



CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 133 • NUMBER 009 • 2nd SESSION • 35th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Friday, March 8, 1996

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, March 8, 1996

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Labour and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved that Bill C-3, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code (nuclear undertakings) and to make a related amendment to another act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise this morning to present to the House Bill C-3, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code (nuclear undertakings) and to make a related amendment to another act. This bill is aimed at promoting stable and productive labour relations at Canada's nuclear plants.

I first want to point out that this legislative measure does not diminish in any way Canada's responsibility to protect people against radiation from some nuclear plants.

In 1993, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Part I of the Canada Labour Code applied to some Hydro Ontario employees, namely all those working at nuclear plants, which are subject to section 18 of the Atomic Energy Control Act. This section deals with nuclear plants that are declared to be for the general advantage of Canada.

The Supreme Court made this statement following a 1988 ruling by the Ontario Labour Relations Board that it was not constitutionally qualified to hear an accreditation application from the Society of Ontario Hydro Professional and Administrative Employees.

This decision was appealed to the Ontario courts, then to the Supreme Court of Canada, which ruled that Part I of the Canada Labour Code governing labour relations applied to Hydro Ontario's nuclear plant workers.

[*English*]

Subsequently it was clear that part II and part III of the code, along with the Non-Smokers' Health Act, also applied to these workers. Part II of the code covers occupational safety and health and part III covers labour standards.

In practical terms the results of the decision means that approximately 42 per cent of Ontario Hydro's employees are under the jurisdiction of the Government of Canada and the remainder are subject to the labour laws of Ontario.

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

It is clear that two separate labour legislations applying to a single group of employees constitutes an exceptional situation. But while being exceptional, this particular and complex situation causes problems to the employees, their union and Hydro Ontario. These problems result from having to work under two similar but slightly different labour systems.

For example, while producing the same effects, occupational health and safety regulations may vary.

[*English*]

There are some differences between federal and provincial technical specifications for the design of scaffolding. However, the cost of replacing scaffolding to meet federal requirements would not provide a corresponding improvement in safety.

A similar situation applies to portable power tools. Under federal legislation, portable power tools must meet standards set by the Canadian Standards Association but Ontario Hydro requires that three-pronged CSA approved plugs on portable power tools be replaced with a twist lock plug. Replacing all plugs and outlets or seeking the approval of the Canadian Standards Association for the twist lock plug would result in substantial costs with no corresponding improvement in safety.

[*Translation*]

These few examples go to show that split jurisdictions are inefficient, entail costs to companies and governments and do not produce any real benefit. After consideration, Ontario Hydro concluded that workers are provided the same protection under

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provincial and federal laws, even if the means prescribed to ensure this protection may differ.

However, these differences add to costs but the employees' safety is not enhanced in any way as a result.

[*English*]

Regarding collective bargaining, the company and unions must contend with two conciliation processes in the negotiation of collective agreements. Ontario Hydro and the unions have a longstanding collective bargaining relationship under the provincial regime going back 50 years.

Because of these concerns, early in 1994 federal and provincial government officials began to discuss the complicated issue of how to apply provincial law to Ontario Hydro. Initially the talks, which also included the company and the union, focused on occupational safety and health law. As talks progressed between my officials and their provincial counterparts, Ontario officials expressed the desire to have all provincial labour laws apply to the province's nuclear facilities.

Federal officials agreed that from a practical standpoint it would be logical to have all provincial labour law apply to Ontario Hydro as well as any ad hoc labour legislation the province might adopt in the future.

Because of the difficulties produced by a split jurisdiction and the type of work done at Ontario Hydro, it is felt that the application of provincial labour legislation would be the best guarantee of efficient and stable labour relations at Ontario Hydro.

The effects of the 1993 Supreme Court ruling did not stop at the province of Ontario, but are also relevant as far as Point LePreau generating station in New Brunswick and Quebec's Gently II. Both provincial crowns appear to be in a legislative void for the purposes of labour law, although in practice provincial laws continue to be applied.

In the case of Gently II this was confirmed by a 1995 Federal Court of Appeal decision. In its decision the Federal Court invited Parliament to forthwith fill the void.

• (1010)

[*Translation*]

I must point out that the bill before the House does not affect in any way the Canadian government's responsibility concerning radiation protection in nuclear plants. Today we are setting a legislative framework for the transfer to the provinces—be it Quebec, New Brunswick, Ontario or even Saskatchewan, because federal and provincial apply to mines—of our jurisdiction over labour under the Labour Code and related legislation.

Of course, in Quebec's case, it is quite simple, because we are just not involved over there. Workers there are governed by provincial labour laws. So, immediately after this legislation is passed, we expect Quebec to submit its draft regulations, upon which the federal jurisdiction over labour will be transferred.

It is up to the Atomic Energy Control Board to ensure this kind of protection. The proposed changes will have no impact on the board's mandate in this regard.

For many years, conventional, that is non nuclear, occupational safety and health legislation administered by the provinces have coexisted with the provisions of the Atomic Energy Control Act regarding radiation protection.

This sharing of responsibility between provincial governments and the Atomic Energy Control Board does not pose any problem and never raised any concerns over nuclear safety.

Finally, as regards the other act amended by the bill, hon. members can rest assured that the Ontario legislation governing the use of tobacco in the workplace protects workers as well as the corresponding federal measure does. Consequently, one should not be concerned if we transfer the powers provided in the Non-smokers' Health Act. Provincial legislation is as good as ours.

This is what led us to introduce this bill today.

[*English*]

By simply amending the Canada Labour Code and the Non-Smokers' Health Act, the federal government will provide a mechanism that allows for the application of provincial labour law at nuclear facilities. It is a move that makes much sense in terms of promoting efficient and stable labour relations in these industries.

The bill provides a mechanism to eliminate the split jurisdiction in Ontario and can also be applied in New Brunswick and Quebec, as I stated before. In addition, the mechanism may be applied to the uranium mines in Saskatchewan which are also regulated by the Atomic Energy Control Act.

Let us begin with the split jurisdiction in Ontario. At present, the company is faced with having to comply with two sets of labour legislation, one federal and one provincial. The bill provides a mechanism to correct that. It works this way. First, the company is exempted from having to comply with the Canada Labour Code. At the same time, it is made subject to provincial labour laws which are incorporated by reference into federal regulations.

The mechanism may be triggered by passing regulations in respect of industrial relations, including ad hoc or emergency legislation, occupational safety and health, labour standards or workplace smoking rules and regulations. Once the regulations are in place, provincial labour laws may be applied to nuclear facilities.

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I would like to turn now to some specific points regarding the ramifications of the bill. Regarding occupational safety and health, the bill provides that provincial occupational safety and health inspectors may carry out on site inspections. The bill also allows the provincial labour relations board to hear and determine cases in respect of labour relations law applying to these nuclear facilities.

• (1015)

In this case of collective bargaining any bargaining agent that was recognized under part I of the Canada Labour Code remains the bargaining agent under the provision of this bill. This ensures successor rights to the bargaining agent and prohibits other unions from applying to represent that bargaining unit outside of regular procedures.

Any collective agreement concluded under part I of the Canada Labour Code continues in force until the life of the contract expires. This ensures the rights, privileges and duties of both parties to the collective agreement remain intact.

Other provisions in the bill deal with the application of regulations, administration, the penalty for committing an offence, responsibility for prosecutions and the disposition of any fines that might be levied.

