.

There are fishermen today who pay \$10 for a licence and make upwards of \$1 million in income. Is the hon. member suggesting that that is reasonable? Others pay \$30 for a licence fee, the case in point which the hon. member mentioned, and make incomes of \$500,000, \$600,000, \$700,000 and \$800,000.

We in this party believe that if a person's income is low, the access fee should be low, and if their income is high, they should pay fair rent on the privilege of the income.

Oral Questions

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, any fishermen who are making the profits which the minister is talking about are paying income tax.

Every year the minister plans to suck another \$50 million out of Canadian fishermen by these access fees. This intolerable tax increase will lead to the extermination of family owned businesses. Not just the little fish, but the little fisherman is hanging on by his fingernails. Will the "taxinator" trash the tax?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to hanging on to a shred of credibility, the hon. member has no fingernails.

When it comes to presenting a fair licensing regime to ensure that fishermen who are in difficult circumstances are not impacted, we brought that forward. We put in place a licence freeze for all of those affected by the groundfish crisis. We have already said to the fishermen in British Columbia who have been affected by the decline in salmon runs that there will be no dramatic increase in fees. We are saying to those who make very large incomes in a way which is progressive and fair that they ought to pay a little more for the privilege of those very large incomes.

If the hon. member is serious about speaking with authority for fishermen, he ought to do a little more homework on the wharf before he comes here to make a fool of himself in the House.

* * *

[*Translation*]

COMMUNICATIONS SECURITY ESTABLISHMENT

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister.

Last week, a former employee of the Communications Security Establishment shed some light on the centre's dubious spying activities. According to Jane Shorten, the CSE targets the communications of our trading partners, including, Mexico and South Korea, and in so doing, spies on Canadian citizens.

Would the government confirm Ms. Shorten's allegations to the effect that the CSE eavesdrops on the communications of friendly countries and the telephone conversations of Canadian citizens?

• (1445)

[*English*]

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the government does not comment on allegations with respect to national security or intelligence.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is not the first time this has happened and the government has been questioned on the subject, but we always get the same answers.

How can we believe government statements on the subject when there is no mechanism for parliamentary oversight of CSE activities, as exists, to a minimal extent but at least it exists, in the case of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service?

[*English*]

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a motion put forward by the member for Scarborough—Rouge River to create a parliamentary oversight mechanism for the CSE was passed by the House.

We have been holding consultations on that with interested parties and we hope to move very quickly to implement the contents of the motion.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in addition to slapping the fishing industry with outrageous tax increases, the minister is planning to rake further millions into his department by taxing the users of Canada's ice free ports for ice-breaking services.

Will the minister today assure the people of Saint John and Halifax that he will not tax them for services they do not need?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans that has the responsibility for coast guard is currently engaged in a broad consultative process to ensure that fees for service are imposed on a fair and reasonable basis.

For the member to stand to single out one or two harbours and to ask for a response today in advance of the end of the consultation is not only not useful but not a fair way to proceed.

The Canadian Coast Guard will go on doing an excellent job for Canadians who require the services and will do so in a manner in so far as fees are concerned that is a fair and reasonable, and the member knows that.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister is hardly being fair and reasonable with Atlantic Canadians. He says he wants Atlantic Canada to prosper yet he now proposes to tax away the critical commercial advantage of ice free ports.

Will the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans deep six any proposals to rob Atlantic Canadians of this important economic advantage and axe his tax?

Oral Questions

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a Newfoundland expression that means you have a lot of nerve: you have to have the face of a robber's horse for a Reform Party member to stand and pretend to give a whit about Atlantic Canada.

This is the party that would be overly happy if we could give everybody in Atlantic Canada what it would call a national deficit fare. It wants to give everybody a one-way ticket to somewhere else.

We are bringing in policies that generate productivity in Atlantic Canada, create new wealth, treat people fairly and are designed to ensure the population is maintained and grows. The Reform Party has no lesson to give those of us on this side of the House about the reality of Atlantic Canada.

Mr. Derek Wells (South Shore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. The Reform Party appears to be protecting fishers making a huge income from paying their fair share. I am interested as well in smaller inshore fishermen.

In instances where the fee is shown to be inequitable, would the minister be prepared to make changes?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike members opposite who bellow from several thousand miles away, I happen to know that this member had a round table in his constituency on the future of the fishery. He took the trouble to actually listen to fishermen before coming to the House of Commons to ask questions.

I understand fishermen are saying that they are prepared to pay a fair share and pay their own way, providing the system is fair and equitable.

• (1450)

If changes can be made that make the system more fair and more equitable, and if that means rewriting portions of what we proposed based on genuine consultation with genuine fishermen who genuinely want to pay their own way, we will do it, of course.

* * *

[Translation]

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The Quebec government has announced that it will have to cut its social assistance program by \$86 million, given the major impact that the federal government's February 1994 UI reform has had on welfare rolls.

Does the minister recognize that his first UI reform has forced many unemployed people onto welfare and that he is responsible for the significant rise in the cost of social assistance programs?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I remind the hon. member that we take very seriously the condition and state of people on social assistance.

That is one reason why in the province of Quebec we pay 50 per cent of the full cost of all social assistance recipients. If we look at the actual figures and not the made up figures, in the changeover from 1994-95 to this year there has been an increase of transfers from the federal level of \$220 million to the province of Quebec under the EPF, CAP and equalization.

Therefore, when the minister from Quebec starts making the charges that somehow the federal government is responsible, I suggest the Quebec minister of social services go back and look at their own books.

We are trying to do our best to help those people. Delay and misinformation around the country do not help.

[Translation]

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, is the minister trying to wash his hands of the whole thing? This Parliament has approved \$2.4 billion in cuts to unemployment insurance for all of Canada this year, including \$735 million in Quebec. Do you think this has no effect on the men, women and young people who end up on welfare?

Will the minister admit that the next UI reform, which he is getting ready to table in the coming weeks, will aggravate the Quebec government's financial problems by forcing even more unemployed people onto welfare?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it sounds to me like the beginning of a leadership speech.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Putting that aside for the moment, I point out to the hon. member again a number of very important facts. It is important to get the facts out in this case.

Under the changes we made to the Unemployment Insurance Act there is the special provision of an additional \$1,000 for those on low income drawing unemployment insurance benefits. In fact 130,000 low income UI claimants were able to draw upon that additional \$1,000.

Furthermore, last summer we signed a special agreement with the Government of Quebec to provide \$80 million to the APPORT program to help those on social assistance get training, get education and go back to work.

One of the primary objectives in terms of the new employment insurance program mentioned by the Prime Minister two weeks ago is to make sure there is a strong guarantee of protection of income for those who are at the lowest income level.

* * *

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in Edmonton the CBC French station has an audience of 300 people. In Quebec City the English CBC station has 1,700 viewers and in Regina it has an entire station dedicated to 40 viewers. That works out to about \$230,000 per viewer.

Given these outrageous spending figures, why is the CBC continuing to fund these stations? When will the government end this ridiculous waste of taxpayers' dollars?

• (1455)

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I remind my hon. colleague that Canadians of both official languages have responsibilities to each other, to know each other, to see each other and to hear from each other. Whether it is in French in Alberta or English in Montreal or wherever it may be, the country has facilities for bilingual services. When one is travelling one should be able to hear one's own language and one's own culture wherever one is.

As the hon. member knows, there are more than just French speaking people who listen to Radio-Canada. There are also anglophones who listen to it. I am a very good example.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister is an excellent example, I am sure.

The point being that there are already all kinds of services provided through cable and over satellite. We do not need dedicated stations in all these communities.

The CBC, Telefilm Canada and the NFB are undergoing a mandate review and will be reporting to the minister soon. The people who should be giving this mandate are the taxpayers of the country. They already understand that the level of funding in any public enterprise should be based on how many people in this case are viewing it.

Is the government prepared to cut spending for services that taxpayers do not support? If so, will it direct the CBC to make its cuts accordingly?

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government and the minister in charge have made it eminently clear that the changing circumstances and the economic aspects of the CBC, the National Film Board and Telefilm are all to be taken into account as the mandate is reviewed. The CRTC is involved as well.

Oral Questions

From that perspective, the hon. member might well wait for the results which should be announced shortly.

* * *

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

I was looking through *Hansard* and found that when the budget was debated in 1991 the then member for Winnipeg South Centre criticized the cuts by the provincial government in health care, social programs and post-secondary education. He said:

As a result, the ability to have any kind of national system of education and health care now stands in jeopardy.

He also said that these cuts cut the very fundamental institutions on which people depend and that they were being dismantled.

Since the minister was so critical of measures considerably less harsh than those his government has taken, could he say why the cuts to education, health care and social programs, much deeper than the last government's, are so good when the last government's cuts were so bad?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have made it very clear from the last budget that one way to restore the country to a form of economic health is to make sure there is more integrity and stability in federal financing.

His home province has been able to achieve a balanced budget. We are still on track to do that but it will take some time because the previous government, of which I was quite critical, did not take the measures that were necessary when it should have to ensure a proper formulation of a fiscal plan that would allow us to have good economic investment.

The proof of that is very clear. Since the two years of coming into office we have created over 500,000 full time permanent jobs. The best way to deal with the problems of low income and of social insecurity is to get people a job. That is what our last budget was all about.

* * *

NIGERIA

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other civil rights activists in defence of the Ogoni people were summarily hung by the military Government of Nigeria after a surreptitious court proceeding.

Tributes

Could the minister tell the House what actions are planned by the Canadian government to protest this heinous act?

Hon. Christine Stewart (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

Canada has spoken in the strongest language to condemn the actions of the Nigerian government in relation to the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa.

Canada took actions beyond that at the Commonwealth heads of government meeting in Auckland, New Zealand last week. Our Prime Minister spoke out as well against this and with other heads of governments suspended Nigeria from participation in the Commonwealth for a period of two years. This will be reviewed when Nigeria shows it has improved its democracy, respect for human rights and governance.

• (1500)

Bilaterally Canada has taken actions as well. We have suspended visas to military figures in the Nigerian government. We have terminated our trade in arms with Nigeria for the past few years. We will continue to look at other possible sanctions including finance and trade.

* * *

THE LATE MR. JUSTICE EMMETT HALL

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with much sadness that we mourn the passing of a truly great Canadian, the hon. Justice Emmett Matthew Hall.

We extend our deepest condolences to his family.

[Translation]

It is with sadness that we mourn the passing of a great Canadian, Mr. Justice Emmett Matthew Hall, whose many achievements included being a founder of our health care system. He was also one of the keenest crusader for the system.

We extend our deepest condolences to his family.

[English]

Justice Hall led a long and distinguished legal career, becoming Chief Justice in Saskatchewan and later serving on the Supreme Court of Canada. He was noted for his forward thinking ideas and keen sense of equity which resulted in his being named a Companion of the Order of Canada and receiving other tributes including numerous honorary degrees, distinguished titles and select memberships.

Of his many achievements Justice Hall may best be known as a founder and lifelong crusader for our medicare system. In 1961, prior to the introduction of the first provincial plan for medical care insurance in Saskatchewan, the federal govern-

ment established the Royal Commission on Health Services, chaired by Mr. Justice Hall. Its mandate was to inquire into and report on existing facilities and future needs for health services for Canadians and to assess the resources required to provide these services.

The commission report, published in 1964, recommended Canada should introduce the legislative organizational and financial frameworks necessary to ensure that health services would be available to all residents without barriers. The commission also called for universal and comprehensive coverage on uniform terms and conditions, in all provinces, regardless of age, condition or ability to pay.

These recommendations formed the basis of the federal medicare act proclaimed in 1968. This act, which established a conditional cost sharing program, empowered the federal health minister to make financial contributions to those provinces which operated medical care insurance plans that met certain minimum criteria: comprehensiveness, universality, portability and public administration.

• (1505)

By 1972 every province and territory had established medical care insurance plans in addition to their hospital insurance programs, and the two main features of Canada's universal health care system were in place from coast to coast.

Justice Hall summed up the need for a national publicly funded medicare system in these words: "The only thing more expensive than good health care is inadequate or no health care".

The guarding principle of health care in Canada is as meaningful now as it was when the system began. Justice Hall's support for this system never waned or wavered.

In 1979 when the federal government asked that the status of publicly financed health insurance programs in Canada be reviewed Justice Hall again accepted the call and chaired the review which also bears his name. After months of public hearings and hundreds of briefs from various consumer groups, individuals and health care organizations, Justice Hall released his report, Canada's national-provincial health program for the 1980s, "A Commitment For Renewal".

Once again reflecting a broad Canadian consensus, the report called for a renewed national commitment to the principles of medicare. Justice Hall could find no one, not any government or individual, not the medical profession nor any organization not in favour of medicare.

On extra billing by doctors, Justice Hall said it was inequitable because it not only denies access to the poor, it also taxes sick persons who, besides paying premiums, are already paying the major cost of the system through their taxes.

Canadians owe a great debt of gratitude to Justice Emmett Hall. In his report Justice Emmett Hall states: "Canadians understand the full meaning of the hospital insurance and medical care acts. They said through these two acts that we as a society are aware that the trauma of illness, the pain of surgery, the slow decline to death are burdens enough for the human being to bear without the added burden of medical or hospital bills penalizing the patient at the moment of vulnerability".

The fundamental principle of medicare is equity. All Canadians are treated the same according to medical need regardless of their ability to pay. This recognizes and fosters the compassionate nature of our people. Our universal health care system is constitutive of our identity. Clearly it is part of who we are as a nation. It is the outward manifestation of fundamental shared values, the values of justice and caring. All Canadians pay homage to this great Canadian.

[Translation]

The people of Canada are greatly indebted to the late Justice Emmett Hall.

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to pay tribute to Emmett Hall, who, among other things, chaired the Royal Commission on Health Services from 1961 to 1964. Mr. Hall was one of those who inspired the debate that had already started on an issue under consideration and discussion in most Canadian provinces: the establishment of a health system accessible to all, regardless of socio-economic circumstances.

This principle, oft mentioned and presented as a basic aspect of any society that wants to be fair and equitable, was also part and parcel of the discussions that were taking place at the provincial level at the time. Based on respect for human dignity, the principle of accessibility met with the agreement of all primary stakeholders and players in the health sector.

I am therefore pleased and honoured to pay tribute to a man like Emmett Hall, who contributed to these discussions vital to the dignity of all Canadians. We must however be careful not to forget the efforts made by Mr. Hall and by the other men and women who participated in these broad discussions, which revolutionized the concept of health care and the way that services were provided, nor the message they left us.

No one, let alone the federal government, has the right to jeopardize such a system. The government certainly seems to be bent on making decisions that will have a disastrous impact on the quality of health care and services.

Tributes

• (1510)

It is therefore essential that serious thought be given to the decision this government is about to make, to fully assess its real impact.

As you do so, think about the women and men who, like Mr. Hall, were in favour of the establishment of a health system accessible to all, regardless of their socio-economic circumstances.

I am joined by my colleagues of the Bloc Québécois in extending my deepest condolences to the family of Emmett Hall.

[English]

Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise on behalf of the Reform Party to recognize a Canadian who was not afraid to leave his mark on the pages of our history. Emmett Hall was a man who led, a leader who asked not why, but why not. Today I join with colleagues from all parties to pay respect to his memory.

Emmett Hall had an outstanding record of personal achievement. After a successful and long career in law, at age 57 he rose to new and increasing challenges as Chief Justice of Saskatchewan, Supreme Court judge, royal commissioner and finally elder statesman.

It was his Supreme Court judgment in 1975 that set the stage for negotiations on Indian land claims. The Ontario education system was profoundly changed with the Hall-Dennis report of 1968.

Even in retirement in 1977 he led the commission that addressed the challenging need to balance affordable rail transportation with small town survival in central Canada. Even at the age of 90 he was mediating a logging and land claims dispute between the B.C. government and two Indian bands.

Historians, however, will recognize his greatest contribution as the chairman of a royal commission whose report led to the introduction of our national medicare system through the Hall report of 1964.

Medicare to this day continues to be a federal cost shared program. It is and should be the best health care safety net in the world. It was made in Canada for Canadians, first on a provincial level and then federally through the Medical Care Act, and it is now mandated to bring comprehensive coverage for health service, publicly funded, portable across Canada and universally accessible to all Canadians regardless of ability to pay.

I would be remiss today to neglect to mention that the confidence of Canadians in medicare is severely eroding. Cutbacks have forced health care professionals, governments and the public to take time to address, analyse and protect this aspect of our life and country.

Routine Proceedings

Emmett Hall was never afraid to challenge the status quo. Today we recognize a man who bravely put forward ideas to propose change, not for change itself but to bring about a better solution.

All that Canadians value in medicare is recognized today in his memory. His vision of health care reform was that it result in the highest quality health care for all Canadians. That challenge continues and needs new Canadian solutions once more in these times of increased pressures on public finances.

Our condolences go out to his family. We salute with others today a great prairie pioneer and statesman.

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour for me to rise today on behalf of my colleagues in the New Democratic Party caucus to pay tribute to one of Canada's and Saskatchewan's greatest sons, Mr. Justice Emmett Hall.

It perhaps seems trivial at a time like this to simply talk about a great man's achievements and to reiterate the many honours achieved in his lifetime. As the Very Reverend Len Morand said in delivering the homily at Mr. Justice Hall's funeral service in Saskatoon, if we were to simply list the man's honours he would have more medals than a Russian general.

As important as these honours may be, there is something more important and more enduring for each of us to take from Justice Hall's life. He was a visionary and a pioneer. In his professional and personal life he created many landmarks which now serve to mark our course as a great country, as a caring and compassionate country; guide posts and landmarks which still guide us today.

He is perhaps best known for his historic and heroic Royal Commission on Health Services which paved the way for the rest of Canadians to enjoy the universal health care service that was born in Saskatchewan.

Even then, in 1964, Justice Hall was looking far into the future, talking about the second stage of medicare, about enhanced services to seniors, dental care, pharmacare and much of what we in Saskatchewan now call the wellness model.

● (1515)

He foresaw a Canada with an ongoing, permanent commitment to a universal and improving health care system. He served as an inspiration to those who continued to battle for just that.

It would be unfair to ignore some of Justice Hall's other great accomplishments. His sense of justice and his belief in our sense of community guided him to make a number of other remarkable changes to this nation and to our culture.

He was an early advocate of the equality of women. He set that concept into law with his precedent setting 1961 decision which

ruled that a homemaker's contribution to the household was no less than that of the income earner. It was groundbreaking in 1961 and still is guiding us today.

A religious and spiritual person, Mr. Justice Hall also believed it was important to keep promises. His courageous Nisga'a land claim decision of the 1970s helped the nation keep its promise. It was courageous in the 1970s and still is guiding us today.

There were, of course, many political leaders in attendance at Justice Hall's funeral service in Saskatoon last week. The Premier of Saskatchewan was there. The Minister of Health and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food were there. I hope that each of them used the occasion to commit himself or herself to the vision of a caring nation of supportive communities of which Mr. Justice Hall so ably spoke and for which he so determinedly fought.

More important than the dignitaries who were in attendance is the fact that hundreds of ordinary people joined in to pay tribute to a man whose many deeds have touched the lives of every Canadian.

One of the scriptural readings at the service was the letter from Timothy, in which he talks of fighting the good fight. Justice Emmett Hall committed his life to fighting that good fight and it is up to each of us to continue it.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to a question asked on November 10, 1995, by the hon. member for Fraser Valley West, the minister responsible for the Canada Post Corporation read an excerpt from a letter sent by a Canada Post official. I am pleased to table a copy of this letter in the House today, for the benefit of all members.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Richard Bélisle (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(d), I have the honour to present the seventeenth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(d), the committee reviewed chapter five of the May 1995 auditor general's report, concerning the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions, deposit-taking institutions sector.

The importance of the financial services industry in the Canadian economy, as well as the concerns expressed by the auditor general, prompted the committee to take a look at the operations of the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions.

Consequently, the committee held a meeting on this issue on October 3, with officials from the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions and from the Office of the Auditor General of Canada.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee asks the government to table a comprehensive response to this report.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, entitled "Economic Impact of Recent Immigration".

* * *

[English]

PETITIONS

INCOME TAXES

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I wish to present a petition which has circulated all across Canada. This petition was signed by a number of Canadians from Medicine Hat, Alberta.

• (1520)

The petitioners would like to 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 that 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 fami-

Routine Proceedings

lies that decide to provide care in the home for preschool children, the disabled, the chronically ill or the aged.

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present this petition from the riding of Prince George—Bulkley Valley and specifically the town of Prince George.

It reads as follows: "Whereas members of the Parliament of Canada are duty bound to represent the interests of Canadians for the good of all Canada; and whereas members of Parliament swear allegiance to the Queen in Canada; and whereas members of Parliament have a moral and legal obligation to fulfil their duties in the best interest of all of Canada; therefore we the petitioners humbly pray that the leader of the official opposition of the 35th Parliament of Canada and the caucus members of the official opposition party having breached their allegiance and moral obligations as members of Parliament of Canada be permanently ejected from the Parliament of Canada".

I support this petition.

The Speaker: Colleagues, as you know it is not in form to either support or not support a particular petition. I would ask you respectfully to please refrain from so doing.

BOVINE SOMATOTROPIN

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have yet another petition coming from dairy farmers and the users of dairy products in my riding, expressing their opposition to the use of the hormone BST in Canadian dairy cattle.

This is about the fourth petition I have presented from my constituents. It is a pleasure to present this.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Question No. 238 will be answered today.

[Text]

Question No. 238—**Mr. White (Fraser Valley West):**

Concerning Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, what automobile leases were made by CMHC during fiscal years 1992, 1993 and 1994, itemizing (a) year, make and model of the leased vehicle, (b) monthly payment and term, (c) name of the employee who is driving the leased vehicle and (d) the number of kilometres each car has been driven?

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation made the following leases for vehicles for the years 1992, 1993 and 1994: a) to d)

Government Orders

1992—No lease was made for that period.

1993—1993 Ford—Crown Victoria

Monthly payment: \$571.53

Term: 24/06/93 to 23/05/96

Driven by: Gilles E. Girard,

Senior Vice-President, Insurance Land and Asset Administration

61,890 kilometres as of 30 September 1995

1994 Chrysler New Yorker

Monthly payment: \$548.01

Term: 03/12/93 to 03/12/96

Driven by: Claude Poirier-Defoy

Vice-President, Programs, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary

32,899 kilometres as of 30 September 1995

1994—1993 Acura—Vigor GS

Monthly payment: \$713.05

Term: 01/03/94 to 01/03/97

Driven by: Robert Lajoie

Senior Vice-President, Policy Research and Communications

59,902 kilometres as of 30 September 1995

1994 Dodge—Grand Caravan

Monthly payment: \$555.95

Term: 01/04/94 to 01/04/97

Driven by: Peter C. Connolly

Senior Vice-President, Corporate Resources

29,306 kilometres as of 30 September 1995

1994 Volvo—GTA Sedan

Monthly payment: \$698.05

Term: 06/05/94 to 31/05/97

Driven by: Douglas A. Stewart

Vice-President, Policy and Research

24,978 kilometres as of 30 September 1995

1994 Ford—Explorer XLT

Monthly payment: \$686.55

Term: 18/11/94 to 18/11/97

Driven by: Jim T. Lynch

Vice-President, Insurance Operations and Land Management

20,210 kilometres as of 30 September 1995

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, if Question No. 225 could be made an Order for Return, this return would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 225—**Ms. Beaumier:**

For which of its initiatives in China has Northern Telecom received monies from the E.D.C. or the Canada Account during the period beginning in 1989

until the present, how much was provided in each instance, in instances where monies were provided from the Canada Account, why wasn't financial assistance provided by the E.D.C., how did Northern Telecom satisfy the "national interest" criteria in cases where Canada Account funds were used?

Return tabled.

[English]

Mr. Milliken: I ask, Mr. Speaker, that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-96, an act to establish the Department of Human Resources Development and to amend and repeal certain related acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

Ms. Jean Augustine (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on second reading of Bill C-96, a bill that deals primarily with administrative reorganization.

Canadians have made it clear that they want government and government services to operate in a more efficient and cost effective manner. The service delivery network initiative is an ambitious effort to respond to this message.

I will focus on the service delivery network because this is a key part of the government's overall plan to renew and revitalize federal programs and services. The service delivery network should be viewed in the same context as Bill C-96, the Department of Human Resources Development Act.

Does Bill C-96 contemplate new programs? No. Does it create new authorities? No. Does it alter jurisdictional arrangements? By no means. Bill C-96 is not a policy initiative aimed at new authorities or new programs. Rather it is a means to improve the delivery of programs and services while saving taxpayers' dollars.

It introduces creative and innovative delivery mechanisms. The service delivery network is a vital part of this policy initiative. It looks to the future instead of to the past. It puts people first by providing comprehensive service at the local and community level. The evolution of this service delivery network would not have been possible without a strong commitment to meet the needs of Canadians without jeopardizing the economic and social future.

• (1525)

We firmly believe that it is possible to enhance the quality of services to the public while delivering those services in a more cost effective manner. Indeed, this approach has been tested within the Department of Human Resources Development.

Through innovation and creativity, the Department of Human Resources Development has been able to create a network of some 700 outlets across the country. When the network is fully operational, it will ensure access to human resource development service for a full 97 per cent of working Canadians.

In concrete terms, I want to stress that these improvements will mean applications for old age security will take only a half a day instead of eight days to process. The processing of Canadian pension plan applications will take one day instead of 15 days. Canadians from all walks of life will find it easier to access services and information and some services will be available 24 hours a day.

As well, the network will deliver a broader array of programs and services. Employment counselling and other employment services, unemployment insurance, federal labour programs, income security programs such as the Canada pension plan and old age security, will be provided at the more than 300 human resource centres across the country.

In addition, up to 400 self-serve electronic kiosks will be located in strategic sites, such as Outreach offices, libraries and municipal offices. In my constituency I am now working with HRD to ensure that we have three to five kiosks in our general area. They will provide access to job information, UI programs, CPP and OAS.

Personnel assistants will be available at all but a few sites, meaning that for seniors personalized service will be available at four times as many points of service as is presently the case. There will be someone there to offer assistance to the seniors ready to use the kiosks.

That is not all. Self-serve access through mail, computers, telephones and the Internet will continue to be expanded. As well, a new electronic labour exchange system is being tested. The system will connect job seekers to employers by computer.

A system to allow unemployment insurance claimants to complete their report cards by telephone is operating on a pilot basis in Calgary and Sherbrooke.

The genius of the self-service delivery network is its capacity to adapt to local realities. Through agreements with organizations such as the YMCA or YWCA and other service groups, the network permits community based delivery of services. This grassroots approach makes tremendous sense in a country as vast as Canada, where local circumstances can vary considerably.

By tailoring programs and services to individual communities, in co-operation with Canadians, the department demonstrates wisdom and foresight. Partnership arrangements, such as co-location of offices and merging of services are being entered into with other federal agencies, provincial and municipal governments, and social service organizations outside government.

All this demonstrates the sensitivity and breadth of vision the government has brought to bear in designing this network. A great deal of thought and preparation went into its creation. The

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idea for this initiative did not happen overnight. It grew out of our red book commitments to improve services and opportunities for Canadians.

It began to take greater shape during the extensive social security reform consultations held with important stakeholders, business people, labour and community groups. Over and over, as we tour the country, Canadians delivered a clear and compelling message: get Canadians back to work, put more power into the hands of individuals to help themselves, remove unnecessary obstacles to Canada's social and economic prosperity.

• (1530)

The service delivery network responds directly to the demands we heard. It achieves the twin goals of improved service and reduced cost. Clearly this is the kind of government renewal Canadians have demanded: better, more personal, more efficient, responsive, flexible, innovative and creative services, aimed at the individual needs of clients where they live, and it saves taxpayers' dollars.

If there is any formula for its success it lies with the network's overriding focus on the people it serves. The network zeros in on local needs and priorities. It maintains personalized services for those who need help while increasing the number of access points. It also makes use of proven application of new technologies.

Does it attempt to create new authorities or change the power of the federal government to initiate or administer programs of any sort? No. It is simply innovative, a more creative and responsible approach to delivering services to Canadians.

Does it attempt to change existing jurisdictional provisions, as some members opposite would have us believe? Not at all. Existing agreements remain in place. Arrangements, partnerships, joint programs and so forth will continue to be negotiated as always. Our partners will be better able to achieve their own goals and objectives as a result of the service delivery network.

This new service delivery network strengthens the community of shared interest across the country. Canadians have placed their trust in us to make the best possible use of our resources, both economic and human, and I call on all members of the House to understand this new delivery service.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, once again, I welcome the opportunity to rise in the House to defend the interests of those I represent. Today we are discussing Bill C-96, an act to establish the Department of Human Resources Development and to amend and repeal certain related acts. At first glance there is nothing to be worried about.

According to the minister, the bill merely brings together elements of various departments under the single name: Department of Human Resources Development. The stated purpose of this reorganization, to improve management of various services, is entirely praiseworthy, but unfortunately, we must point out that such bills are being used by the federal government to continue its attempts to encroach on the jurisdictions of Quebec

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and the other provinces. Unfortunately, these attempts are often successful.

Less than a week ago, I rose to condemn another bill, C-95, which also turned out to be a direct attack on the prerogatives of the Government of Quebec. I strongly condemned this approach, and I must say that the situation today calls for much the same treatment.

When we analyse Bill C-96, we see it is typical of a government that is discreetly trying to extend its powers, a government for whom provincial prerogatives are far from sacrosanct. In this respect, my colleague the hon. member for Mercier pointed out that, coming hard on the heels of a vote in which Quebecers gave Canada a brief respite to shape up, Bill C-96 is an insult. How right she was. With this bill, the government is trying to legislate powers it never had under the constitution.

For instance, in clause 6 we read that the powers of the minister are to be exercised with the objective "of enhancing employment, encouraging equality and promoting social security". Never mind the minister: encouraging equality and promoting social security were not part of the original legislation. Similarly, what about clauses 7 and 13, the former providing that the minister may "co-operate with provincial authorities with a view to the co-ordination of efforts made or proposed for preserving and improving human resources development"? Now that is a good example of the government's attitude to co-operation with the provinces.

• (1535)

When we see what it does with the suggestions and the consensus there, it is easy enough to believe. Clause 20 provides that the minister may, as part of his duties: "—enter into agreements with a province or group of provinces, agencies of provinces, financial institutions and such other persons or bodies as the Minister considers appropriate". This is what the government is calling decentralization, this circumventing of provincial jurisdiction and going directly to persons or bodies. This is what they call decentralization.

Once again, despite what the Minister of Human Resources Development says, this clause enables him to enter into agreements with, as I have just indicated, a number of bodies and institutions and even with individuals. With this clause, the minister is giving himself the power to go over the heads of the provinces—this cannot be said often enough—and enter into agreements with whomever he deems appropriate.

Do I need to point out that this does not appear in the original legislation? No clause in this bill provides that the government should respect provincial jurisdiction. Bill C-95, which a number of my colleagues and I strongly criticized recently, to its credit, at least attempts to respect the provincial governments by precluding the possibility of its exercising "any jurisdiction or

control over any health authority operating under the laws of any province".

When we see the extent of the federal government's encroachment, even when it says it wants to respect areas of jurisdiction, we can easily imagine the situation when it does not express its desire to do so.

This bill definitely confirms the federal government's involvement in social and job programs. This fact is all the more obvious in the area of manpower training.