[Translation]

As hon. members know, the government pledged to manage its finances efficiently and to ensure that the administrative authority rests with the level of government that is best able to exercise that authority. By passing the amendments before us today, the government will fulfil that commitment.

In conclusion, I want to re-emphasize that these changes do not weaken the authority and the responsibility of the Atomic Energy Control Board in the least, since we would be going back to the structure that existed before the related 1993 Supreme Court decision.

It is because that structure worked very well that I ask hon. members to support Bill C-3. With leave of the House, if there is unanimous consent, we could agree that, instead of referring this bill to the human resources development committee, we could discuss it here in committee of the whole and then proceed immediately with third reading.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): There has been a request by the hon. Minister of Labour for unanimous consent that we proceed in all stages through committee of the whole as opposed to the standing committee.

Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin, as tradition dictates, with my congratulations to the new Minister of Labour on the responsibilities conferred upon him by the Prime Minister this past January. I am certain he will be equal to those responsibilities, and I know that his community, both the people of Saint-Léonard and the members of his community of origin, must be extremely proud to see one of their own rise to such heights, knowing the great influence that goes with the position.

Before going to the heart of the subject, I would like to state that I would have liked to see him begin his career as Minister of Labour begin by introducing legislation similar to Quebec's anti-scab legislation. I have no doubt that he will do so in the coming days and months, and this will represent a real test of his influence within Cabinet. I am issuing this friendly challenge to him, in the certainty that he will be capable of honouring that commitment.

The Bloc supports the bill most enthusiastically, for in the end it represents a delegation of powers, as we have said. The thought has crossed our minds that, if the Minister of Labour respects his commitments properly, he could be moved to the intergovernmental relations portfolio and, inspired by the dynamics of Bill C-3, step up the return of powers to the provinces.

• (1020)

Essentially, as the Minister has pointed out, we are remedying a situation in which, if he did not act, there would have been a very real risk of split labour relations jurisdiction in three nuclear facilities, as well as in the Saskatchewan uranium mines.

As the minister has said, the 1993 Supreme Court ruled that labour relations relating to nuclear facilities came under the Canada Labour Code, which went against 50 years of labour relations practice, because the provinces had been the ones to pass regulations, set guidelines and generally oversee labour relations for all that time.

We are delighted that the minister thinks it better we return to the status quo. This approach to intervention leaves the Bloc very comfortable supporting Bill C-3. Could you perhaps check later whether there is consent for the House to go into committee of the whole, and I will even propose it, if I may, because we would like to act quickly.

I should perhaps point out what we are talking about in our attempt to describe the nuclear sector. If the bill is adopted, it would apply to, as we said, Ontario Hydro, Hydro-Québec, New Brunswick Power and Saskatchewan uranium mines. It could apply to some 9,000 workers, including between 6,000 and 8,000 in Ontario.

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We can understand the minister's desire to act quickly, because Ontario, with 6,000 employees in the nuclear sector, gets 60 per cent of its hydro electric power from nuclear energy. I understand the minister is also concerned about the vote at Ontario Hydro among the unions represented on the subject of strike mandates. If the situation remains unchanged, if our information is correct, Ontario Hydro and the unions represented could declare a strike as of April 1.

I understand that the minister obviously does not want anyone to be deprived of his right to strike, which is a last resort means, but which, in certain circumstances, is appropriate. But the minister, like us, thinks that strike action should be a matter for provincial labour relations.

We repeat, this practice should be contagious. We are obviously delighted by the minister's decision to retroactively return the field of labour relations in the nuclear sector to the provinces. At the start of the debate, we thought the minister should do so, not by regulating it, but within a legislative context through a delegation of power between legislative bodies or through amicable agreement.

The minister, with the help of his officials, has convinced us that, in this specific case, a number of technical reasons make it impossible; however I do understand—this is a solemn promise on the part of the minister, who is known to be true to his words, and through him of the whole community he represents—that when the Quebec labour minister, the MLA for Matane, sends him the regulatory framework proposed by Quebec, the minister is promising it will be the regulatory framework that will apply to Hydro-Québec and the Gentilly nuclear plant.

Why does Quebec want to have its own regulatory framework? Quite simply, it is very important for us, and I do understand why the minister did not want to venture out in this area, since the regulatory framework will define which Quebec laws will apply to this field of jurisdiction, as Quebec workers will henceforth come under Quebec laws, still of course very specifically within the nuclear industry.

• (1025)

For the information of our listeners, and to make sure it is absolutely clear in the minister's mind, this delegation of authority will result in the Act respecting Labour Standards applying to a number of non unionized workers. You know, Mr. Speaker, how important this act is. My colleague sitting next to me, who is an expert in labour relations, knows very well that, for all non unionized workers, labour standards are the closest thing they have to a collective agreement. They deal with bereavement leave, holidays, monetary as well as normative issues.

We understand that the Essential Services Act would also apply, for the benefit of these workers. I imagine that the minister must

be very pleased; now he can begin to reflect on the need, for the federal government, to establish a mechanism similar to what we have in Quebec with the Essential Services Council. The minister will find there a model which has allowed us to strike not a perfect balance, but a rather satisfactory balance in labour relations.

Legislation on essential services and councils authorises the workers to go out on strike in very clearly determined circumstances and always as an ultimate recourse. We know that strikes always penalize, but they can also be necessary in some situations, but users and consumers cannot be left without services we consider to be essential.

Retrocession would also give the CSST authority for all workers concerned, and the minister mentioned that point. I am also thinking, again if our information is accurate, of the construction workers.

This is not the most important bill the minister will introduce in this House, we will not judge him on this bill, but I understand there is a regulatory vacuum in this area which made it imperative for him to correct the situation. We support this bill, again I repeat, because of the retrocession to those provinces that request it.

On that point, in committee of the whole, I will have the opportunity to ask the minister to ensure that the provinces approve the retrocession because, according to the briefing we had, the bill specifies "after consultation with the provinces".

I wonder whether it would not have been more appropriate, from a legislative point of view, to mention agreement with the provinces rather than consultation. The minister, given his political experience, knows that he could find himself in the following situation. As he is well aware, labour relations in Ontario are in turmoil, the premier of that province has a right-wing agenda and has threatened, even started, to dismantle the anti-scab legislation. It is not impossible that the minister would come under pressure from workers who would find it more advantageous to work under the provisions of the Canada Labour Code in some particular situations.

He could even come under pressure from third parties, in particular unions working within a labour confederation, interested in having the Canada Labour Code apply to their workplace.

I know that the minister will not waver and that he will make sure that his contacts, unlike what happened with Bill C-76, are not various intermediary bodies or other groups like unions or employers, although in that case this last example is probably not relevant, and that the delegation of authority will be given with the consent of the provinces.

We are also going to make sure in committee of the whole that this delegation of authority, even if it is through regulation, is total and final. What worries a number of unions, in particular the Syndicat des professionnels d'Hydro-Québec—and we understand

that from a parliamentary point of view—is that a regulation could easily be overridden by another regulation.

We are going to make sure that we do not find ourselves in a situation where the delegation of authority could be temporary, lasting only a few months before being superseded by a new regulation that would undo what the minister is proposing today.

We support the bill, and we will co-operate so that it can be passed as quickly as possible.

• (1030)

However, the minister will allow me to go back to the antiscab legislation and, if he wants, I will readily work very hard with him so that we can have a debate in the House on this subject and I know that the hon. member for Manicouagan has dealt with the matter.