The minister talks of a whole other sort of decentralization. He intimates that his aim is to give communities and individuals more manoeuvring room. It is clear, however, that Bill C-96 is a way to get around what the provinces and Quebec want in order to deal directly with the groups and individuals the minister considers appropriate, who will, of course, be subject to whatever standards he may wish to impose.

The minister also talks of a single window. In this regard, the Quebec minister of employment, Louise Harel, said recently that Bill C-96 was the antithesis of the single window Quebec would like to establish by making the Société québécoise de développement de la main-d'oeuvre the primary intervenor in training matters. The SQDM is the embodiment of Quebec's consensus on the need for the Government of Quebec to be given full powers in manpower matters.

Despite this, according to the federal documents *Le Devoir* cites in its November 10 issue, the federal government is apparently preparing to end its co-operation with the Société québécoise de développement de la main-d'oeuvre in order to deal directly with community organizations and private institutions that it will finance and that will be subject to its eligibility criteria.

At a time when only the present Prime Minister and Pierre Trudeau still believe that further centralization is the solution to the multiple problems of federalism, it is not surprising that Bill C-96, although long ready, was not debated before the referendum.

This government has a very disappointing record with employment and social services; more than two years have passed and there is as much unemployment and even more people on welfare, and the coming unemployment insurance reform, also long ready and also kept hidden to keep Quebecers from knowing the true intentions of the government, will only make its record even worse.

Recently, in response to questions from the Leader of the Opposition on Bill C-96, the Minister of Human Resources Development replied that "obviously the Leader of the Opposition has not taken the time to read the bill". To counter this pretentious statement, I would like to refer to a number of Quebec reactions to the federal announcement of its intent.

The Société québécoise de développement de la main-d'oeuvre under Claude Béland and Ghislain Dufour has unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the federal government to transfer all of its manpower training budgets to Quebec.

• (1540)

The Quebec Minister of Employment, Louise Harel, described Bill C-96 as “the blunt rejection of the unanimous consensus in Quebec—”.

We might add the reactions of the Canada Labour Congress and the Canadian Institute of Adult Education, both denouncing Bill C-96, one calling it “an attempt to bypass the provinces” and the other “a flagrant lack of respect for the aspirations of the provinces, Quebec in particular, in matters of education, training and manpower development”.

For his part, the secretary general of the FTQ, the largest labour federation in Quebec, deplored the federal government’s thumbing its nose at areas of provincial jurisdiction, and the Quebec consensus, in order to put into place a structure parallel to what is already there. He added “Even the Conseil du patronat sides with the unions on this. And even Robert Bourassa’s Liberal government opposed a similar attempt by Ottawa in 1991. Anyone who still harbours any illusions about Canadian federalism ought to think twice before voting in the referendum”.

These comments were made three weeks prior to the referendum, but they hold as true today as they did then.

For all these reasons, it is obvious that we in the Bloc Québécois share the opinion of the majority of Quebecers and would be unable to vote in favour of such a bill.

[English]

Mr. Larry McCormick (Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak on Bill C-96.

A year ago our human resources development standing committee conducted public hearings in Ottawa and all across Canada. As a member of this committee I attended hearings in 25 cities in 35 days in 10 provinces, 2 territories and the East Arctic. In my own riding constituents shared their ideas and concerns with me at four town hall meetings held in Napanee, Sydenham, Bancroft and Tweed.

The bill addresses the concerns we heard from many Canadians. Recently in my riding I had the opportunity to attend the opening of an HRDC job kiosk in Northbrook, Ontario. Mr. Adrian van Asseldonk, our local HRDC manager, and his staff have provided residents from the Northbrook area, the northern part of our Lennox and Addington county, access to job market information. They no longer have to make the long trip to Napanee, Belleville or Kingston.

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As we look at the legislation before us we could talk for hours on end about what this mandate clause means or that qualification entails or about what wordings should be changed; indeed we have to do this. It is our responsibility to get the legislation right but we also have to take our eyes away from the fine print, look at the thing as a whole and ask what it really means.

We can find out what it means outside these four walls in the communities because in the end this is about people; people who have hopes and dreams for the future, people who are willing to work hard for those dreams, people who are often struggling to hang on to a job or fund a new one, old people who are struggling to get by on a fixed income, young people stepping out of the school room into a world few of us could have imagined just a few short years ago. Those are the people who know about the real work this department is doing day in and day out across the country.

HRDC touches the lives of millions of Canadians every year perhaps more directly than any other government department. From survivor benefits to student loans, unemployment insurance, employment programs and services, old age security, HRDC has an impact on Canadians at each stage of their lives.

The HRDC described in the bill is working with Canadians in a new way. The government recognizes that Canada and Canadians are in the midst of a sea of change economically and socially. Our labour market and social programs have to change as well. For women, for aboriginal peoples, for people with disabilities and visible minorities this means a new Employment Equity Act, a stronger, more effective act which was tabled last year. In times of economic upheaval our commitment is to equity for all Canadians and it must be stronger than ever before.

• (1545)

For people looking for a chance to learn and expand their opportunities, it means a new Canada student loans program, the first major overhaul of the program in years and one that puts a good education into the reach of more Canadians than ever before.

For the first time there are specific grants to help women go to graduate schools in areas once dominated by men. For the first time students with disabilities can get support for the special facilities they need. For the first time single mothers can go back to school and get the financial help they need to pay for child care. At a time when knowledge and education are so critical, the new program is vital to many Canadians.

For older workers displaced by technology or by the decline of an industry, the bill means marshalling our resources to give them a hand, through strong partnerships with other governments like we have in Quebec through the program for older worker adjustment.

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It means bold new approaches like the Atlantic groundfish strategy, helping displaced fishers and plant workers across Newfoundland and Labrador.

For young people who are unemployed and out of school it means youth services Canada. At last count, there were 200 projects across the country where they are learning new skills through community service.

There are projects like the one in Red Deer, Alberta where young people are working with the RCMP to deal with drug programs. Projects like the one in Clayoquot Sound where 20 young aboriginal men and women are working to develop a promising new eco-tourism program. Projects like the one in New Brunswick where young people are cleaning up and reclaiming polluted streams and rivers.

For young Canadians still in school the new approach means youth internships where private sector firms are giving kids in grade 10 or 11 hands on work experience tied in with the school curriculum. This year alone there are 25,000 young interns across Canada thanks to the strong partnerships we are building with the private sector. Business and government are working together to give young people a shot at a great future.

Bill C-96 means the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council addresses the training needs of 1.2 million workers across this country. For women, this bill means Women in Trades and Technology, a national group helping women get into more trade, technological and blue collar jobs, with a national support network, courses and training programs designed specifically for women.

For some 30,000 unemployed Canadians it means getting a helping hand as they create their own jobs and become self-employed and, in the process, creating an additional 30,000 jobs for other Canadians.

For all Canadians this bill means the federal government working with the provinces to test new approaches in employment and training, learning and education and income support and services.

For example, in P.E.I. the Choice and Opportunity Project is designing and testing a delivery model to improve integrated services for persons with intellectual disabilities, eliminating barriers within generic programs and services and moving from segregated to inclusive community systems. The project is conducted in partnership with the Canadian Association for Community Living and the P.E.I. Association for Community Living.

In Newfoundland, the project "Transitions—The Changes Within" is helping over 5,000 people by testing a tuition voucher system that helps students remain in full time studies, helping post-secondary graduates gain work experience and

becoming self-employed, helping unemployed workers find full time work.

In British Columbia an initiative is under way to improve the quality and access to child care for working and studying families through community one stop access centres, testing delivery models for the delivery of child care and finding ways to help children with special day care needs.

In New Brunswick the job corps project provides an annualized income to participants, people over 50 who were unemployed or on social assistance, in return for 26 weeks of volunteer work.

In every province we are making a real difference in the lives of Canadians from all walks of life. We are making a difference because we have transformed HRDC and our approach to delivering the programs that Canadians need.

This transformation will continue. In August the Minister of Human Resources Development announced the establishment of a new modern service delivery network that will reach more Canadians than ever before, the most sophisticated, efficient delivery network in the government.

We are developing new, more flexible programs and services through the human resources investment fund, programs that will be locally based, locally driven and focused squarely on results.

• (1550)

That is what the bill really means: a new direction for the department; a new focus for jobs and opportunity; a new approach to helping Canadians catch hold of their dreams for the future.

The human resources development department is doing good things for Canada. Bill C-96 will let us do more and better things. Let us not put up roadblocks. Let us get on with the job of serving Canadians.

I have a comment for an hon. member opposite. When I, along with other colleagues of the House, put in 12, 15 and 16-hour days across the country, in all corners, from sea to sea to sea, most members of the committee stayed in the room and listened to the witnesses. They listened to Canadians. Some hon. members stayed for one hour a day. There were stories of them going out on to the streets and signing up members for their party. I am ashamed of the conduct of some members of the House.

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.):
Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to rise on behalf of the people of Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt to oppose Bill C-96, an act to establish the Department of Human Resources Development and to amend and repeal certain related acts.

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As we all know, this piece of so-called legislative genius proposes to transfer legal powers from one department to a new department. A new department. Another department.

Once again the Liberals are not listening to Canadians. Canadians have repeatedly demanded, in fact they have begged the Liberals to reduce the size of the federal government. All over the world, western democracies are reducing the size of bureaucratic monsters. Canadian provinces are doing everything they can to reduce the size of their operations. Other governments are trying to eliminate the waste of taxpayers' dollars, to eliminate duplication of tasks, to eliminate overlap in duties and to eliminate inefficiency and ineffectiveness. Not the Liberal Party of Canada.

The federal government, under the command of a man who brought our country to the brink of destruction, is creating more bureaucracy and red tape.

The Liberals are quick to say that this legislation only serves to reinforce existing federal powers for social programs. In the current post-referendum phase in which we are living Canadians do not want to reinforce any areas of federal government intervention. In fact, Canadians are demanding alternatives to the status quo.

The Liberals insist the legislation does not create any new powers for the federal government. How can we believe this, given the Liberal government's intention to increase government and to reinforce its firm grip of power over social programs for Canadians?

The Liberals are silent with respect to the increase or decrease of staff in the human resources development sector. There is nothing more scary than a silent Liberal, unless it is the Liberal defence minister saying that he needs a pen. In fact, this legislation contains a royal recommendation which authorizes expenditures that are undisclosed. Undisclosed?

This bill is a masterpiece of Liberal silence. Ask any Liberal member and he or she will tell you with a straight face that any expenditure under the bill is expected to be minimal, so Canadians have nothing to worry about.

The defence minister's new quill-tipped, gold lettering engraved pens, encased in some kind of black velvet, were a minimal expense.

The Liberal government's \$100 million gun registry is a minimal expense. Most non-Liberal Party sources agree that \$100 million is the minimal amount that the punishment of law-abiding, responsible firearms owners and users is going to cost. On the subject of how much the gun registry is going to cost, most authorities, that is those who do not belong to the Liberal Party of Canada, believe it will cost Canadian taxpayers much more than \$100 million.

• (1555)

Since this past August I have uncovered over \$100 million worth of wasteful and questionable spending by the Minister of National Defence and his senior officials. One hundred million dollars means nothing at all to this Liberal government. It has only to be careful to make sure that the defence minister does not spend \$100 million on gold-plated pens.

The Reform Party of Canada is looking forward to building a new Canada of the 21st century. The Reform Party has a program which would allow the federal government to withdraw from fields it currently occupies jointly with the provinces.

The provincial premiers are in favour of negotiating the transfer of power from the federal government to the provincial governments. The Reform Party's voice has no attachment to the status quo. The Reform Party is not interested in dragging our country back into a constitutional quagmire. Our 20-point plan can modernize and decentralize the country, something for which Canadians are clearly asking.

Bill C-96 is an embarrassment to the Liberal government. The Liberals should withdraw this phoney bill. The Prime Minister has nearly smashed our nation to smithereens as a result of his complete misunderstanding of the will of the people of Quebec and all other provinces. The Prime Minister misjudged the referendum within Quebec. He misjudged the referendum as a national issue. Canadians had to take it on themselves to travel to Quebec to express their wish for that province to remain in our family.

Canadians were hoping the Prime Minister would lead the way in assuring Quebecers that all Canadians wanted Quebec to vote no. Canadians as usual since October 1993 were sorely disappointed by the Prime Minister. We have been let down. The Prime Minister and the Liberals have lost the confidence of our nation. Yet the Liberals are busy creating another federal government department. This is pure balderdash.

The Minister of Human Resources Development and the Minister of Western Economic Diversification has been fudging his handling of Canadian social programs since the Liberals took office. The infamous red book made lofty promises of social policy reform. This minister has yet to be able to get anything meaningful past the Liberal cabinet.

The bill is a desperate attempt by this minister to do something about our nation's social policy. Canadians want social policy reform. This bill creates bureaucracy. It does not reduce government or reform social policy. This bill takes the existing situation and shuffles it all around.

The Reform Party is offering Canadians the opportunity to decentralize powers to the provinces and truly reform our public tax supported institutions. We propose to get our money's worth from what we have to work with. Unlike the Liberals, we want to bring power closer to the grassroots of Canada. We do not propose to continue allowing bureaucrats in Ottawa to answer

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their phones and just say no to whatever the people of British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and all other provinces are asking.

Western Canadians have as many problems with the status quo as our Quebec counterparts. Virtually all Canadians want change and the Liberals do not realize it. Our forefathers managed to change our nation each time we were faced with difficulties in how we would govern ourselves.

In terms of social services, including medical services, we propose to change the role of the federal government to that of fostering co-operative interprovincial agreements rather than imposing unilateral standards and withholding transfer payments as a punishment for non-conformity. By proceeding with the bill the Liberal Party is acting completely against the will of Canadians. The government should be ashamed.

• (1600)

I must sound the alarm for Canadians watching that the bill does away with an annual report for the new department. As hard as it is to believe, even though we are \$550 billion in debt the Liberals are creating a department of the federal government that does not even have to report its administration costs.

The Liberal Party and its leader have been terribly smitten because they have been trying to appease Quebec without consideration for the wants and desires of other provinces.

The Reform Party is rising like a phoenix out of the west. After the next election the Reform Party will have at least an additional 100 seats. These seats will come from lost Liberal seats in rural Ontario and eastern Canada. The grassroots movement of our party is a wave that is sweeping across the nation. After the next election Canadians will see a new form of federalism come to the country with the Reform Party of Canada as a new government.

On behalf of my constituents and all Canadians I say no to Bill C-96.

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on Bill C-96, the Department of Human Resources Development Act.

I am also pleased to respond to some of the suggestions of the member for Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt. He said that his party seeks to eliminate overlap and inefficiencies and is a rising phoenix. The phoenix is dragging its tail. It is trying to make its point on cheap shots about the Prime Minister and about the minister of human resources.

Mr. Stinson: There is nothing cheap there.

Ms. Cohen: A phoenix is a bird that cheeps and this phoenix is certainly about the cheapest around.

Canadians are demanding alternatives to the status quo. Canadians are demanding efficiencies. The bill does not deal with substantive issues. The bill deals with issues consequential to not creating a new department but merging three different departments. The bill is about efficiencies, about preventing overlap and about producing better results for the Canadian taxpayer.

Members know that the Department of Human Resources Development already exists through orders in council. An obvious question might be: Why bother proceeding with this in a legislative format? The department is working. Why not put the legislation off until other substantive issues could be included? It is a fair question and I would like to address it briefly. In my view there are essentially five reasons why we need the bill and why we should proceed without delay.

First, we need a straightforward way to clarify the role of the department and to clarify ministerial responsibilities. The existing arrangements are set out through orders in council. They are perfectly legitimate as transitional arrangements. However, in the final analysis the government, and I am sure everyone in the House, even the great Reform phoenix, would prefer to see this complex trail of statutory powers leading back to the enabling legislation of many different founding departments replaced with one single, coherent bill that sets out the mandate and the powers of the department in one place. That is just common sense. It ought to appeal to all of us. It certainly ought to appeal to the Reform Party.