It is inconceivable that some 18 years after Quebec gave itself an antiscab legislation, workers under federal jurisdiction still cannot use it. It is no small matter; it concerns 10 per cent of the labour force, employees who are working in major areas such as the public service, interprovincial transportation, radio and television broadcasting, telecommunications, cable television, banks and nuclear plants.

Need I remind the House that it affects—I mention this because I got the exact numbers yesterday—more than 8,500 employers in 40,000 work locations. Imagine the rejoicing in this Parliament if the minister decided to make history and to fully exert his influence in cabinet. He would give us the pleasure, during the present session, in the context of the work of this House, of providing Canada with provisions that would be included in the labour code and offer an additional guarantee, an additional means.

What is a legislation that sets out guidelines for the right to strike? What is a legislation that prevents the use of scabs? It is an additional way of having civilized labour relations.

I think the hon. member for Manicouagan was extremely eloquent on that. There is a direct correlation between the existence of an antiscab legislation and the recurrence of labour disputes.

If the minister wants, we will both be very relentless on this issue. We will be the “Laurel and Hardy” of labour relations in terms of antiscab legislation and I want to assure him of my whole co-operation on this matter.

For the time being, we support Bill C-3 and may I be allowed to move once again that we sit in committee of the whole in order to speed up things.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): If I understood well, the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve is asking for unanimous consent?

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Mr. Ménard: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is there unanimous consent to study the bill in committee of the whole House instead sending it to the standing committee?

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): There is not unanimous consent. Resuming debate with the hon. member for Wetaskiwin.

[*English*]

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his appointment as Minister of Labour.

Bill C-3, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code, is heading in the right direction. Certainly there is a lot of confusion under the circumstances where there is one group of people under two sets of labour legislation, provincial and federal.

With all due respect to the minister and his portfolio, we should be working toward a time when there simply is no federal labour portfolio. It is a duplication. I refer to the budget speech. The Minister of Finance, on page 9, talks about duplication of services and uses as an example meat inspectors, health inspectors and food inspectors.

This carries on into the Department of Labour and we should see a devolution of powers in all areas of labour from federal to provincial in order to downsize government, to get these decisions closer to the people and to make them more effective and more efficient. I am wondering why it would not apply right across the board. Atomic energy facilities are a place to start. I would like to see legislation move along that line so we could have provincial jurisdiction.

• (1035)

Duplicate departments create overburdensome bureaucracy and overlap that nobody needs, especially in such difficult fiscal times. Smaller government is something we should be looking at. I cannot help but reflect on the Government of Alberta in the 1950s and the 1960s under the guidance of Ernest Manning, recently deceased. He gave Albertans only essential government. Waste, inefficiency and duplicity were something he was ever vigilant of. I believe all governments can learn a great deal about effective government from the example set in Alberta during that time.

While the Reform Party generally agrees with the bill as set out by the minister, we will be contemplating amendments later on as the bill goes through this process. We would provide our qualified support at this time.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak today on Bill C-3, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code relating to nuclear undertakings. Like my colleagues on the opposition benches, I

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extend my congratulations to the minister on his appointment. He has served this country well in his other capacities in opposition and in government. I look forward to working with him in his capacity as Minister of Labour.

I was appointed by my leader on January 10, 1996 as the New Democratic Party labour critic. I have spent a considerable amount of time over the last few weeks bringing myself up to speed with the various legislation the government may be engaged in, such as the review of the Canada Labour Code, and with various union responses to government undertakings in this regard. I will enjoy the debates with the minister and the Liberal government over the next year relating to human activity and the conditions affecting Canadians in the workplace.

The government and the opposition seem to think this bill is nothing but housekeeping; that it simply transfers from one level of government to another a process that should be simple and easy to understand. My colleagues in the Reform Party want to extend this across the board, beyond the specific legislation. That is another matter entirely.

We have a very specific bill here aimed at the workers of Ontario Hydro. I want to make clear at the outset that I was one of those in the House today denying unanimous consent to speed all aspects of the bill through the House today.

• (1040)

I did that simply because I do not believe that all aspects of this legislation have been heard by members of the House. I think reference to the committee will be useful in that members of the House, particularly members of the opposition, might be able to hear from some of those people who will be affected directly by this legislation to assist them in making up their minds about whether this is the proper thing to do.

I do not feel comfortable as a member of the House having to make decisions affecting people's lives when I have not heard all sides of the story, especially as they would be presented in argument to us as legislators.

Let me put forward a couple of matters that have come to my attention. I will repeat some of the things the minister put on the table because it is important to understand the full context in which the bill is being brought to us.

As indicated, before 1994 workers at nuclear power plants in Canada came under the jurisdiction of provincial labour legislation. In Ontario this would be the Ontario Labour Relations Act.

In 1993 the Society of Ontario Hydro Professional and Administrative Employees applied to the Ontario Labour Relations Board to be certified under the Canada Labour Code; in other words, federal jurisdiction. The application ended up in litigation before the Supreme Court of Canada. In 1994 the supreme court decided

the nuclear operations of Ontario Hydro did fall within federal jurisdiction.

A certification was requested by the workers of Ontario Hydro under the Canada Labour Code. The supreme court upheld them in this decision. The decision also applied therefore to nuclear workers in Quebec and New Brunswick, and that is where I believe some of the confusion exists today.

If they were under provincial jurisdiction and the workers wanted to be under federal jurisdiction, and the supreme court agreed with them to be under federal jurisdiction, why is the government today moving with great haste to put them back under provincial jurisdiction?

I want to clarify this contradiction. I cannot in all good conscience stand here and agree with the members of the government and the members of the opposition in allowing this to go through. It is important that the workers, especially those who are part of that application just two years ago, are heard by the members of the House and consulted and perhaps listened to.

The legislation today puts labour relations involving nuclear workers back under the jurisdiction of provincial labour relations instead of under the Canada Labour Code. The government says the legislation is needed because it is too difficult for provincial utilities to manage their labour relations if their workforce is under two different jurisdictions. Non-nuclear hydro employees are still covered by provincial legislation.

Obviously, as the minister indicated, the legislation is intended for the Ontario Hydro workforce but will apply in future after negotiations with Quebec, New Brunswick and even Saskatchewan.

I have been informed that both the Society of Ontario Hydro Professional and Administrative Employees and the power workers union in Ontario are opposed to this legislation. We have not heard that indicated in the debate today.

The workers want to continue to be covered by the Canada Labour Code because in all fairness they are quite worried about how they might be treated by the present Ontario government. The provincial government has already legislated away rights and benefits of public sector employees and has taken provincial labour legislation back 20 years.

The Mike Harris government in Ontario is not a friend to public sector workers. For the federal government to arbitrarily send workers under federal labour legislation under the arm of the Harris government has many of them quite fearful.

As I understand it, the unions say the federal government introduced Bill C-3 without notice or consultation with them. They believe the government is pushing this through because the federal and provincial governments want to strengthen management's hand

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when the power workers' contract is about to expire and contract negotiations are about to begin.

• (1045)

The unions believe that this move may have implications on how workers, who may not be pleased with the process and who may be considering strike action, will be dealt with. In other words, the provincial government will have the ability to legislate all striking hydro workers back to work without consideration of the collective bargaining process. This could have severe consequences concerning the hydro union's rights if nuclear operations are sold or transferred as is being considered within the Ontario context.

There is a great deal to be considered under these circumstances. As many members know, the privatization of the system in the province of Ontario is under serious consideration.

It would be improper for the federal government to be seen intervening on behalf of an employer at a sensitive point in the collective bargaining process. I believe that is exactly what is being carried on right now. There is no credible justification for this legislation and certainly no credible justification for the haste with which the legislation is proceeding. Certainly the timing is suspect.

The legislation is being advanced with unseemly haste and without consultation or opportunity for appropriate review, not just by the people who are involved but by the members of this Chamber who have a duty to question every aspect of government legislation before it becomes law. We are not being given, under the process that is being advocated today, the opportunity to do that.

I have not been able to gather a consensus in the industry or among the workers on this issue. Without that consensus, it is the duty and the responsibility of politicians and parliamentarians to try to seek one before legislating rights. In fact, the proposed legislation goes far beyond anything that was previously suggested in discussions that had taken place.

No explanation has been provided why the initiative is proceeding independent of the current review of the Canada Labour Code.

Just a couple of days ago the minister tabled the Sims report that deals extensively with part I of the Canada Labour Code. No doubt there will be significant amendments come forward to the Canada Labour Code. Members will be first of all reviewing, consulting and debating amendments that the government is going to put forward.

I do not feel comfortable without having the benefit of a thorough and broad debate of the Sims report and the amendments that the government will bring forward in making decisions

relating to changes in the Canada Labour Code and jurisdiction at this point.

The government should reconsider the haste with which it is moving today. Certainly it should not proceed with this proposed legislation until its details have been carefully considered, fair consultation has been taken and all the affected parties brought in, consulted with, talked to and all of the issues put on the table.

Certainly members of this Parliament owe the nuclear workers in the province of Ontario the benefit of the doubt when they consider the future potential of labour legislation in the province of Ontario.

I did not want to prolong debate but I wanted to make sure that those matters were put on the table today. I appreciate the House's indulgence for that.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a very brief question. I appreciate my colleague's points. I wonder whether at the same time he might give me an indication of what his party's position is with respect to the nuclear industry itself. I would be interested in that.

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. The party's position on nuclear matters is quite clear. As members know, the issue in front of the House is labour legislation. It is people involved in existing industries. They are people who have collective bargaining rights and those rights must be respected. Regardless of the future position of the nuclear industry and whether there are federal funds available to continue subsidizing it, as it has been for years, the workers in the industry deserve the respect and protection that they have been afforded in the past. I think we should keep the issue centred on that for the debate today.

• (1050)

Mr. George Proud (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to take part in the debate this morning dealing with Bill C-3. As the Minister of Labour has explained, Bill C-3 will promote efficient and stable labour relations at Canada's nuclear power stations.

Contrary to comments, consultations did take place with all parties. Furthermore we are not attempting to take away anyone's collective bargaining rights. I would not want to be party to that and I know the minister would not either.

Nuclear power stations are in an unusual situation with respect to federal labour law. It has always been assumed that provincial labour laws apply to nuclear power stations, but as has been said here this morning many times, a 1993 ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada determined that nuclear generating stations at Ontario Hydro were subject to the Canada Labour Code. A split jurisdiction was created at Ontario Hydro whereby the nuclear power workers

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are subject to federal labour law but the other power workers in conventional generating plants are subject to provincial labour law.

Passage of this legislation will address that ruling of the Supreme Court of 1993 by resolving the question of a split jurisdiction at Ontario Hydro. Ontario and other provinces with nuclear undertakings will then have a mechanism available permitting the application of provincial labour laws. This action is designed to foster efficient and stable labour relations at nuclear facilities.

[*Translation*]

With Bill C-3, the government proposes to revert to the situation as it stood before the ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada in 1993.

[*English*]

A corollary of this decision is in keeping with the federal government's commitment to flexible federalism. To that end the legislation before us is consistent with the clarification of roles and responsibilities between the provinces and the federal government.

[*Translation*]

Since the labour minister has dealt with health and security in his speech, I would like to speak about labour relations and employment standards.

[*English*]

The majority of workers in Canada's labour force, currently around 13 million, are subject to provincial statutes. These statutes govern such activities as local transportation, manufacturing, construction, the forest products industry and provincial and municipal employment. But in those activities which cross provincial or national borders, federal jurisdiction over labour laws prevail as mandated by the Constitution Act and interpreted by the courts.

Those areas of federal private sector jurisdiction include international and interprovincial transportation by land, sea or air, such as railways, airlines, shipping and specific trucking and busing operations. As well, federal jurisdiction applies to communications and broadcasting, including telecommunications, radio and television; also federally chartered banks, longshoring operations, federal crown corporations such as Canada Post and national museums; as well industries declared to be for the general advantage of Canada such as uranium mining and grain handling.

Part I of the Canada Labour Code, which covers employees engaged in these federal industries, also provides the legislative framework for conducting labour relations in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. The exceptions are employees in territorial governments.

• (1055)

Hon. members will know that Parliament has adopted separate legislation, namely the Public Service Staff Relations Act, to

provide for collective bargaining in the public service. In all, some 700,000 employees are subject to part I of the Canada Labour Code and approximately 250,000 federal government employees come under the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

The federal government and each province have collective bargaining legislation. Independent labour relations boards which administer labour laws exist at both the federal and provincial levels. It differs slightly in Quebec, which has a labour court and equivalent administrative mechanisms.

With certain exceptions, both levels of government recognize the right of employees to join trade unions and to bargain collectively. Unions and employers have a duty to bargain in good faith. Collective bargaining agreements generally take the form of legally binding contracts.

These contracts cover such things as hours of work, wages, working conditions and job security.

[*Translation*]

Normally, those contracts cover one to three years, during which strikes and lockouts are prohibited, in all jurisdictions.

[*English*]

Finally, Canadian labour laws generally outline a range of unfair practices and prohibitions relating to both employers and trade unions. Labour relations boards or the labour court in Quebec hear complaints of unfair labour practices and have broad corrective powers.

I trust that this outline of industrial relations in Canada has been helpful. I believe that some members may be concerned that there are discrepancies between the federal and provincial employment standards. That is not necessarily so. Although not identical, labour standards—

The Speaker: The hon. member will have the floor immediately following Question Period to complete his speech.

It being 11 a.m. the House will proceed to Statements by Members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

RENEWABLE FUELS

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Minister of Finance for introducing measures in the budget that will place renewable fuels on an equal footing with non-renewable fuels.

The developers of renewable fuels recognize that fossil fuel reserves are being depleted and sustainable solutions for our future energy needs have to be found.

Renewable fuels like ethanol and bio-diesel provide important economic stimuli in many areas of the country, including Oxford. This measure is good for renewable fuels, good for the environment and good for Canada.

The government has not extended any special powers to the renewable fuels industry, it has just levelled the playing field with the oil and gas companies. Renewable fuels never needed a special break, they just needed an even break.

I applaud this move which will keep Canada in the forefront of environmental and energy technologies.

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[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. Michel Daviault (Ahuntsic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to draw attention to International Women's Day.

Today more than ever before, it is important to keep a watchful eye on the gains made by women in recent years, as their socioeconomic situation makes them more vulnerable to the impact of cuts being made left and right in these times of fiscal austerity.

More than 58 per cent of single mother families live under the poverty line. Women who work full time earn on average less than 70 per cent of what their male counterparts make.