Second, by providing that single coherent mandate we could then clarify the identity of the department, something that is important both for its employees, although I do not think the Reform Party is worried about them, and for its clients, Canadian citizens, people the government cares about.

For more than a year employees from the four founding departments, labour, employment and immigration, health and welfare and the secretary of state, have been working together to create a new organization. They have accomplished a great deal but their own sense of belonging, being part of a single focused organization, really cannot be complete until the legislation is passed.

Bill C-96 means that the people who work for the department can turn the page and head into a new chapter. At the same time people in organizations who work with the department need to know with whom they are working. This is difficult when, for example, departmental officials at this point legally cannot really use human resources department letterhead. For legal and contracting purposes they still use letterhead from departments that in the eyes of our partners do not even exist any more. That may seem like a minor issue, but it creates a great deal of confusion among our partners and is expensive.

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• (1605)

It is related to the third reason why we need Bill C-96 now. It would be overstating the case to say that existing arrangements are an administrative nightmare, but it does not overstate the case by much. Without enabling legislation for the department even simple issues like getting a person transferred turns into a complex, time consuming and costly process.

When more detailed contracts are involved the process gets very messy. This is understandable and unavoidable during a major restructuring and transition, but there comes a time to bring that transition to an end. Two years have passed since the reorganization started and the time is now because we need to move forward. This is the fourth reason for the bill.

We have to consolidate the progress we have achieved in integrating social and labour market programs and sharpening the focus on developing Canada's human resources. More important, we need to clear the way for further progress.

As we undertake a major overhaul of the UI program, as we develop new programs and services under the human resources investment fund, as we work to improve programs for seniors, as the department implements the next phase of re-engineering and streamlining services to Canada, we need to clear the way.

This brings me to the fifth and most important reason we need the bill. Canadians need and deserve the best possible service. In the end that is what really matters about the bill. In the end that is what Liberals worry about. The displaced workers who walk into the Canada employment centre in Windsor, Ontario, deserve the same kind of integrated, results oriented support focused on helping people adjust and get new jobs.

The single mother from my riding who is looking for help needs the kind of integrated service that will help her care for her children while getting the skills and income support that will help her to build a life with a future.

The young person stuck in a cycle of dead end jobs and unemployment after leaving school needs help breaking that cycle. That is what Human Resources Development Canada is there for. We need to ensure that the department can do its job. It is important to clear up the administrative tangles left over from earlier times. It is important to establish a clear identity and coherent mandate for the new organization to function properly. It is important to ensure that as the department looks to the future there is a solid foundation to build on.

It is important also to continue to fulfil the overwhelming desire of Canadians, a desire that is clear in all 10 provinces and in the territories. What Canadians want is a strong federal government that can make sure that programs and services are delivered uniformly across the country.

Bill C-96 creates the department that will provide that foundation in the human resources development area. We need to pass the bill. We need to get on with the work of serving Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I take part in this debate today on Bill C-96, an act to establish the Department of Human Resources Development.

Over the next ten minutes, I intend to look at the issue of employment centre restructuring, from the particular point of view of Quebec, where, from now on, we will have 78 sub-offices coming under 28 offices called regional management centres.

I will also address this issue as it relates to a case of particular concern to me, namely the CEC of Trois-Rivières, because we were stunned and outraged to learn, on June 22, 1995, that the department planned to establish the regional management centre in Shawinigan rather than in Trois-Rivières.

This announcement immediately gave rise to a general outcry. Yours truly was the first one to denounce such plans, soon to be followed by the mayor of Trois-Rivières, the Chamber of Commerce and 70 organizations of the greater Trois-Rivières area, including 40 municipalities, all of which passed resolutions denouncing the federal government's plans in this respect.

This eventually resulted in a petition being circulated over the summer by the EIC employees' union, with the full support of the Federation of Senior Citizens, because this bill is a direct attack on senior citizens, and of the local branches of the Fédération des caisses populaires Desjardins, which helped circulate the petition. As a result, upwards of 25,000 citizens have signed the petition and expressed in writing their opposition to these plans the federal government has regarding our region.

• (1610)

As you can see, in addition to being very unpopular in the Trois-Rivières region, this decision actually contradicts the department's own criteria for determining the most sensible location for these offices.

In fact, the criteria were based first of all on the total population; second, on the number of people on unemployment insurance; third, on the number of people receiving income security benefits; fourth, on the number of senior citizens concerned; and finally, on the number of businesses and employers affected by the activities of the employment centres. The department, preferring to ignore its own criteria, concluded for obvious reasons that it was better to locate the regional centre in Shawinigan instead of Trois-Rivières, although there

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is twice as much economic activity in the Trois-Rivières region as in Shawinigan.

The same ratio applies to the total population, the number of senior citizens and the number of businesses. This is one more example that shows why it makes no sense to locate in Shawinigan instead of Trois-Rivières. The practical implications are all explained in a document we happened to receive not long ago. This is an internal management document entitled: "Preliminary Report on Centralization of Claims Processing".

This document was released less than a month ago on October 23, 1995, and prepared by a committee of 11 department officials, including several senior officials. The report more or less describes the future role of the sub-offices, including Trois-Rivières. The sub-offices will receive benefit claims, transmit the claims and collect the facts from the client. According to a note in the document, this will only consist in taking down information provided by the client.

They will take this information down in Trois-Rivières and routinely send it on to Shawinigan, where more than half of the files will come from Trois-Rivières and the surrounding region. Trois-Rivières in this case includes Cap-de-la-Madeleine and Trois-Rivières West. What about Bécancour, which will have to deal with Drummondville? It does not make sense. There is no administrative or historic link between the residents of Bécancour and Drummondville, which is another absurd aspect of this plan.

We, that is my colleagues for Champlain and Richelieu and myself, wrote to the minister to make the appropriate representations. People in our regions, especially the unemployed, will have a hard time as a result of this plan. Six weeks later on November 10—as soon as possible, as usual—we received a written reply from the minister who, by the way, was too busy to meet three members of Parliament. He referred us to an assistant deputy minister in Montreal, Mr. Gladu. We will let somebody else go and meet him.

In his letter, the minister explained why Shawinigan had been chosen instead of Trois-Rivières, and I quote: "The government decided to centralize Human Resources Development Canada's internal services for the Mauricie region at the Shawinigan centre because it felt it would be useful to bring together a certain number of services and departments, including Revenue Canada and Human Resources Development Canada".

Which means it was a matter of accommodation, office space would appear to be available at the Taxation Data Centre in Shawinigan. The reason is therefore simply a physical one, despite the decision's unpopularity and unreasonableness. It is a matter of premises that has led to preparations to move it to Shawinigan—South and yet, in the present building, there are premises available. Even more will be coming available soon,

because the network will disappear in the restructuring, and this will free up a whole floor and another one, two floors leased until 1999, which will be available and could accommodate all the personnel required for a regional management centre in Trois-Rivières.

• (1615)

This reason does not hold. What is more, the minister says that the future centre in Shawinigan, in addition to offering the same programs and services as in Trois-Rivières, will manage internal services relating to the administration and processing of unemployment insurance claims. This tells us about the role of the Shawinigan centre rather than the one in Trois-Rivières.

Here again, according to this document, not only will the actual files of people from Trois-Rivières be in Shawinigan, but departmental investigations will be done from Shawinigan, appeals to the board of referees will be made there and complaints about unemployment insurance will be lodged there. According to the same document, three claims out of four will be reviewed, as they call it, and will be given special follow-up because of some complexity or other. Therefore three claims out of four arriving in Trois-Rivières will be transferred to Shawinigan and given special treatment.

Here is what the minister says in his missive. He tells us that he has no intention of making any changes to the way the department is serving the people of Trois-Rivières. Well, at this time, the physical files of UI claimants are in Trois-Rivières; departmental investigations are conducted in Trois-Rivières; appeals to the UI arbitration board are heard in Trois-Rivières; and relatively complex files are processed in Trois-Rivières. Therefore, we cannot trust the minister when he tells us that the services provided to the people of Trois-Rivières will not be affected in any way. This cannot be true in my opinion.

How can we trust the minister? What guarantee does he give in this letter that there will be no changes? There is no guarantee. The more we look at this, the more we realize that the decision to move and almost dismantle the Trois-Rivières manpower centre—whose staff, according to our information, will be reduced from around 100 one or two years ago to 12—is purely political.

This is a purely political decision. If the hon. member for Saint-Maurice, the Prime Minister wants to show his constituents that electing him was not a mistake, that they did the right thing for the riding of Saint-Maurice by electing him, he may have the right to take measures, but he has no right to do so at the expense of the people of Trois-Rivières and the surrounding region and to look down on them. He has no right to do that, and I take this opportunity to tell you, Mr. Speaker, and to tell this House that we will not give up. We do not accept this decision and we never will.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the service delivery network initiative, a feature of this bill, is a significant step forward in providing Canadians with faster, more effective and efficient services. It gives the government and local communities greater flexibility to help those about whom we are all most concerned, those Canadians in need of some assistance from their government, whether it is through unemployment insurance, a retirement pension or many of the other services now under the jurisdiction of the Department of Human Resources Development. Not only does it provide for greater self-service, it enhances access to in-person service.

The service delivery network was spurred by the need to accomplish two goals: improve the quality of service and reduce costs. These goals may seem contradictory. The government, however, was convinced from the beginning that better and more innovative service is a means of saving money. It is also a way to meet the needs of Canadians more effectively.

Canadians clearly agree. They know fiscal restraint and social responsibility are both essential to Canada's future; they told us so during our wide ranging consultations. That is what the new service delivery network achieves; faster, more responsive, localized and personalized service at less cost.

• (1620)

Given the tone of the debate on Bill C-96, it would be useful to restate the background behind the reform. First, it bears repeating that Bill C-96 is an administrative measure, not a policy instrument. The new service delivery network breaks new ground in terms of innovation and creativity. What it does not do is create new powers for the federal government; nor does it invade provincial jurisdiction in matters of labour market development. It is an administrative reform initiative, period. It is not necessary or even desirable to alter jurisdictional arrangements or create new authorities.

[Translation]

How will this new service delivery network benefit Quebecers? The new network will affect the lives of Quebecers in many ways. Across the province, Human Resources Development Canada provides services through an expanding network of offices. Whether through programs and services relating to employment, old age pension benefits and unemployment insurance or any of the various job-related services, every Quebecer will be affected by one or more of these programs at one time or another, from their youth to their retirement.

HRDC offices in Quebec serve more than one million people. For students alone, there are 87 Canada Employment Centres for Students. The Quebec network administers several employment programs and Canada-Quebec agreements, a number of joint ventures involving the province and the federal government,

50,000 contracts relating to manpower and a \$13.3 billion budget.

In 1994-1995, HRDC helped more than 164,000 Quebecers find jobs and nearly 45,000 students find summer jobs.

Education is another area in which HRDC makes a significant contribution. Without the required skills, Canadians and Quebecers have no hope of matching the competition on the rapidly changing global market we are dealing with today. That is why HRDC pumped \$1.5 billion into the Quebec post-secondary education system. Young Quebecers certainly took advantage of this financial assistance to further their education.

[English]

The department helped nearly 280,000 participants in employment services and nearly 150,000 employment program participants. It served 850,000 old age security pension plan recipients. As well, HRDC contributed more than \$2.7 billion under the Canada assistance plan to help some 700,000 people receiving social assistance benefits. It provided the unemployment insurance service to a monthly average of 528,000 claimants.

[Translation]

HRDC funds pilot projects like Éduplus, Formetal and La Puce to develop innovative ways of serving the public. The department also contributed to the outstanding success of groups like the Cirque du Soleil, which flourished with the financial support of HRDC.

This list of achievements speaks volumes. It shows that meaningful partnerships between the federal government and the people of Quebec promote community building and shape its future. By providing easier access to improved services, we broaden even more future prospects.

• (1625)

These initiatives and programs did not appear out of thin air; they are the result of sustained efforts by the department in Quebec. They certainly bear the Quebec government's seal of approval, since most of them arise from various partnership agreements that have been signed.

[English]

There are the Canada-Quebec interim agreements on labour force development measures, the Canada assistance plan, the agreement on enhancing employment opportunities for social assistance recipients, the Canada-Quebec agreement on the assignment of unemployment insurance benefits, the Canada-Quebec agreement on the exchange of information, the Canada student loan program with block funding to Quebec, the post-secondary education financing agreement with block funding to Quebec.

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[Translation]

Do Quebecers appreciate these services? Undoubtedly, as evidenced by the 50,000 contracts relating to manpower, representing about \$685 million, that were awarded in Quebec, including 9,600 contracts with non-profit organizations; 9,300 contracts with private sector enterprises; 2,800 contracts with public sector enterprises such as municipalities; 3,200 contracts with the Government of Quebec for the provision of institutional training and 25,000 contracts under the fee payer trainee program.

[English]

I have described the daily ongoing service of Human Resources Development Canada to the residents of Quebec and in co-operation with the people of Quebec. These are not the inventions of the new service delivery network. They are the content the network was designed to deliver more effectively, more responsively, more creatively.

Opposing improvements in the delivery of programs does not serve the interests of Quebecers. Confusing administrative reform with reform of social policy or jurisdictional changes does not serve the interests of Quebecers or of Canadians anywhere. Innovation and creativity do serve the interests of all Canadians, including Quebecers, and innovation and creativity are what the new service delivery network is all about.

The Department of Human Resources Development has every intention of remaining innovative in its delivery of services and programs but it has not by this initiative invented any new programs. We do need new ideas and ways of doing things. We need clarity of vision, which is what this bill represents, a new way for a new future of delivering programs right across the country, helping those who most need to adapt in a new economy.

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this debate.

Human Resources Development Canada I believe, from my longstanding commitment to the Liberal tradition, is central to the government's maintaining its credibility with the people of Canada. Of all government departments Human Resources Development Canada is the one at this time that should get the most support and the most encouragement from all members of the House.

• (1630)

As we are going through a period of restructuring we have these incredible forces from the right that say cut, eliminate, offload, decentralize. When we are doing that for the purpose of eliminating waste I am sympathetic.

I believe human resources development has to be one of the departments of the national government that remain strong and

intact. It must be the counterbalance to provincial forces that quite often are shortsighted and think in a parochial way rather than in the interest of the whole of Canada. I maintain that unless we have national programs with national standards it will be very difficult for us to maintain a sense of national will.

I am totally opposed to offloading any more of the decision making process in an area like human resources development to the province of Quebec or to any other provinces. All of a sudden we will have that parochial thought process emerge. We will become a country in which essentially we have about five or six different standards, thought processes emerging. When we are trying to develop national standards it is virtually impossible when we go that route.

I will give an example in terms of my own province, Ontario. We have a Conservative government which is being very shortsighted in the way it is treating its human resources development opportunities.

Mr. Stinson: Not according to the people.

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): A member from the Reform Party said not according to the people.

I have to take a minute to talk about the people and why the provincial government is so popular in Ontario. We have in the country now an emerging culture. A book written by John Kenneth Galbraith was called *The Culture of the Content*. What we have now is a culture in which there are people who have work, who have a job, who have everything going for them, who might have a lot of RRSPs, whose business may be in good shape, who are essentially content. They represent about 70 per cent.

The 70 per cent who are basically content, who have their paycheque secure, or who have enough investment income that they can look after themselves are essentially comfortable with this right wing agenda. Those people are not being as sensitive as they used to be toward those in our community who do not have, who do not have work, who do not have the opportunity to get retrained. We must as governments invest in some people to be retrained.

We have in our province a Conservative government catering to the contented culture. It is forgetting the 30 per cent who are having a very difficult time. The Ontario government's vision is very much like a business vision. It is like earnings per share per quarter.

• (1635)

When building a country we cannot run it like a business. We have to think of the investment in human capital for the long term. It is essential that we have a counterbalance at the national level.

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

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Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, when I try to talk in a constructive way about the issue here, the Reform Party does not let me finish. There may be a day when those gentlemen might be given the trust by the people of Canada. If they have been given the trust of the people of Canada, they are not supposed to get the trust and then simply say hand it over to the province.

The Chamber is meant to be a counterbalance to those regional and provincial forces. When one is in the Chamber, one does not speak only for one's own riding and one's own province. When in the Chamber, one is supposed to speak for all of Canada. We are here to speak for all of Canada.

Ontario has a shortsighted vision evolving in which we do not have investment dollars going into human resource development. We should be thanking God that we have a minister who will not be pushed around by the bureaucrats in the Department of Finance when they are trying to offload this place. He will maintain his presence for a strong national human resources development department.

To the members of the Reform, there are many I have had good constructive debate with—

An hon. member: Does that include giving something to the Winnipeg Jets?

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): The member asked whether giving money to the Winnipeg Jets is a good decision? He is taking me off the subject matter of my speech but I will talk about the Winnipeg Jets. I declare conflict of interest with the Winnipeg Jets. As members know, my son played his nine games with the Winnipeg Jets. He is only a 19-year old kid.

I support the commitment of the Government of Canada to try to maintain another National Hockey League franchise in this country. I come from Toronto where we do not have any problems maintaining a franchise. This is not a country that has looked out only for those provinces that have. We should be looking out for provinces that do not have the same resources as downtown Toronto.

It does not bother me if some of the cashflow from Ontario is distributed to Winnipeg or other places if it means we can maintain our national sport. It does not bother me.

An hon. member: Big business.

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): It is big business. It is a multi-billion business that has created exports, equipment, players, tourism and exposure. Do not underestimate the contribution of hockey as a national sport.

Let me get back to my speech on human resources development. Mr. Speaker, please do not dock me for the diversion that was generated by the Reform Party on the Winnipeg Jets.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The only commitment I will make—I cannot put you in the penalty box—is that you have two minutes to wrap it up.

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): I will not argue with the Speaker because I am afraid of a 10-minute misconduct. That means I will not be able to speak tomorrow.

• (1640)

I want to go back to the essence of the department, human resources. Many of the ideas and decisions taken by the Department of Human Resources Development do not always come out of Ottawa. It is very rare. That is one of the myths, one of the spins we hear from the Reform Party.

I know many of the ideas for human resource development, ideas for job creation or jobs for retraining, actually come from the grassroots, from the local human resource development offices. I bet there is not a member of Parliament who has not had an idea come through the system and get approved where the idea came right from the community.

To all members and to my dear friends from the Bloc Québécois please, the people of Canada have spoken. They want a strong national government. We must begin by reinforcing the voice of the people to make sure the Department of Human Resources Development is the ground swell for rebuilding this great, strong, national government that once was.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing, education; the hon. member for St. John's East, domestic violence.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Madeleine Dalfond-Guiral (Laval-Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, now that the Quebec referendum is over, the Liberal government is finally tabling the most important piece of its legislative agenda, that is Bill C-96. We had to put up with years of Liberal dickering and federal pussy footing to arrive at this result: at last, this government is showing its true colours.

The government can try its best by including so-called "technical" details in its bill, by saying that it merely seeks to "establish" a legal entity, and that it "streamlines" federal bureaucracy to meet the concerns of those involved. However, nothing can hide this obvious will to increase federal involvement in fields of provincial jurisdiction.

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On October 5, in response to questions from the official opposition, the Minister of Human Resources Development deemed appropriate to say that the Bloc Québécois obviously had “not taken the time to read the bill”.

Whether the minister agrees or not, the fact is that the Bloc Québécois, the Quebec government, the Société québécoise du développement de la main-d'oeuvre, the socio-economic partners in Quebec, including those representing management, union and social sectors, not to mention the Quebec minister of state responsible for joint action, have all read the same document and come to the same conclusion: Bill C-96 strengthens the centralizing views of the federal government and increases its involvement in the employment and social program sectors, including manpower training. This shows a complete disregard for the consensus reached in Quebec on the need to have all necessary powers, so that the Quebec government, in co-operation with its socio-economic partners, can channel its energy and its resources where they are needed most, based on the actual and increasing needs of its population.

On October 4, Louise Harel denounced, in a press release, the federal attempt to set up a parallel structure to get involved in the manpower training sector:

“Like its labour market partners, the Quebec government denounces Ottawa’s intentions to set up its own parallel manpower structures in Quebec. This federal initiative amounts to a flat rejection of the unanimous Quebec consensus, repeatedly expressed, both under the previous administration and under the current one, on the need for Quebec to regain control over all labour adjustment measures, including the related budgets”.

• (1645)

Let there be no mistake. This bill is a screen allowing the Liberal government to hide its real intentions. This makes it the cornerstone of federal interventionism for the Liberal government, which is now determined to ignore Quebec and overlook the provinces’ wishes. This is a great example of the importance and role the federal government wants to give the provinces in tomorrow’s Canada.

Bill C-96 mirrors the Canadian constitution: encroachments, overlap, duplication, and waste. Bill C-96 clearly shows that the federal government has no intention of respecting provincial jurisdiction. How can we not denounce this attitude?

This is not the federal government’s first encroachment on provincial jurisdiction. After taking over unemployment insurance in the 1940s, it consolidated its hegemony in the labour sector by creating employment centres and manpower training programs. Fifty years later, we are forced to recognize that the

federal government has no intention of withdrawing from that sector.

Bill C-96 undermines Quebec’s efforts to set up a single framework for labour initiatives, thus confirming the official opposition’s worst fears. The minister is trying to take advantage of his reform to give himself more powers at the expense of the provinces. Bill C-96 gives the government the powers it needs to bypass the provinces in concluding agreements with local organizations.

The federal government will then be able to go after municipalities and offer them responsibilities contracted directly with the Department of Human Resources Development. This would allow the minister to delegate powers to the new employment commission or any other entity, thereby bypassing provincial governments and administrations. Quebec’s fears and concerns are justified, since the minister can impose his own standards on these entities by delegating these powers, without, of course, the agreement of the Canadian Parliament or the provinces. This is the Canadian version of decentralization.

This bill, if passed, will provide the necessary legislative framework to allow the minister to implement his much talked-about UI reform, which is the second piece of the federal puzzle. Several clauses of Bill C-96 grant huge discretionary powers to the head of the department, which, in the opinion of the official opposition, promotes greater federal interference and invasion of the provincial jurisdiction over social matters, and manpower in particular.

For instance, clause 6 of the bill states that the “powers, duties and functions of the Minister extend to and include all matters over which Parliament has jurisdiction—not by law assigned to any other Minister, department, board or agency of the Government of Canada, and are to be exercised with the objective of enhancing employment, encouraging equality and promoting social security”.

It is clear that, with Bill C-96, the powers, duties and functions assigned to the minister are larger, because his thrust area is no longer specified in the act. One can wonder about the deeper motives of the legislator.

As for clause 7, it could hardly be vaguer. It states that “In exercising the powers or performing the duties or functions assigned to him under this or any other act of Parliament, the minister may— cooperate with provincial authorities with a view to the coordination of efforts made or proposed for preserving and improving human resources development”.

Nowhere does it say that the minister has to cooperate with the provinces. The minister is not required to respect provincial jurisdictions.

• (1650)

However, clauses 20 and 21 are even more worrisome. Clause 20 provides that:

—the Minister may enter into agreements with a province— agencies of provinces, financial institutions and such other persons or bodies as the Minister considers appropriate.

This covers a vast range. As for clause 21, it provides that:

The Minister may authorize the Minister of Labour, the Commission or any other person—to exercise any power or perform any duty or function of the Minister.

It is obvious to the official opposition that, through these legislative provisions, the minister is getting the powers necessary to delegate, to whomever he considers appropriate, the management of his department's policies and programs. From now on, the minister will have the power to contract out, at his full discretion and with full impunity.

In this instance, the minister will have the power to enter into agreements with local or regional organizations, such as municipalities, and thus completely ignore the provinces.

The federal strategy taking shape with this bill will inescapably generate a clash between the already well established manpower network and that of the federal government, with the numerous programs and grants of all kinds that the government will provide throughout Quebec. That strategy is already being used by the federal government. The establishment of this superdepartment, along with the discretionary powers given to the minister, will only reinforce the centralizing position of the federal government.

Unfortunately, by acting in this way and rejecting Quebec's efforts and desire to be effective in the manpower sector, the federal government clearly shows a lack of integrity. By establishing national standards in that field, the government carries on its tradition of interfering in fields which are not under its jurisdiction.

Quebec and its dynamic forces denounce the federal will to further interfere in an area where the programs and initiatives must be defined by the Quebec government, based on the real needs of its population.

Mr. Mac Harb (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-96 does not in any way alter present federal and provincial powers. No matter how you look at the situation, there is absolutely no intrusion in spheres of provincial jurisdiction. This is forbidden by the bill itself.

The time has definitely come for all levels of government—federal, provincial, municipal—to rise above all jurisdictional quarrels and to start finding solutions for working together, pooling their resources and helping the people they serve.

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The Bloc would prefer to see us do nothing. On November 9, the member for Mercier served up a fine piece of jargon about jurisdictional issues. Perhaps she might like to come back down to earth and talk to us instead about the people concerned.

Perhaps she might talk to the millions of Quebecers who each year turn to the Department of Human Resources Development for help, to let them know which of them will be abandoned and unable to take advantage of the \$13.3 billion we spend in their province every year.

Perhaps the Bloc ought to talk to the 164,000 Quebec men and women we helped to find a job last year, to say, "We will not be helping you any longer". Perhaps the Bloc members could let us know which of the 44,789 students who found summer employment last summer we ought not to have helped.

Perhaps they could tell some 700,000 Quebecers that the federal government ought not to have spent close to three billion dollars for the social aid program they depend upon to live.

Perhaps the Bloc could explain jurisdictional issues to the half million unemployment insurance recipients there are in Quebec every month.

• (1655)

Perhaps they could tell us which of the 400,000 Quebecers who benefit from our employment programs and services we should abandon.

Perhaps they could explain to the 850,000 Quebec seniors why they should not receive their Canada pension plan and old age security benefits.

Perhaps they could explain to Quebecers why the federal government should not invest \$1.5 billion in their postsecondary education system.

While some members worry about the imaginary threat of federal power grabs, the Department of Human Resources Development is doing the work it has to do, with Quebecers and the Quebec government. Bloc members say, in the name of respect for provincial jurisdictions, that we should do nothing. I, however, say that, in the name of change, we should find ways of doing a better job.

It is not by erecting walls that we will do a better job. We need a better philosophy. We need the type of philosophy articulated by the minister when he talked about the need to empower the community and the people to make more choices.

What was the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup's answer? No. People should not be empowered to make more choices. This is not the Bloc's philosophy. We need the kind of philosophy articulated by the minister when he talked about new partnerships between the government and the private sector, between the government and the school boards, between the government and the provinces.

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What was the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup's answer? "No, we do not want to work together to bring about changes". The hon. members for Mercier and Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup made much of the fact that Bill C-96 allows us to conclude agreements with Quebec organizations for implementing our programs and delivering our services.

HRDC already has thousands of contracts and agreements with a myriad of Quebec organizations, including agreements with the Quebec government that are important to those people trying to return to the labour force. The existing legislation already allows us to negotiate such agreements. In 1994-95 alone, HRDC signed over 50,000 labour agreements in Quebec, representing a total of \$695 million in funding for programs and income support. This bill simply renews these agreements. Nothing has changed.

Is the Bloc telling us that we should stop investing millions of dollars to help laid-off workers, as we are now doing under the program for older worker adjustment? We could not do so without the power to enter into agreements with financial institutions and to buy the pension plans these workers need.

Does the Bloc mean to say that we should stop building new partnerships in Quebec, partnerships that help reduce duplication and overlap and improve service delivery to Quebecers? Because we would be unable to establish partnerships if we no longer had the means of ensuring their smooth running.

Let there be no mistake about it, the partnerships we enter into are indeed effective, and the basic concept of flexible federalism which supports these partnerships is also effective. Think about the many current agreements between HRDC and Quebec, including the interim Canada-Quebec agreement on certain manpower development initiatives, the welfare recipient accord implementation agreement, the Canada-Quebec agreement on employment in the agricultural sector and the agreement on the global transfer of funds to Quebec under the Canadian Student Loans Program, just to name a few.

• (1700)

These master agreements are effective and they have a decisive impact on the lives of thousands of Quebecers.

I submit that we should consolidate these partnerships, further decentralize powers and let Quebecers decide what programs and services are best suited to their needs.

Labour market programs and services are already amongst the most highly decentralized federal measures. They are implemented through a very wide network of local centres that have gained a reputation for reliability and co-operation within the communities they serve.

The government is currently decentralizing by delegating decision making authority back to the regions, all the way down to the local level, where it should rest. Over the past year, we have been leaders and made tremendous progress in this area. We completely redesigned the way the Department of Human Resources Development operates within communities in Quebec and across Canada.

The federal government also undertook to work together with the provinces to afford Canadians maximum flexibility with respect to services. Take for instance the Canada social transfer for health and social programs, which is to replace the Canada assistance plan. The purpose of the social transfer is to help provinces provide the social services and benefits of their choice, which they cannot do at present because of inflexible rules.

Obviously, this is good news. We are making real progress on the road to co-operation, while also preserving our integrity. We are making real progress by putting stable social programs in the hands of Quebecers.

Bill C-96 is about the pursuit of these achievements. It will allow us to continue to work together, to define the roles of the various levels of government, and to create links between them.

These initiatives are certainly better than the alleged usurpations of authority. It is high time we started creating links that will bring us closer together.

This is why we officially asked the Government of Quebec, as well as those of the other provinces, to co-operate with us to decentralize services. Several provinces have already joined us to discuss ways to define our respective roles and promote more effective co-operation. Consequently, I urge all members of the House to encourage Quebec to join us to meet that challenge.

The motion from the Bloc Québécois is certainly not a constructive move to bring about the type of changes that we all want. Rather, it is yet another obstacle on the way to the future.

What purpose would be served if the House did not go ahead with Bill C-96? None at all. It would not help the Bloc Québécois to proceed with the type of changes it claims to be seeking. It would not help Canadians to get the services which they expect and which they need.

It would only force the Department of Human Resources Development to continue to work in isolation, outside the simple and consistent framework provided by the bill. It would only maintain the administrative burden resulting from the lack of enabling legislation, since even the simplest operations, such as a transfer of personnel, can trigger a complex, long and costly process.

We can certainly do better than that.

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It goes without saying that co-operation is better than confrontation, discord and separation. We have to recognize that, at a time when we are trying to make the best of the resources of federalism, in which Quebecers have put their faith.

Co-operation is better than living in the past, as we are trying to redefine the role of partners, which must be fulfilled by governments, that is being partners with individuals and communities, but also partners among themselves.

Such is the philosophy, the vision underlying the establishment of the new Department of Human Resources Development.

Bill C-96 is the foundation of that department. With the approval and support of this House, we will pass this legislation and carry on our work.

• (1705)

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with great interest that I am intervening today in this House on Bill C-96, an act to legally establish the Department of Human Resources Development.

This is a long way from the agricultural portfolio for which I am usually critic for the official opposition, but the significance of the changes brought in by Bill C-96 requires me to speak out.

Application of this bill would be disastrous for Quebec, and I must defend the interests of my constituents first, but also those of all Quebecers.

What the government is preparing to do by going ahead with this bill is quite simply unacceptable. Bill C-96 is a tool with which the minister intends to broaden his powers once again, going over the heads of the provinces to do as he sees fit.

This bill enables the minister to ignore the provinces by establishing direct links with local organizations or individuals of his choice. What we are to understand from this is that, when the federal government speaks of decentralization, it is merely replacing the salaries of federal employees with grants to local organizations, thus retaining total control over program standards.