The federal government recently abandoned its child care plan and announced in the last budget that seniors' pension benefits would be calculated on the basis of family income. This represents an incredible setback for women.

The struggle for equality is far from over. That is why the Bloc Quebecois will always be there to remind this Liberal government of its commitments regarding equality for women.

* * *

[English]

FISHERIES

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the speech from the throne promises to "promote the long term conservation and revitalization of fisheries in Canada". Those are nice words but what have the Liberals actually done?

The Liberals have cut funding to salmon hatcheries in British Columbia, a proven enhancement program. They have cut funding to sea lamprey control on the Great Lakes, a proven conservation program. They have implemented groundfish management plans on both coasts which are unacceptable. Their plan will put B.C. ground fishermen out of work. So much for revitalization. They

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have strangled fishermen by the wallet with a \$50 million tax grab when fishermen can least afford it.

The only thing that has been conserved and revitalized by this government is the ivory tower on Kent Street and the minister's office decor.

I call on the minister to restore funding for conservation and enhancement, cut his bloated bureaucracy and consult with ground fishermen on both coasts to ensure viability in the fishery.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's announcement by the President of the Treasury Board concerning a lifting of the freeze on public service wages must be taken with a grain of salt. We cannot forget that collective bargaining in the federal public service has been suspended for almost six years during which time there has been massive job loss throughout all departments and agencies.

Let us keep in mind that the Treasury Board package offered yesterday ties the new wage package to privatization, further contracting out of existing jobs, and additional schemes that make it easier for people to leave the public service, things the New Democratic Party find completely unacceptable.

Again, we are seeing the Liberals supporting the collective bargaining process but setting the terms of the negotiations before they even begin. The Liberals seem once again to want their cake and eat it too.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this International Women's Day, I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the great strides made by women in the education field.

Today, women make up the majority of undergraduate students in Canadian universities and just under half the student population at the master's level. In addition, more women are teaching in colleges and universities.

The government promised it would encourage students, particularly women, to excel in the fields of science, mathematics, technology and engineering. Our government recognizes that access to education is a key factor in ensuring that women achieve social equality and economic independence. We shall pursue our efforts in this regard.

S. O. 31

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mrs. Jean Payne (St. John's West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am also honoured to rise in the House today to mark International Women's Day and pay tribute to women's accomplishments in Canada and around the world.

The federal theme for International Women's Day 1996 is Strategy for Equality: Managing Change. Its focus is our need to maintain the momentum toward gender equality in the face of deep societal change. The Liberal government continues to support Canadian women in these times of fiscal restraint, globalization, restructuring, and new technologies.

In the federal plan for gender equality we outlined specific actions we are taking to advance women's equality to the brink of the 21st century. The foundation of that plan is a new policy of gender based analysis of all federal government policies, programs and legislation.

I am certain all members of the House will join me today in pledging our commitment to achieving gender equality and in celebrating the important gains women have made over the years.

* * *

CRAYOLA CRAYONS

Mr. John O'Reilly (Victoria—Haliburton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to announce that Binney and Smith (Canada) Limited, the maker of Crayola products has just manufactured its one hundred billionth crayon.

Binney and Smith in the town of Lindsay, Ontario is the lone manufacturer of Crayola products in Canada. Surely my fellow colleagues can recall the days when they were kids and covered the walls with the colours of Crayola.

Crayola has issued a special commemorative blue ribbon crayon to mark this occasion. It will be distributed in regular packs of crayons somewhere across North America. Whoever buys the crayon can either turn it in for a \$100,000 bond, or they can keep it.

I ask my fellow members, would they take the cash or would they keep it?

* * *

● (1105)

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the least Canadians should expect from their elected officials is for them to pass legislation that reflects the wishes of the taxpayers.

Canadians are looking for tax relief; there is none. They are looking for the disappearance of the GST but it is still with us. They are looking for good, permanent, sustainable jobs. They are

not there. They are looking for a solid unity proposal. This government has provided none. They want section 745 of the Criminal Code to disappear. It is still with us. They want meaningful changes to the Young Offenders Act that would deter youth from crime. That has not happened. They want to feel safe in their schools, communities and on the streets but they do not. Most of all they want to be heard and governed accordingly instead of the dictatorial "we know best" attitude this government provides.

This country belongs to the people. Let their voices be heard. Maybe after the next election when the Reformers replace the government side this will happen. That is replace, including abolish.

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[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux-Montagnes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on this International Women's Day, I wish to extend my best wishes to all immigrant and refugee women.

As an immigrant myself, I am thinking in particular of the thousands of women who have been victims of rape or violence or who experienced hardship in their countries of origin before seeking asylum in Canada.

I wish to emphasize the outstanding contribution to our society made by immigrant women, who face a triple challenge as immigrants, mothers and workers.

I urge the government to show compassion for persecuted women seeking asylum in Canada. Eighty per cent of the 23 million refugees around the world are women and children.

Immigrant and refugee women, the Bloc Québécois salutes you and supports your efforts to have your rights recognized.

* * *

[*English*]

AIR CANADA

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Air Canada is an integral part of a cluster of companies including CAE, Rolls-Royce, Bombardier, and Spar which together make up Quebec's vibrant and world renowned aerospace industry.

[*Translation*]

Air Canada employs nearly 6,000 people in Quebec, and many of its activities are concentrated in and around Montreal.

[*English*]

The designated carrier has dropped its route between Montreal and Italy. As a result 4,629 of Air Canada's 6,000 employees in Quebec have signed a petition to the Prime Minister asking that Air

Canada be designated the flag carrier between Montreal and the Italian market.

[*Translation*]

Given Air Canada's importance to the economy of Quebec and Montreal, as well as the large Italian community in Montreal, I fully agree with these 4,629 Air Canada employees that Air Canada should be designated as the flag carrier between Canada and Italy.

* * *

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES

Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is now some good news for high-tech, aerospace and biotechnology companies.

In his budget speech, the Minister of Finance announced that the Minister of Industry would soon introduce a program called Technology Partnerships Canada. This initiative will make Canada more competitive in advanced technologies.

Under this program, the government will share the risks of technological research with the private sector. This fund will increase from \$150 million this year to \$250 million next year. Moreover, the Federal Business Development Bank will receive an additional \$50 million to finance businesses.

These initiatives will help create jobs and revive the economy in some parts of the country like the Montreal area and the national capital region.

* * *

[*English*]

JOSEPH BERNIER RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiak, Lib.):

[*Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut.*]

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, last week in Igloolik former students of the residential school in Chesterfield Inlet, operated by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate received an apology that was a long time in coming.

During the 1950s and the 1960s Inuit students at the Joseph Bernier school suffered physical, emotional and sexual abuse. For over 30 years the victims have struggled with heavy hearts. Their load was lightened by the sincere apology of the Bishop of the Hudson Bay diocese, Bishop Reynald Rouleau. I commend the bishop for this brave act.

As well, I pay respect and honour to all those former students of the school. Despite their painful burdens and the pace and stress of the transition to modern society, many have become successful

leaders in their communities. I salute their courage and determination.

* * *

• (1110)

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on this international women's day, the Bloc Québécois strongly condemns the unacceptable situation in which women are placed regarding pay equity. In 1996, Canadian women still earn only 70 per cent of what Canadian men make. This situation has bad consequences for society as a whole. Equal work should mean equal pay. However, as we near the third millennium, this is still not the case.