With Bill C-96 it is absolutely clear that the federal government does not intend to respect this area of provincial jurisdiction in any way. We in Quebec will not allow this to happen.

Once again, this reminds me that, only hours after the last referendum, the Prime Minister of this country, the leader of the party across the floor here, the Liberal Party, the one that started off promising no changes, nothing on the table, after the conference on the UN, said there was no question whatsoever of proposing any changes. And with that great declaration of love, paid for by all of us of course, that put any possibility of decentralization, any possibility of change, on ice.

This bill was already prepared, of course, but it is totally contradictory to what the Prime Minister of Canada had suggested.

In reaction to Bill C-96, a proposal was made by Claude Béland, with the support of Ghislain Dufour, a person who cannot be accused of defending the sovereigntist cause. As you are well aware, Mr. Speaker, Ghislain Dufour does not run with the sovereigntists, but with the party across the floor. He asked that the SQDM unanimously adopt a resolution demanding that the federal government transfer the budgets it allocates for manpower training to Quebec and that it not establish a structure parallel to the SQDM.

Henri Massé, secretary general of the FTQ, also pulled no punches in his attack against this federal plan. "We no longer want the federal government butting in where it has no business to be—that is, manpower—and going over our heads to implement a parallel structure".

Still in connection with the referendum campaign, Victoriaville, in the next riding to mine, Lotbinière, had an important visitor, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, representing a Montreal riding whose name escapes me.

• (1710)

I know that an Ontario resident has his riding in Montreal and happens to be our Minister of Foreign Affairs. He told about fifteen people at a public meeting in Victoriaville that it was Quebec's fault if there was any duplication. Now really! Sure, that is what he said. He did not realize it but there was a reporter—he thought he was alone, no media—who only had a tape recorder and the next day they played his tape of the minister's speech on the radio news.

It really takes colossal nerve and then some, to go to Victoriaville, in the riding of Lotbinière, and say it was Quebec's fault if there is any duplication. Now that is a clear case. Let them stay home. We do not want them. The Liberal predecessor of the PQ government, under Robert Bourassa and then Daniel Johnson, unanimously adopted a resolution asking this government to stay out of manpower training. They just do not understand. Two structures and deficit upon deficit.

In fact, one of my constituents from East Broughton, Clément Paré—I asked his permission to mention his name—told me: "People do not understand. It is like a well at one end of my property. I take a pipe to bring the water from the well down to the bottom of my property. The further I get from the well, the more likely I am to get leaks, and I also lose pressure". It does not take a university degree to understand that.

He said: "It is the same in Ottawa. You pay taxes to Ottawa, the money goes from East Broughton and Frontenac and is sent to Ottawa, some of it gets lost on the way, and then it goes back down to East Broughton and to Thetford, and some more gets lost, and we are left with the crumbs". That is the kind of system we have: duplication throughout.

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Mr. Speaker, I told you the story about the well and I saw your knowing smile. This is a very good example. I think my constituent, Mr. Paré, has very good judgment, and that is probably why he voted and worked for the Yes side in his beautiful municipality of East Broughton.

As I left my riding this morning, I stopped in Weedon to get some gas, and I noticed the Pepsi-Cola vending machine had been struck by a car. So I told the garage owner: "Too bad about that. Your Pepsi machine is broken already". He replied: "Yeah, sure, it was not big enough". In fact, it was huge, standing there outside the garage. Actually he was joking when he said: "It was not big enough". I said: "Too bad, it will cost you a few dollars to repair that". He said: "Oh, that does not matter". So I said: "How come?" He said: "It does not belong to me, it belongs to Pepsi". You see, Mr. Speaker? It belongs to Pepsi, so it does not matter.

People often react the same way to Ottawa. When I was the mayor of a small municipality, I remember we spread eight inches of nice new gravel on the sixth line. My constituents who were, of course, a small group, came to complain that the municipality was spending too much money. I said: "No problem. You are not paying for it". They said: "How come?" I said: "The money comes from the province". They said: "So you got a grant, Mr. Mayor?" I said: "Yes. I got it through our MNA". They said: "Great, the money comes from Quebec! It is not our money".

So you get the same reasoning when it comes from the federal government. When it comes from the federal government, it comes from somewhere on this planet, nobody knows exactly where. My point is that when the Minister of Foreign Affairs, this Ontarian who represents a Montreal riding, when he said in Victoriaville that if there was any duplication, it was not the federal government but the Quebec government, it really takes a colossal nerve.

• (1715)

The board of directors of the Canadian Institute of Adult Education has also condemned the Liberal government's initiative. The CIAE strongly objects to Bill C-96. The Bloc Québécois is not alone in its opposition to Bill C-96. With this bill, the federal government has demonstrated a flagrant lack of respect for the aspirations of the provinces and especially those of Quebec in matters of education, manpower training and development.

With all these agencies and many others that are opposed to Bill C-96, the government of Quebec condemns outright the federal Liberal government's insistence on going ahead without considering the needs expressed by the groups concerned. Quebec Employment Minister Louise Harel reacted as follows to Bill C-96: "This is an outright refusal on the part of Ottawa to

consider the consensus that exists in Quebec and was repeatedly expressed by the previous administrations of Mr. Bourassa and Mr. Johnson and by the present government headed by Mr. Parizeau, a consensus on the need to patriate all programs and budgets for manpower adjustment to Quebec".

In concluding, I want to point out that the Quebec Liberal Party, when it was in power, demanded that the federal government withdraw from this provincial jurisdiction.

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the debate, at second reading, on Bill C-96 establishing the Department of Human Resources Development and amending certain acts, which was tabled in June.

This bill provides, essentially, for the administrative reorganization of the department and brings together sections and services from the former Departments of Employment and Immigration, Health and Welfare, Labour and the Secretary of State.

It reaffirms the federal government's involvement in manpower training, employment and social programs.

It contains no indication of the federal government's intention to respect provincial jurisdictions.

Reaction in Quebec to Bill C-96 was therefore negative. The FTQ cautioned the federal government about its latest attempt to intervene in areas of Quebec's jurisdiction in manpower development. The federation's general secretary, Henri Massé, indicated they had had enough of Ottawa's involvement in this area and its bypassing the province to set up parallel structures. He said that Quebec had established a special partnership in the area with the Société québécoise de développement de la main-d'oeuvre or SQDM. He added that there was a strong consensus favouring Quebec's becoming solely responsible for policies on manpower adjustment and occupational training within its borders and its acquiring the funds the federal government allocates to these programs.

The Conseil du patronat agrees with the unions on this, something that does not happen very often. Even Robert Bourassa's Liberal government opposed a similar move by Ottawa in 1991.

The SQDM has asked the federal government to keep out of areas of Quebec's jurisdiction in manpower development.

• (1720)

The board of directors, on a motion by Claude Béland, the president of the Mouvement Desjardins, seconded by Ghislain Dufour, the president of the Conseil du patronat, unanimously adopted a resolution to call on the federal government to transfer to Quebec the funds it allocates to manpower training. Furthermore, they asked Ottawa not to establish any structure parallel to the SQDM.

The Quebec minister of employment, Louise Harel, denounced the bill in the following terms: "This federal initiative amounts to a flat rejection of the unanimous Quebec consensus, expressed, both under the previous administration and under the current one, on the need for Quebec to regain control over all manpower adjustment measures, including the related budgets".

I take this opportunity to again protest the upcoming closure of the Canada Employment Centre on rue Papineau, which serves the population of my riding of Bourassa in North Montreal, where the real rate of unemployment is nearly 30 per cent. It is a model CEC, which provides top quality service to a large clientele. Unions, business, community groups, users and my constituents vigorously oppose its closure.

Furthermore, the federal government has decided to close 34 other Canada Employment Centres in an effort to cut expenses, thus resulting in the layoff of nearly 1,000 public servants. Computerized job kiosks will become more prevalent.

The unemployment rate remains a very high 11.2 per cent in Quebec. The jobless have an urgent need for support services to which only 10 per cent of them had access last year. Instead of helping people who are looking for a job, the government makes it more difficult for them to have access to information and counselling services.

One must add that these closures are all the more difficult to explain as the unemployment insurance fund, which is entirely financed by employee and employer contributions, has a five billion dollar surplus.

Last September, the unemployment rate in Canada increased from 9.2 to 9.4 per cent. In Quebec, it went from 10.9 to 11.2 per cent. In British Columbia, it climbed from 8.8 to 9 per cent. Last year, cuts in the federal and provincial public sector resulted in the loss of 86,000 jobs. In October only, 3,000 civil servants lost their jobs. And yet, Bill C-96 contains no concrete measure to create jobs.

If you allow me, I will take this opportunity to ask the minister of Human Resources Development to speed up the negotiations with regards to a social security agreement between Canada and Chile. In 1990, with the return of a democratic regime in Chile, as president of the Chilean council in Quebec, I had asked for negotiations to start on this issue.

As a member of Parliament, I wrote the minister on several occasions. It was only at the end of 1994 that representatives of both countries met for the first time in Santiago. The second meeting took place last June, in Quebec City and in Ottawa. The Chilean community in Quebec and Canada would like this agreement to be signed without delay; it will benefit many

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Canadian and Chilean citizens who have lived and worked in both countries.

• (1725)

I would also like to congratulate the FTQ and the CSN which signed a solidarity and co-operation agreement that on November 13 will create a partnership between these two unions. This agreement confirms their common will to enhance the impact and the influence of organized labour in our society.

I think that it is an historical agreement and an extraordinary measure bringing together two Quebec labour unions which will jointly face future challenges, including employment and the protection of existing social benefits.

The next FTQ convention will be held from November 27 to December 1st in Montreal, where the theme will be to fight unemployment and prepare the future.

The job issue will be the focus of all discussions because the streamlining, restructuring, voluntary termination of employment and early retirement programs are continuing and even increasing, in both the public and the private sectors.

I wish my FTQ friends an excellent convention.

Given the cuts in unemployment insurance, thousands of unemployed people will have no other choice but to ask for welfare, but welfare benefits have also been cut over the past few years. Recently, Ontario decreased welfare benefits by 21.6 per cent. It is unfair and cruel for Canada to fight the deficit at the expense of the have-nots of our society. I denounce the Liberal government's irresponsibility and lack of action in the fight against poverty.

In closing, I would like to say that I approve the amendment to Bill C-96 presented by the member for Mercier.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion 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:

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The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

I have been requested by the government whip and the opposition whip to defer the division until tomorrow, immediately after Government Orders.

* * *

[*English*]

AUDITOR GENERAL ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-83, an act to amend the Auditor General Act, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: There is only one motion in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for report stage of Bill C-83, an act to amend the Auditor General Act.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 1 will be debated and voted on.

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-83, in Clause 5, be amended by deleting lines 1 to 23, on page 3.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I want to address the motion that we have tabled, an amendment to remove the amendment tabled by the Liberals during the committee meeting of November 2, which amended Bill C-83, in clause 5, by adding section 21.1, from (a) to (h).

• (1730)

I note that this bill was given a fairly bumpy ride in committee, if I may say so. The Liberals seemed to be caught between a rock and a hard place, to be torn between public servants and politicians. First, members opposite moved and voted on their own amendments, then cancelled them and moved and voted on new ones. You will agree that this is confusion at its best.

The amendment our friends opposite, our friends of confusion and discord, are proposing seems to be a big catchall of environmental principles that constitutes a dangerous foot in the door of provincial jurisdiction.

A careful reading of section 21.1 and its points (a) to (h) leads us to believe that the Liberals may have wanted to better explain the work of the future commissioner of environment and sustainable development. If that was their objective, they are way off the mark. Instead of presenting precise objectives in support of the future commissioner, the Liberals propose to give him a series of broad environmental principles that, ultimately, will not make his task any easier. Even worse, these broad principles will extend his mandate to a point where he will be unable to carry it out.

However, this section is, once again, a case of the federal government wanting to interfere in provincial jurisdiction.

Indeed, through this section, the commissioner will have the mandate to monitor the progress of departments according to sustainable development criteria that are clearly the responsibility of the provinces.

Thus, under section 21.1, a department encroaching on an area of provincial jurisdiction will get a positive appraisal from the federal commissioner. There was certainly nothing else to be expected from the Liberal committee members. True to themselves, they repeated the same arguments they had put forward when we were studying the CEPA, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the goal of Liberal committee members is to extend as much as possible federal jurisdiction on environmental matters and to use the federal government's spending power as much as possible, although that attitude is viewed as an aggression by the provinces. Committee members constantly refer to great green principles such as sustainable development, bio-diversity or systemic approach, to promote an increased federal presence in the area of environment.

Of course air pollution is not restricted to one region. Of course water knows no boundary. Of course species move around. We all know this, but this is no reason for the federal government to become or set out to become the sole keeper of the environment, especially since the provinces have made great strides in that area and have taken their responsibilities. The same certainly cannot be said for the federal government, something the Liberals should recognize.

The federal government has not made rapid progress and has failed on many environmental issues under its jurisdiction. Why then should we give it more responsibility, when it does not even carry out its primary duties? Why do they absolutely insist that the federal should interfere in areas of provincial jurisdiction against the provinces' will? There lies the failing, if I may say, of our dear Liberals. The Liberals have some great environmentalists such as the hon. member for Davenport and the hon. member for Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis, who, much to their credit, are also great champions of Canada. That is exactly where their weakness lies: they are fervent federalists.

Their vision of the environment is clearly influenced, not to say marred by their natural federalist tendencies. That is why they tie everything that has to do with the environment to the federal system. This kind of attitude is alarming and dangerous for the environment because the farther one is from the field, the harder it is to find a solution. It is obvious that the provinces are closer to the environment and are therefore in a better position to deal with environmental issues.

Let us have a look at the concept of sustainable development to be found in the bill, a concept the Liberals use a great deal to crowd out the provinces. Sustainable development is an ideal all societies should strive for.

• (1735)

What is at stake here is not the validity of this principle, but the way it is implemented. The Bloc Québécois not only recognizes the validity of the principle, but also the need, not to say the urgent need, to translate it into concrete measures.

We believe this principle should be implemented by the provinces because they have the overriding jurisdiction over the environment. It is up to the provinces to promote the conditions needed for sustainable development.

In a federal system, the principle of sustainable development takes on a new dimension, that is respect for jurisdictions and areas of authority. Obviously, the squandering of both financial and human resources, due to a double structure, is in no way sustainable. However, pursuant to their amendment, the Liberals are asking the commissioner to monitor the progress of the various departments, by taking into consideration criteria which clearly come under areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction.

Let us look at paragraph (a) of the clause dealing with the integration of the environment and the economy. In fact, this part of the commissioner's mandate can turn into subsidy programs for suppliers or targeted purchase programs, for example.

Using its spending power, the federal government has often launched programs or projects in areas of provincial jurisdiction. In many cases, after a few months, the federal government withdrew and let the provinces, including the province of Quebec, foot the bill and go through the ordeal of quashing these projects.

This way of doing things can in no way help to protect the environment. Short term and paltry measures are to be excluded.

Paragraph (b) talks about protecting the health of Canadians. Health is an area of exclusive provincial jurisdiction. It is the responsibility of the provinces to prevent health risks due to water and air pollution or soil depletion.

Again, duplication of standards and inconsistency with the provincial standards are inefficient and costly for the governments as well as for the private sector and the public. The federal government has again opened the door to new quarrels concerning the division of powers.

Given the rather firm stand taken by the provinces on this issue, it is hard to understand the attitude of the federal government. That proves again that the Liberals do not understand a thing about the repeated demands for change made by Canadians and Quebecers.

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We are anxious to see the changes promised by the other side on October 30. It will probably, in the end, be another case of "Much ado about nothing". I am fair-play and ready to wait and see. All the more so since the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs seems to be quite a miracle worker.