The only initiative taken by this government regarding employment was the infrastructure program, which essentially created temporary employment traditionally associated with men. Women are also still underrepresented in certain employment categories. For example, in the federal public service, women only account for 25 per cent of Transport Canada's departmental population and 34 per cent of DND's workforce. Moreover, they hold only 19 per cent of management positions. The government must act.

* * *

[*English*]

CHILD SUPPORT

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, regarding the proposed change in the taxation of child support payments, I disagree with the approach taken by the government. I believe the taxation of these moneys should be worked out between the divorcing parents at the time of divorce, hopefully with the help of a mediator.

My main concern is that these new rules can be made retroactive. This new legislation will open the floodgates for renegotiation of agreements. This will lead to enough litigation among family law lawyers across the country to ensure that very few of them will be sitting idle.

The obvious increase in litigation resulting from this change announced in the budget is particularly upsetting for me. The justice minister and his Liberal colleagues on the justice committee voted down my private member's bill on grandparents rights because Liberal committee members argued it would increase litigation, in spite of the fact that three eminent family lawyers argued to the contrary.

Is it the government's intention to help divorcing parents or to help their Liberal lawyer friends?

*Oral Questions***CHILD SUPPORT**

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very appropriate during International Women's Week that the finance minister as part of his annual budget would include changes affecting child support. These changes affect the most needy in our society, namely women and children. It is primarily the children of Canada who are experiencing hardship as a result of marriage breakdown and subsequent divorce.

Few Canadians think it is right to tax child support as income to one parent while giving a tax break to another. These changes to child support will ensure that the benefits will reach the children it is targeted for and will update a law designed over 50 years ago.

I say bravo to the finance minister, justice minister and the revenue minister.

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NATIONAL ENGINEERING WEEK

Mr. Ian Murray (Lanark—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is National Engineering Week. As part of the celebration, I attended the official transfer of the Canadian Science and Engineering Hall of Fame from the National Research Council to the National Museum of Science and Technology.

The hall of fame began in 1992 with the induction of 16 engineers and scientists. A survey had shown that most Canadians could not name a single Canadian scientist or a single Canadian science or engineering achievement. National Engineering Week is designed to make us aware of the contribution engineers make to our quality of life.

This year a special emphasis has been placed on youth and the importance of students maintaining interest in mathematics and science. The continuing success and prosperity of Canada depends on our having a society that is technically literate.

Canada has produced such hall of fame members as Banting, Bell and Bombardier. With its new home in the Museum of Science and Technology, many thousands of Canadians will be exposed for the first time to men and women who have been true builders of this country. It gives me great pleasure to salute the 160,000 professional engineers who continue that legacy of building the Canadian dream.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals profess to be federalists but they support the separatist Bloc Quebecois here in Parliament. Why?

The Prime Minister says his blood boils when he sees those separatists in front of him but his Liberal MPs in the House committees vote time and time again for Bloc Quebecois members to be the committee vice-chairs. Why? There is no consideration of candidates' qualifications. The Liberals' order to their MPs is simply: Vote for the Bloc.

In the last week, with the exception of one independent minded MP who bucked the party line, every single Liberal MP on the following committees has voted for a Bloc Quebecois member as vice-chair: procedure and house affairs; environment; foreign affairs; aboriginal affairs; agriculture; human resources; and health.

• (1115)

The record so far is that 33 out of 34 Liberal MPs have voted for the Bloc. We will make their names public. Tune in next week to see if they do it again in the national defence committee.

* * *

COMPLETING THE CIRCLE

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the Prime Minister's recent response to the throne speech, he outlined the measures our government will continue to take to ensure a strong economy and foster a positive climate for the private sector to create jobs.

In order to be successful we must forge a new and active partnership between the public and private sector. With this vision and agenda in hand, I recently launched "Completing the Circle". This York region initiative identifies available jobs in the community, provides pre-employment training and matches unemployed clients to jobs. This local initiative demonstrates the type of successful partnership that can and must be forged between the private sector and various levels of government.

Human Resources Development Canada, Tetra Pak and the Career Foundation have all joined together to enable a minimum of 100 people in the York region to greatly benefit through \$200,000 in contributions by HRDC and Tetra Pak.

This is Team Canada in action.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Oral Questions

The Liberal government's third budget calls for women's pensions to be determined according to their partner's income in future, thus reducing their level of benefits and their degree of economic independence. When questioned yesterday in the House on this subject, the Minister responded as follows: "Nine out of ten women will get more money because of our reform".

Did the Minister of Finance deliberately attempt to trick senior women by referring to inappropriate statistics which apply to single women, not married ones on whom there are no statistics in his budget documents?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in his budget, the Minister of Finance has tried to be as equitable as possible, by enabling the most vulnerable members of our society to continue to receive a pension over the long term, and he has done so by reducing what would otherwise have gone to the better off.

Clearly women will benefit from this exercise, for they constitute one of the major vulnerable groups in our society. We support a system of social programs which redistributes funds from the most well off to the most vulnerable.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Really, Mr. Speaker, I have no idea whom the minister thinks he is addressing with that response to a simple, clear, precisely set out question. Either he just likes to hear the sound of his own voice or he did not get the question, so I shall repeat it.

On page 16 of the budget speech, we find the following, and I quote: "nine out of ten single senior women"—not those with spouses but single women—"will be better off" and so on. The reference was to single women, but the Minister is playing with the semantics of rich and poor. I want him to answer the opposition's question on what will happen to married women.

Why is the minister twisting his own statistics and what he said in his speech? Why will he not answer my question, not his own idea of a question, but what I asked?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the important question relating to women is how the government is treating women in general, whether single or not. And the important principle is not what the opposition member is proposing. The important principle is: How are we fulfilling our redistributory role by taking from the most fortunate a portion of their surplus to pass it on to the most vulnerable members of society, which include women?

• (1120)

The present situation, particularly in Quebec, is such that it is mainly women who are poor and vulnerable, and our desire to help vulnerable women is what has prompted changes to our program in order to ensure them of long term protection. We make no distinction between categories of women. We want to give all women the protection to which they are entitled.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister is determined not to understand the real question.

Will the minister admit, without any shilly-shallying, that the new method of calculating old age security based on family income treats women like dependent children and represents an unacceptable backward step for the women of Quebec and of Canada in their struggle for equality and financial independence?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member of the opposition is determined to create a problem where none exists, and to refuse to grasp the true principle behind our reform.

That underlying principle is that vulnerable women are entitled to government protection. In the system as it exists at the present time, the guaranteed income supplement already includes the yardstick of the couple's income, the revenue of the husband and of the wife. We have extended the principle that applies at the present time to the guaranteed income supplement to the reform as a whole.

We have brought in this reform because we, unlike the Bloc Québécois, want people to be able to receive government assistance when they experience hardship. We are the ones implementing true social democracy.

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, and we say women will continue to be hard headed.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. At a conference on violence against women organized this year by the UNESCO women's program, it was concluded that women's financial independence is the key to change. As the minister has already determined the fate of female senior citizens by making them more dependent, would he be willing to improve women's financial situation generally, and, if so, how would he do it?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here again, the important principle is our desire to protect women who are most at risk, and we are doing so.

We will have revenues redistributed to the women who are the least well off. In Quebec it is clear that most of those receiving or

Oral Questions

who will receive the increased pension are women. Furthermore, cheques distributed to couples will be divided equally between husband and wife so that each gets half the money due the couple and so that each may remain independent.