Paragraph (c) of clause 21.1 has to do with protecting ecosystems. As owners and managers of the land, the provinces have jurisdiction over ecosystems. As an example, to assume this role, Quebec created 17 national parks. It also gave itself the legislative tools to preserve biodiversity.

Provinces which have not yet done so have the responsibility to act and pay heed to the demands of the world community which, for example, made some criticisms in the OECD report concerning Canada's environmental performance when it comes to protecting ecosystems.

Those are some of the items that make us doubt the will of the federal government to respect the provinces.

Clause 21.1 of Bill C-83 is rather to the contrary. In mentioning vast environmental concepts the federal government shows its intention to interfere further in areas of provincial jurisdiction.

The federal environmental record is nothing to cheer about.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, I want to respond to what the hon. member for Laurentides said and to the amendment she moved to the bill.

I should read the section the hon. member wishes to remove from the bill.

• (1740)

It is section 21.1, which reads as follows:

21.1 The purpose of the Commissioner is to provide sustainable development monitoring and reporting on the progress of category I departments towards sustainable development, which is a continually evolving concept based on the integration of social, economic and environmental concerns, and which may be achieved by, among other things,

- (a) the integration of the environment and the economy;
- (b) protecting the health of Canadians;
- (c) protecting ecosystems;
- (d) meeting international obligations;
- (e) promoting equity;
- (f) an integrated approach to planning and making decisions that takes into account the environmental and natural resource costs of different economic options and the economic costs of different environmental and natural resource options;
- (g) preventing pollution; and
- (h) respect for nature and the needs of future generations.

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I find it really surprising that the hon. member for Laurentides has decided to move such an amendment to the bill at this time.

[*English*]

She knows perfectly well that her leader, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean, was a minister of the environment and supported all these same principles. She comes into the House today while he is occupied considering his future and proposes an amendment that undermines the whole concept of sustainable development and a way of treating it in Canada.

I am absolutely astounded that the hon. member for Laurentides is getting away with this. I suspect that if the Leader of the Opposition were in Ottawa he would hound his colleague, the member for Laurentides, for proposing such an amendment as this. She has tried to claim this amendment is one that affects provincial jurisdiction but on its face it most patently does not.

It says that the commissioner will provide sustainable development monitoring and reporting on the progress government departments are making. How can government departments be making progress on things that are not within their jurisdiction? They must deal with matters within their own jurisdiction. If they were dealing with matters beyond their jurisdiction, they would be doing something unlawful. Everyone knows that government departments do not do things that are unlawful, at least not very often.

The hon. member who is making these claims is saying that government departments are in fact dabbling in provincial matters all the time and therefore this section is bad because the commissioner in his work might impinge on provincial jurisdiction if the government department was doing so and he was reporting on it. Presumably if he thought the federal government department was overstepping its bounds he would report that.

After all, he is an officer who has some authority, according to my reading of this bill. I do not claim to be terribly familiar with it. I was not on the committee where the amendment was brought in but I understand the commissioner is given certain authority, which in my view is very sensible authority, to deal with a whole host of issues, all of which are of great concern to Canadians. Every one of the items I read from the list is of concern to Canadians.

Yet we have a situation where a party headed by a former minister of the environment who supported all of these things when he was minister—

Mr. Boudria: He invented some of them.

Mr. Milliken: As the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell has said so ably, he invented some of them and I am sure his memory of these things is better than mine. The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean invented these very concepts

and now one of his henchmen comes into the House and tries to undermine the whole process.

I am shocked. I am sure every member of the House is shocked at the duplicity of the opposition in saying one thing through its leader when he was minister of the environment and saying another now through the hon. member for Laurentides with this frankly ridiculous amendment.

I see even the members of the Reform Party are smirking. They must agree this amendment is pretty wild. It is not something they would support. I am sure they support the bill. I am sure they realize the bill is in the best interests of all Canadians as I am sure the Leader of the Opposition does. After all he knows more about environmental issues than I do. He was minister for several years. I know it was with a government that showed a callous disregard for the environment but he had a reputation for doing the best he could in difficult circumstances.

Some say that perhaps—

Ms. Augustine: —he should have remained.

• (1745)

Mr. Milliken: Some say that perhaps he should have remained as Minister of the Environment, but he did not. On the other hand, I understand there were often times when he did not get a lot of support from his cabinet colleagues on environmental matters he raised. He may have gone out on a limb and done it in an appropriate way from time to time, but I do not know. I was not in the cabinet. It is not something I could easily comment on, but we certainly can see the effect of his environmental crusade. The hon. member for Laurentides has wilfully abandoned all the principles her leader stood for when he was Minister of the Environment.

As I said, I find myself almost at a loss for words in trying to understand the amendment she has put forward today. I can only assume that the Leader of the Opposition did not see this amendment before it was tabled. If he had, he would have blown a gasket, in common parlance, and that would have been the end of the amendment.

I can only say that I hope there is a vote on this. I want to see the Leader of the Opposition come into the House and vote against the principles he so resolutely stood for when he was Minister of the Environment.

He may have forgotten some of the things he learned when he was minister.

An hon. member: Remind him.

Mr. Milliken: I am trying to remind him by this speech. I hope he reads it very carefully and I am sure the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell would agree.

Sometimes remembrance is important in these things. The Minister of the Environment always learns something about his or her portfolio when occupying that portfolio. When the member for Lac-Saint-Jean was a minister, I remember him standing and answering questions, defending the government's environmental policy in the House. Now we see his party trying to undo the work of a committee of the House and the work of the present very competent Minister of the Environment, the hon. member for Hamilton East.

The hon. member for Laurentides is pleading with me to continue this eulogy. I certainly could do that. She knows what a competent minister we have. The fact is all these ministers have stood for this kind of principle and they have all adopted the principle of sustainable development as the cornerstone of Canada's environmental policy.

The hon. member for Davenport, who I am sure will be speaking on this amendment in a few moments, can remind us of how long this principle of sustainable development has been a cornerstone of Canadian environmental policy. It is reflected in this bill. Here is an opportunity to have an officer with some authority to report on government departments on how they are doing on specific concerns. It was a great list.

The hon. member for Laurentides wants to throw the whole thing out of the bill. I do not understand it. Of course, the government will oppose this change. It is wrong headed. It is contrary to principles espoused by the hon. member's own leader. It is contrary to the principles that were agreed on in the committee which studied the bill. I am shocked to hear at this late date that the hon. member for Laurentides would take it in her own capacity to move an amendment to the bill that would undermine what I think is the view of the vast majority of Canadians and the vast majority of members of the House.

I want to indicate the government's strong opposition to the amendment. We will support the bill and the amendments that were made in committee. We feel the committee's amendments were entirely appropriate and the bill as it stands is a good bill.

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the environment is an issue very dear to Canadians. We all want to do what we can to preserve this great country. Every day we ask ourselves: What can we do to make certain that the environment can be preserved and saved?

The member for Laurentides is a great believer in environmental issues yet I have to question her amendment to Bill C-83. The bill is not a solid, forthright piece of legislation. There is no doubt about that. However, removing the part in clause 5 dealing with sustainable development makes a weak bill all that much weaker. It removes benchmark measurements on reporting.

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The Reform Party has been consistent in its position on Bill C-83. The bill would be much more effective if the role of the environmental commissioner were completely taken over by the auditor general. We know that the commissioner will be an employee of the Office of the Auditor General. The commissioner will have to pass everything by the auditor general before it can be released to Parliament and the public.

● (1750)

Bill C-83 makes the government look as if it is serious about cleaning up the environmental practices of federal departments. However, the real question is whether or not this commissioner is going to really make a difference. The role is a strange one. The commissioner would monitor and report annually to Parliament through the auditor general on the extent to which federal government departments had met sustainable development objectives and implemented the actions set out in their sustainable development strategies.

When the auditor general came before the environment committee, he stated quite clearly that there would not be a responsibility given to the commissioner that could not be performed by the auditor general himself. Therefore, Reform sees the role of the commissioner as outlined in this bill to simply be another level of bureaucracy, all of course at the expense of the taxpayers. It is a long envisaged proposal now coming in the form for the sake of appearances without any real substance.

Let us not forget the Minister of the Environment stated that one objective of the commissioner would be to look into waste reduction. Therefore, if the auditor general's office took over more responsibility in terms of environmental issues would this not be cost effective as well as a reduction of wastefulness?

The environment minister has truly convinced herself that Bill C-83 will be a solution to some of Canada's environmental chaos. The minister believes that when the commissioner reports to Parliament, federal departments are going to listen and then act. However, if they do not act now to the regular auditor general's reports, why would they act on a commissioner's report on environmental issues?

Let me illustrate the point. The report from the auditor general in May 1995 looked at Environment Canada and the management of hazardous wastes. The auditor general reported that there was a lack of effort on Environment Canada's part to control the storage and destruction of PCB wastes. The control of PCBs is under the regulation of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act in order to minimize risk to human health and the environment.

The auditor general stated: "On March 31, 1995, Environment Canada terminated its leadership role in the management of PCB destruction without devising a plan to guide federal departments to further consolidate PCB wastes, reduce their volume and develop action plans for their destruction. This

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could seriously impede the government's ability to ensure safe and cost effective storage and timely destruction of federal PCB wastes".

The control of PCB wastes is crucial for true sustainable development. Unfortunately, the environment minister has not followed through with the auditor general's recommendations. Therefore, my question is: When and if the environmental commissioner is put into place, what will he or she say that will be any more convincing than what has already been said by the auditor general himself? The answer is nothing. The section of the bill adjusted by the Bloc amendment before us makes the bill ever more unfocused and vague and does not enhance any function at all.

Canadians will soon realize that the commissioner is just a smoke screen created by the environment minister to make it appear that she is working to clean up the environment. She has done little throughout her tenure as minister that accomplishes an improvement to our environment. Her talk is shrill and her actions are sometimes expensive; the end result being an increased deficit with little to no environmental improvements.

My friend from the Bloc Quebecois has an amendment at this stage that deletes what I believe to be the only clear specification in this legislation. While I do not agree that we should have a separate commissioner under the auspices of the auditor general, I do believe that if there has to be one it is essential that the person provide the best report possible on all sustainable development strategies to all category one departments.

In this time of budget restraint and fiscal responsibility, I am bothered that the minister has chosen to spend the taxpayers' hard earned money with such a redundant position merely to add prestige and political significance to environmental issues. Such redundant spending is common among most Liberal ministers. It will only be a matter of time before Canadians come to the realization that to achieve a new and more environmentally sustainable Canada a different party must come to government.

In closing, I cannot support the Bloc amendment. Bloc members continue to whine about preserving provincial jurisdiction while at the same time the Quebec provincial government creates overlap after overlap. The fiscal consequences for the poor people of Quebec due to the separatists' colorations and manipulations of public policy are very serious. The amendment adds nothing positive or helpful to a poor bill and therefore I cannot support it.

• (1755)

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to put this amendment into perspective, I would like to pay homage to the hon. member for Frontenac and the hon. member for Terrebonne. They participated in the work of the committee which produced a report over a year ago proposing the measures

contained in this bill, namely the creation of the position of the commissioner for the environment and sustainable development.

Both the hon. member for Terrebonne and the hon. member for Frontenac conducted themselves in committee in a very constructive manner. In the conclusion of their dissenting report, they outlined three principles. One of the three principles reads as follows: "It is imperative that the economic and environmental aspects of federal government decisions and policies be intrinsically linked". We fully agree with that principle. We applaud the hon. member for Terrebonne and the hon. member for Frontenac for having concisely put forward such an important concept.

However, we have enormous difficulties in reconciling the political direction which was taken by the hon. member for Laurentides and her colleagues. They are running in conflicting directions. They are not reinforcing each other. The motion of the hon. member for Laurentides which is now before us dismantles and ridicules the concluding principle I have just read.

That is what the amendment the committee proposes, which the hon. member for Laurentides wants to wipe out, intends to do. It intends to intrinsically link the environmental and economic aspects of government decisions. The hon. member for Laurentides is proposing to wipe out this important concept.

This is a very sad moment. The amendment by the hon. member for Laurentides means that her party is not in favour of protecting the health of Canadians. This is what her amendment would achieve.

Her party is against the integration of the environment and the economy. This is what the amendment would achieve. Her party is against the protection of the ecosystem. That is what her amendment proposes. Her party is against meeting international obligations. That is what her amendment would achieve. Her party is against the promotion of equity. That means that her party is in favour of inequities. That is the effect of her amendment.

Her party is against an integrated approach to planning and making decisions which take into account the environmental and natural resource cost of different economic actions. That is what her amendment would achieve.

Her amendment would eliminate the principle of pollution prevention. Does that mean the Bloc Quebecois is against pollution prevention? That is the net effect of the amendment. The net effect of the amendment is to delete pollution prevention from the bill. The net effect of the amendment is to eliminate the concept of protecting the health of the public, of protecting the ecosystems and of meeting international obligations.

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Finally, the net effect of the amendment is to eliminate the respectful nature and the needs of future generations. In other words, the effect of the amendment is to say that the Bloc Québécois rejects the Brundtland report and the definition of sustainable development. As the parliamentary secretary to the House leader already asked, is that the direction the member for Laurentides has received from her leader? Is that the new political direction of the Bloc Québécois? Or, is it perhaps that the member for Laurentides badly needs a psychiatrist to remove her obsession with federal-provincial relations, her obsession with seeing under every chair a federal monster, a federal presence which may disrupt the quiet life of the people in her riding?

• (1800)

It is absurd to say that the amendment by the Bloc Québécois reflects the majority of thought of members of her party for whom I have the highest respect. I do not recognize in the amendment the preachings, the interventions or the thoughtful examination I have experienced when the member for Frontenac and the member for Terrebonne were members of the committee. This is diametrically opposed to what I have heard from that party until now.

I find it unbelievable that we should be debating an amendment of this nature which runs counter to everything the leader of the Bloc Québécois said when he was Minister of the Environment and what his colleagues have said until now in support of sustainable development. There is no federal plot, I reassure the member for Laurentides. There is no fear to be had for jurisdiction because Canadians know very well that the environment does not know boundaries.

Perhaps the member for Laurentides forgets there would not be any clean up of substance of the St. Lawrence River were it not for the federal government, were it not for the intervention in the Great Lakes of the federal government in co-operation with Washington. We know very well the source of pollution in the St. Lawrence River. It emanates and originates from activities on both sides of the border well upstream. Therefore the role of the federal government in cleaning up the St. Lawrence River is of paramount importance.

The geopolitical law of gravity of water whereby rivers have to flow in a certain direction has escaped the attention of the member for Laurentides. She is more preoccupied with the federal presence than with the health of the people in Montreal and downstream. This is the obsession of the member for Laurentides when analysing and considering bills of an environmental nature.

The member for Laurentides is worried about the waste of two levels. If we do not have a federal level concerned with international relations, who will do it? We will have a Canada for the next thousand years and therefore we need a federal

presence in implementing this type of legislation. Whether or not the member for Laurentides likes it, that is the political reality of today, tomorrow, the day after and for many generations to come, as the vote proved on October 30.

Turning to the Reform Party members, they seem to be engaging in a very fashionable game in the House. Unfortunately they are copying the member for Laurentides. They like to attack the minister. They find this is the greatest sport since the invention of soccer. We have news for them. The minister is the best we ever had considering the work she has done under most difficult political and economic circumstances.

Whether or not the Reform Party likes it, the minister has managed to promote harmonization on federal-provincial relations on the environment. This minister has managed to bring about an agreement on harmonization with British Columbia. It is quite interesting that the criticism is from members from British Columbia. The minister achieved that. The minister has produced the bill dealing with a commissioner for sustainable development, keeping a red book promise. The minister has engaged the Americans in consultations on the Great Lakes for the sake of the health of Canadians who live in that basin, namely the health of Canadians whose livelihood and well-being depend on the fresh water of that fantastic system.