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the key to change lies in women's economic independence. That means jobs.

In the budget speech, at page 26, the minister said, and I quote:

—that ten years hence increasing child poverty rates will be a thing of the past—

Are we to understand that the Minister of Finance advocates the status quo in this area? Is he telling us that his government is resigned to keeping 1.3 million children in poverty?

[English]

Ms. Hedy Fry (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism)(Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is absolutely right. The key to women's equality lies in their economic independence. The government recognizes that fully.

When one looks at the initiatives we have taken in the past and looks even closer now at the initiative we took during this budget, we looked at women at every stage of their lives in order to ensure their economic independence.

When we look at the education changes we made in terms of increasing the eligibility for day care and the tax credits for going to school, we are ensuring single women get the same break as women who live in families. The child support of the WIS will be doubled in the next two years.

• (1125)

In the seniors package we are ensuring that 90 per cent of women, whether they live singly or in couples, will benefit from this new seniors benefit. We are talking about the economic independence of women.

* * *

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the government finger pointing on its broken GST promise seems to be intensifying.

Yesterday it was somehow the fault of Canadians that the government has failed to meet its promise and has failed to scrap the GST. Today we find out it is blaming the provinces. We had this embarrassing display from government members from Saskatchewan saying to the premier: "Please help us hide and expand the GST". It is ridiculous.

Why does the government not admit, why does it not come clean with Canadians and tell us it has absolutely no intention of killing, scrapping or abolishing the GST despite what it said during the election campaign?

Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very easy to answer that question. We do have every intention of keeping our promise and every intention of replacing the GST.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is an issue of trust. The government has betrayed the trust of Canadians on this issue. It made promises to scrap the GST. It did not say harmonization. The only people interested in the government's new super tax are the members opposite.

Ontario has said no, Manitoba has said no, Saskatchewan has said no, Alberta has said no and British Columbia has said no. The only provinces that the government is trying to get on side are the Atlantic provinces and the only way it can do that is to pay them.

Since the provinces have no intention of being co-conspirators in the government's efforts to fudge the public record, why will the government not simply live up to its election promise and scrap the GST?

Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member forgets is that there are significant advantages to a harmonization program. There are significant advantages to having the GST replaced by a retail tax on an equal basis across the country. The advantages are clearly there. If the Reform Party does not want to see those advantages, fine.

It is unfortunate to have the Reform Party accuse the Atlantic provinces of taking bribes.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is the hon. member who said they were taking bribes. We said nothing of the sort.

I remind the hon. member that the Deputy Prime Minister said in the House that the GST was a job killer. We also know the GST harmonized would kill 70,000 jobs in Ontario alone. That is four times as many as the public servants in Ontario are currently striking over.

It does not matter how many times Liberal members read from the small print in the red book. They can pretend all they want that harmonization was what they told Canadians on the campaign trail, but Canadians know that is not true.

I ask a simple question which Canadians across the country want answered. Why did you lie?

The Speaker: In the course of question period sometimes words are used that should not be. I ask the hon. member to withdraw the word "lie".

Mr. Solberg: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the word "lie" and simply ask why did it break its election promise to scrap the GST?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to put on the record again exactly what was this party's election promise. It was spelled out not in the fine print of some hidden document but in the red book, the basic statement of the platform, the commitments of this party, on which it was elected by the Canadian people: "A Liberal government will replace the GST

with a system that generates equivalent revenues, is fairer to consumers and to small business, minimizes disruption to small business and", get this, "promotes federal-provincial fiscal co-operation and harmonization".

• (1130)

Our commitment was based on the concept of harmonization and any attempt by the Reform Party to say otherwise indicates how blind and deaf it is when it comes to the truth.

* * *

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice intends to introduce, without amendments, Bill C-119 on juvenile prostitution, sexual harassment and female genital mutilation.

My question is for the Minister of Justice. Why did the minister turn a deaf ear to repeated demands of the Bloc Québécois that severe sanctions be imposed on anyone who helps, encourages or incites someone to mutilate a young girl?

[English]

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the bill which we will reintroduce provides clearly that for anyone who engages in the mutilation of a child or of a woman it is aggravated assault within the meaning of that term in the Criminal Code and will carry very heavy penalties.

The principles that apply generally in criminal law with respect to those who aid, abet, counsel or assist will be as applicable to this offence as they are to any other.

[Translation]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since information and education are essential to solve this issue, why does the Minister of Justice, in co-operation with his colleague from immigration, not inform newcomers right away that the excision of the clitoris is considered to be a criminal practice that is not tolerated in Canada?

[English]

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and her colleagues are aware that if we are to eradicate this criminal and savage practice we have to not only take steps in criminal law but also educate and inform.

Oral Questions

The Minister of Health, the Minister of Immigration and Citizenship and the Department of Justice have been working together devoting energy, time and effort to educating communities in Canada and those coming to Canada that this is criminal conduct and will be prosecuted where found.

* * *

THE BUDGET

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today we have learned the provinces are refusing the federal government's attempts to get them to harmonize the GST and raise federal taxes.

We know in the budget that the federal government is planning to cut transfers to the provinces for health, education and CAP by \$7 billion over the next few years.

We all know the provinces have been balancing their budgets. Is it not the real budget strategy of the government to get the provinces to balance the federal budget as well?

Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the numbers and facts in the budget and the actions of the government speak for themselves.

[Translation]

My supplementary is for the same minister and also concerns the massive cuts affecting transfers to the provinces, since the minister did not answer the first question. In spite of its sovereignist agenda, the Bouchard government pledged to eliminate the deficit created by the provincial Liberals. Must it also eliminate the deficit generated by the federal Liberals?

• (1135)

[English]

Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question is simply not valid. The premise is incorrect. The answer is that is not the case.

* * *

[Translation]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval-Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Over the last five years, women's groups have seen their subsidies go down 5 per cent every year. Yet, on Wednesday, the Minister of Finance said, and I quote: "If there is one obligation before the government today, it is to do what we must so that confidence can overcome anxiety and hope can replace despair".

Oral Questions

Given the disturbing rise in poverty and social problems, and given the importance of the role played by these women's groups, will the minister explain the new 6 per cent reduction which brings to 31 per cent for the last six years the cumulative cuts affecting these groups?

[English]

Ms. Hedy Fry (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism)(Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government in its budget has stressed very much the economic independence of women.

We have talked about initiatives in tax credits. We have talked about changing the child support program. We have taken money to be gained out of that program and placed it into ways to eliminate poverty. We have looked at how we can empower single women to go to school and to get training through tax initiatives. There is more than one way to skin a cat.

[Translation]

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval-Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, given her government's plan to promote gender equality, could the secretary of state tell this House about the impact that these new cuts will have on the promotion of women's equality?

[English]

Ms. Hedy Fry (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism)(Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, very important in terms of women's equality is that the government has agreed to put forward a plan for gender analysis that will cross every single government department.

Gender analysis means that every time a policy, a law or an initiative is taken there will be a lens to look at that policy, law or initiative to see how it could disadvantage women or men. That kind of thing has led to changes in the employment insurance bill and to all of the initiatives we have seen in the budget.

* * *

CANADIAN SOVEREIGNTY

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the U.S. government is still not backing down on B.C.'s inside passage. It is now threatening to charge ferries a toll for crossing between Vancouver and Victoria.