• (1805)

The minister brought in and has before the House legislation on manganese, legislation that would remove MMT from gasoline, legislation that is opposed tooth and nail by the Reform Party on behalf of the Ethyl corporation which seems to have quite an influence on its way of thinking. We have a Minister of the Environment who has the courage to bring legislation before the House that hopefully will be approved very soon.

This is not the end of the list. The minister will provide a governmental reply to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act report of the committee of the House, which is probably one of the most difficult tasks ever faced by an environment minister who has to be concerned at the same time with the environment, with health and with the economy. That is not a minor feat for any environment minister.

Members of the Reform Party cannot appreciate that. It is only an indication of their political naivete or their political inability to understand the complexity of issues and to appreciate the complex role faced today by the Minister of the Environment. That is not all.

The Minister of the Environment has managed to put on the table the extremely difficult issue of climate change and the necessity of reducing carbon dioxide emissions in the country, probably one of the most difficult issues to handle.

It may well be it has escaped members of the Reform Party that there is a climate change issue surrounding us, one that is at least accepted and talked about by the scientific community. The Minister of the Environment has managed to put the issue on the

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agenda and is right now in Edmonton discussing the matter with her provincial colleagues.

The Minister of the Environment has put on the agenda the question of the protection of endangered species, a matter which to my greatest disappointment does not have the support of the Reform Party. As recently as this morning the Reform Party opposed proposed legislation not by the minister but by a backbencher.

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for more than a year, I had the opportunity to sit on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development chaired by the member for Davenport. I have to admit that, up until about ten minutes ago, I admired the member for Davenport. Unfortunately, I discovered this afternoon, in the speech he just made, that he had a total lack of respect for my colleague, the member for Laurentides, especially when he asked her if she needed a psychiatrist.

• (1810)

It was a low blow and I think the member for Davenport should apologize. He really went a little too far. During all the time that I sat with him on the environment committee, I always noticed his honesty and his judgment as a politician, particularly in environmental matters.

It is therefore with great pleasure that I stand in this House to speak to Bill C-83, an Act to amend the Auditor General Act.

It has been a few weeks since we last talked about this bill in the House, so I should take a few minutes to review its contents briefly.

Bill C-83 amends the Auditor General Act to achieve five objectives, which I will sum up quickly.

Firstly, to ensure that environmental considerations in the context of sustainable development are taken into account in the Auditor General's reports to the House of Commons.

Secondly, to require the appointment of a Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development.

Thirdly, to impose requirements for responding to petitions received by the Auditor General about environmental matters under federal jurisdiction—and I repeat it for the benefit of the member for Davenport—under federal jurisdiction in the context of sustainable development.

Fourthly, to require monitoring and reporting to the House of Commons on petitions and the extent to which departments have met the objectives, and implemented the plans, set out in their sustainable development strategies.

And finally, fifthly, to require that departmental sustainable development strategies be prepared and tabled in the House of Commons.

On a technical level, the adoption of this bill will require the implementation of a number of things. First of all, there must be an appropriate definition of sustainable development. I will come back to that later.

But I will say to the hon. member for Davenport, who got carried away a few minutes ago, that the government has been in power for two years. A sunken barge has sat in the waters between Prince Edward Island and the Magdalen Islands for 25 years now. At the end of June, we learned quite by accident that there was an important quantity of PCB tainted oil in the sunken ship. The barge has been there for 25 years and the Liberals were in power during most of that period, except for the nine years of the Mulroney government and the nine months of the Clark government.

It is easy to boast about sustainable development, but that barge was supposed to be refloated this year and nothing has been done. They chose the wrong solution because it was cheaper, but I can guarantee you, as does my colleague for Davenport, that, once the *Irving Whale* is refloated, when we get the bill the cost will be more than if we had chosen the better solution to begin with.

Sustainable development, what a trendy expression. It is useful if one wants to get reelected, of course. But why did they not apply it in the two years since their election? Of course, the Liberal Party set up a fine committee—the Easter-Gagnon committee—that went to the Magdalen Islands and arrogantly told the people to step aside, that they would refloat the barge.

• (1815)

We can refloat it, they claimed. Give us 12 months, and we will refloat it. How much did it cost us to have the Gagnon-Easter mini caucus go around making political points?

The member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine learned his lesson with the last referendum. The islands' voters showed the member who had promised to resign if the no lost in Quebec where the door was.

Mr. Robichaud: He won in his riding.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): He was scared. He was so scared on the evening of October 30 that he was shaking all over. "I should never have made empty promises".

Mr. Robichaud: He won in his riding.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): He won in Bonaventure, but he lost in the Magdalen Islands. Close to 60 per cent of the voters on the Islands voted against him. There is one Liberal member of the Quebec legislature, Georges Farrah, however, and one in

Ottawa, who did not even get 40 per cent. That really requires a colossal amount of nerve.

I was teaching ecology at the Disraeli comprehensive high school when several million dollars were spent there. The Liberals were not in government at the time, of course; it was the member for Sherbrooke who was acting as Minister of the Environment. He had organized a television show in prime time Sunday evening, coast to coast, paid for by the taxpayers, on the Green Plan, six billion dollars over five years. That turned into five billion over six years, and got watered down and watered down, until today no trace remains. Nobody knows what became of the Green Plan.

In the schools we showed videotapes of it, which provided our young students with some glimmer of hope about the environment and sustainable development. Now it has been junked. In the waste basket. And that is where the environmental commissioner is headed.

The intent is to water the thing down so much that it will end up in the waste basket and thousands, hundreds of millions of dollars will be spent and—

I would like to tell you about an example given by a friend from East Broughton, who said to me on the day after the referendum “It is a bit like bringing water from several kilometres away. You start with a big pipe and you end up with a tiny one at the other end; there is surface tension, leaks here and there along the way”. We know what it is like in the federal pipeline system with its leaks here and there, you get to the end of the pipe and there is hardly any water coming out, no water pressure, nothing left. Everything got lost along the way.

It is the same thing we say to you, my friends across the way, “Mind your own business, but mind it well. And when something is not your business, not within your area of jurisdiction, then butt out and stay where you belong”.

It is true we all breathe the same air, we all drink the same water and we all walk on the same ground. When you came to Montreal on October 27 to tell us you loved us, at taxpayers’ expense, of course, we let you breathe our air. When we come to Ontario, you let us breathe your air.

This is how we want to live. So stay home, and when it is a provincial matter for Quebec, mind your own business. We are quite capable of minding our own business, better than you are.

An agreement was signed with the United States to develop the Great Lakes. It is working out fine. We get a report every two years. That is fine. It is having no effect on the United States’ environment. You are not going to meddle with American environmental jurisdictions, why do you want to meddle with Quebec’s? We will not tolerate it. That time is long gone.

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When your jurisdictions are involved, look after them, but keep out of our space.

Having said that, I again call for an apology from the hon. member for Davenport, who showed disrespect for my colleague for Lotbinière.

• (1820)

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 1. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

Some hon. members: On division.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion negatived on division.

(Motion No. 1 negatived.)

Hon. Fernand Robichaud (for the Minister of the Environment) moved that Bill C-83, as amended, be concurred in.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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 yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

And the division bells having rung:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the division on the question now before the House stands deferred until Tuesday, November 21, at the end of government business, at which time the bells to call in the members will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

*Adjournment Debate***ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS***[English]*

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

EDUCATION

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a little while ago I asked the Minister of Human Resources Development what he thought of Statistics Canada reports that Canadians with lower levels of education are having serious difficulties in the workforce. How did he see the serious, significant reduction of funds to post-secondary education and how did he think it would affect the generation of opportunities Canadians need?

Education is a right of all Canadians. Research studies suggest that technical institutes, colleges and universities offer Canadians the most fertile ground for future prosperity and a place in the workforce. In today's information economy, the job prospects of Canadians and their earnings are increasingly dependent on what they know. The success of Canadians and, indeed, of Canada's future rests on the notion of accessible and affordable post-secondary education for all who can benefit from it.

This unfortunately is not the case in Canada. With the present government's policies these crucial objectives are farther from being met than ever before.

Studies reveal that the majority of post-secondary education students originate from an upper middle class socioeconomic background. Higher tuition fees and increasing living expenses are creating huge debt loads for students and reducing accessibility for potential university and college students.

More effort, not less, needs to be directed to ensuring that young people from sections of society which are presently under represented in our post-secondary education institutions are provided with opportunities to study. Post-secondary education must be available to all Canadians if Canada is to prosper.

A recent Statistics Canada study reveals that educational requirements have risen so sharply that young Canadians now need a university degree to earn roughly as much as a high school graduate in the same age group earned a decade before. Over the same period the earnings of high school graduates decreased by about a quarter. Those without high school certificates have an even more difficult time of it.

• (1825)

Young people have lost significant ground over the last decade. However it is also important to recognize that the incomes of university graduates have grown rapidly with work experience, while high school graduates have only seen modest gains.

The broad point is that future economic growth for Canada and for Canadians will depend on how much education Canadians attain. The country and the government need to commit themselves to the notion that all Canadians have a right to accessible and affordable education. Quality education should not only be available to the rich.

Over the last 15 years under successive Liberal and Conservative governments this right has been eroded by drastic cuts to funding. Considering that only 43 per cent of young Canadians in the 25 to 29 year old age group had a high school diploma in 1993, the future of Canada's economy does not look bright unless we turn the situation around.

In 1995 university applications were down about 5 per cent on average for first year university places. This is the sharpest drop of its kind in more than 20 years. We are going in the opposite direction to what Canada needs. With nearly half of young Canadians facing a future of low or stagnant incomes, high unemployment and diminishing opportunities for full time work, we are headed toward a polarized society and an economy functioning at well below desired objectives if we do not reduce the educational deficit.

Despite all the evidence showing that higher education is a prerequisite to prosperity both for Canadians and for Canada, the federal government continues to cut funding for post-secondary education; a 25 per cent cut to health, post-secondary and social programs, the deepest cut since the second world war.

The government states that we cannot afford the cost of investing in our young people and of investing in the future. It must start listening to common sense. The government must not cut Canadians' lifeline to future prosperity. Instead it must start listening to young Canadians who want a quality future, a quality workforce and the opportunity to contribute to a quality economy and a quality society.

These drastic cuts to post-secondary education cannot be justified. Since the government has forgotten, I will remind it once again that funding for post-secondary education is a critically important investment in Canada's future. Canadians and Canada deserve better.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I should like to start by making a very clear statement: young people are very much a priority of the federal government.

In April 1994 the government announced the youth employment and learning strategy to address problems that have held back many young people from participating fully in society. By that I mean high school dropout rates have been high. There has been a lack of access to post-secondary education, work experience and effective job training.

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We have moved on several fronts. We have made serious amendments to the Canada student loans program by increasing loan limits for full time students from \$105 to \$165 per week and by raising the yearly loan limit for part time students to \$4,000. For the very first time we are offering special opportunities grants for women pursuing doctoral studies, for high need students and for persons with disabilities. We have begun to offer the programs because we saw within the federal sphere there was a void that needed to be filled and we did that. We also have Youth Services Canada and youth internship programs. Combined they have had a positive impact on the lives of over 30,000 young people.

These measures speak to how the government, the federal Government of Canada, has been able to address key concerns and issues affecting young people.

This is only the beginning. We realize that the future lies within our young people, within future generations. For this reason we have combined all these tools so that the future for the country and for future generations will look bright.

We have also made some headway in youth entrepreneurship programs that have helped young people acquire the proper skills, not to mention the important measure taken this summer of creating over 44,500 jobs through our summer job action plan and the spinoff from the Canada employment centre for students which was over 175,000. The commitment of the government as far as youth policy is concerned is crystal clear.

• (1830)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mrs. Bonnie Hickey (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a number of years ago Nellie Nippard was stabbed 33 times by her husband and left for dead. By some miracle Ms. Nippard survived and today works with the women's organizations in Newfoundland.

Just two years ago another woman, Brenda Young, suffered multiple stab wounds at the hands of her boyfriend while her two young children slept in the other room. Unfortunately Ms. Young did not survive her attack.

Both of these women are from my home province of Newfoundland. One of them lived in my riding of St. John's East. The violence they endured was extreme but unfortunately it is not rare.

There are thousands of women in Newfoundland and across the country who live in fear and are subject to violence. In spite of the good work and good will which exists across the country for enhancing the security and safety of women, the violence persists.

Statistics show that more than half of all women in the country have experienced at least one incident of violence, as defined under the Criminal Code, in their adult lives. Twenty-five per cent of women have experienced violence at the hands of a current or past marital partner. On average, a woman is killed every six days in Canada, often in a private home or by someone she knows.

Women make up 59 per cent of all homicide victims killed in a domestic relationship. Forty-two per cent of women surveyed in 1993 reported they felt unsafe walking in their neighbourhood after dark, over four times the figure of men.

Despite the statistics, some cling to the belief that the problem is not that bad or dismiss it as a women's issue. This problem needs to be addressed. The eradication of violence against women can be accomplished only with the full partnership of all members of society.

This can no longer remain a women's issue. Violence against women affects us all. When women are abused there are costs to the victim, the family and to society. Taxpayers pay significant sums of money in medical costs for doctors, hospital emergency wards and medical health clinics; in criminal justice, costs for police services, courts and corrections; and in social service, costs for welfare, housing and daycare. As well, employers pay for violence against women in higher absentee costs and low productivity rates.

The most recent example of how violence against women affects more than just the victim was raised in the Newfoundland Select Committee on Children's Interests. The committee has been holding public hearings across the province. It heard from the administrator of the Iris Kirby House, a women's shelter in my riding, about how devastating domestic violence can be for our children.

The committee heard how children who witness family violence show signs of low self-esteem, which leads to a lack of self-confidence and a feeling of insecurity. As these children get older, depression, withdrawal and pessimism set in, leading to suicidal tendencies, drug dependency and emotional instability.

These children often do poorly in school because they have difficulty concentrating, are frequently absent and show behavioural problems. Also, research shows that children who witness violence in the home are more likely to live in a violent relationship in their adult lives.

We are approaching December 6, which some may not realize is the national day of remembrance and action on violence against women. It is a time for us to pause and remember the 14 women who died tragically at the Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal six years ago. As important as December 6 is, we need more than just one day of awareness about violence against women. We need to take action on a daily basis.

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We need to continue to provide support and funding for the various women's shelters and treatment programs which provide cost effective support and services.

I know the government has taken action over the past two years to address the issue of violence against women, but I would like the parliamentary secretary to assure my constituents and all Canadians that this is and will continue to be a priority of our government.

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for articulating the situation very well.

I assure her that in the past two years the government has taken many concrete and positive steps toward reducing and preventing violence against women and children. Our strategy is multi-faceted just like the problem of violence which is particularly costly socially, psychologically and economically to our society.

[Translation]

We also took a number of legislative measures, starting with the firearms bill.

I wish to urge the members of the other place to pass this bill immediately. They cannot remain insensitive to the distress call sounded by the families of the victims of events at the École polytechnique and by the individuals my hon. colleague just mentioned. Two thirds of the people killed by their partners are women and one third of all victims of homicide are women.

[English]

We have introduced amendments to the Criminal Code to make peace bonds more effective in keeping abusers away from women and children. As of January 1, 1996 Bill C-41 will require tougher sentences for crimes involving abuse of trust or those motivated by gender based hate.

The government supports community based solutions. For example, more than 2,000 projects have been funded through the family violence initiative, which has been extended for another year. Status of Women Canada has made available community kits on violence against women, a step by step guide to community action. I hope many communities will write in to get copies of it and use it, as many have already done.

At the recent fourth United Nations world conference on women in Beijing Canada was active in securing strong wording on violence against women. The final agreement states that violence is never a private matter, that the state has an obligation to legislate against violence against women and to prosecute and punish those who commit violence.

In the interest of our women and our children and the men in our society we must reduce violence in our society. In Canada the government is working to fulfil that obligation.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

(The House adjourned at 6.38 p.m.)

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