The cowardly inaction of this government has given the U.S. an upper hand. That is odd given that when the Prime Minister was in opposition in 1985 he demanded that the federal government prevent American boats from entering Canadian waters without permission. He talked tough then; he is now rolling over.

When will the government stand up to U.S. election year bullying and declare unauthorized transit of U.S. boats an active challenge to Canadian sovereignty that will not be tolerated?

Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

He talks about the U.S. passing laws. The U.S. put its name to a law 150 years ago, the Treaty of Oregon, which recognized without contention that the inside passage was internal waters. In internal waters there is no right of innocent passage.

Irrespective of any laws the U.S. may have passed which ask it to look for the fees to be returned, which we have refused, this treaty has stood the test of time and will stand us in good stead if we have to look at this downstream.

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, at the core of this is the Pacific salmon dispute with the Americans.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs said this week that our disagreement with the Americans over Cuba was a very serious affair, while the west coast fishing dispute was merely "an annoyance". His statement underscores the government's attitude toward British Columbia: just an annoyance.

• (1140)

Will the minister apologize to the people of British Columbia and tell the House what measures the government is taking to protect the interests of west coast fishermen?

Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I certainly understand the thrust of the hon. member's question.

All members of the House are concerned for the 16,000 commercial fishermen in British Columbia who fish a very difficult species. There are 4,000 stocks, 1,500 streams and a migration pattern that takes two to five years leading to the Alaskan and Aleutians Islands. There is a great concern about this.

The mediation process that has been going on since last summer, of which the hon. member is aware, has stalled. It has not been 100 per cent successful but it has been at least 75 per cent successful. The success that has been achieved was the basis of a discussion between the Minister of Foreign Affairs and myself yesterday. I can assure the House he will be going to Washington with some very good and very strong options that will support the fishermen of British Columbia and their concerns.

* * *

[Translation]

REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

In November 1993, the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies, which cost more than \$28 million, underlined the need to legislate against the marketing of human embryos.

How can he explain the fact that, two years after the tabling of the Baird report which strongly recommended the criminalization of egg trafficking, nothing has yet been done by this government to follow up on the commission's recommendation?

[English]

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question.

The Department of Health has taken the position that is consistent with the expectations of all Canadians. In all cases we will deal with solid research that is well analysed and properly evaluated. The health of Canadians will come first and foremost in all decisions, and every principle of the Canada Health Act will always be maintained. That is our position and we continue to hold it.

[Translation]

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what is the government waiting for before it legislates? Is it waiting for another crisis like the contaminated blood scandal?

Will the secretary of state recognize at least that the voluntary moratorium implemented last July is a total failure and that the situation is getting out of control and will he assure us today that he will take his responsibilities and legislate immediately?

[English]

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure the rhetoric is helping at all. What the department has done and the minister has reiterated in the House is to pursue a line that allows for the re-establishment of public confidence in our blood supply system, in maintaining the process, and in ensuring that all the principles of the health act are maintained, observed and respected by everybody.

The minister indicated in the House on several occasions that inquiries such as the one to which the hon. member has referred have been proceeding according to the mandate of the commission.

We are allowing the commission to go forward. It has already presented an interim report. The government has acted very quickly and decisively on all seven recommendations that related to the federal responsibilities.

Oral Questions

FISHERIES

Mr. Derek Wells (South Shore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

This week an unprecedented meeting was held in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia by a coalition of inshore fisheries groups from the Scotia Fundy region with senior officials of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Along with other hon. colleagues from the region I worked diligently to ensure this meeting took place, that fishermen's concerns were listened to and that a positive outcome could be achieved.

Would the minister please inform the House of the results of this three-day meeting.

• (1145)

Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member and his colleagues for their participation in the meeting to which he refers, along with Neil Bellefontaine, the regional director general, his staff and the fishermen. It went on for three days and involved 200 fishermen representing 47 different groups in six fishery sectors.

It involved some difficult subjects such as groundfish management, fisheries legislation, licensing policy and the commercial licence fees for 1996.

I will be holding a press conference following question period that will give all the details of this. However, the measure of success that was achieved in the three days of talks is a positive indicator to me as fisheries minister that the management of fisheries at difficult times when the resources are very scarce will go on in a very positive, understanding, consultative and co-operative manner.

* * *

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence.

The finance minister, who is really the Liberal's defence minister, has announced \$800 million in cuts to the defence department which are directed at equipment procurement, such as armoured personnel carriers, search and rescue helicopters, shipborne helicopters, submarines, that are all needed to maintain Canada's combat capability.

How and when will the defence minister manage to purchase this equipment which is essential to maintain our sovereignty and to support our troops around the world.?

Hon. David Mr. Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's assertion is absolutely wrong.

Oral Questions

In the white paper in 1994 we committed to three major purchases, the armoured personnel carrier, search and rescue helicopters, maritime helicopters and if a deal was favourable, submarines.

The question of submarines is still to be decided and has not been affected by the budget announcement of this week.

The armoured personnel carrier announcement was made last August and search and rescue in October. Those programs will proceed.

With respect to maritime helicopters, as a result of the \$150 million one-time charge two years hence, we will be deferring the maritime helicopter program decision for one further year.

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, one thing is very clear from the Liberal government. It has placed the blame for Canada's growing debt on the men and women of the Canadian armed forces and that is wrong.

The government has promised to foot the bill for some \$23 million for a mission in Haiti and it will not even seek reimbursement from the United Nations, which is normal practice. At the same time it is gutting the defence budget by some \$800 million which will put Canadian sovereignty at risk.

Will the minister agree to reassess each and every overseas mission until it can adequately fund the Canadian Armed Forces or at least make the UN contribute to our costs?

Hon. David Mr. Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party in the last election championed massive spending cuts. In fact, the leader of his party in reply to the Minister of Finance this week said the government is not going fast enough. Now we are told that we should not be cutting in certain areas.

In fact, the Reform Party tried to pose this week as the guarantors of health and other social programs. Canadians will see through this rhetoric.

* * *

[Translation]

CHINESE ORPHANAGES

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. So as not to jeopardize its trade, the Canadian government is closing its eyes to the treatment of babies in Chinese orphanages, abandoning them to their fate. It would appear, however, that people in Canada and Quebec disagree.

Could the minister tell us what kind of concrete measures his government intends to take to put an end to the blatant abuse of human rights in Chinese orphanages?

[English]

Hon. Christine Stewart (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the question.

Federal government officials have visited China. During conversations with officials the issue of the situation with babies and small children in China has been raised. We have told them of our concern about the deplorable conditions we learned about in which some Chinese children are living. We have offered our assistance to help them deal with this situation. We have also referred them to UNICEF. We understand that right now China is in dialogue with UNICEF and that UNICEF will be providing some assistance.

• (1150)

The Government of Canada supports UNICEF financially and we will keep an eye on this issue to make sure there are improvements being made.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows full well what we want, and what the Bloc Québécois has been condemning for many months now. We want an unequivocal condemnation by the Canadian government of children's human rights abuse in Chinese orphanages. Behind the scene dealings will not protect Canada's reputation in the world.

I would like the minister to tell us when her government is finally going to adhere to a consistent policy on the issue of trade and human rights, in order to protect the reputation Canada used to have, and I do mean used to have, throughout the world?

[English]

Hon. Christine Stewart (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is very sympathetic to the issues that the member raises with regard to human rights issues worldwide. We have officially addressed abuses to human rights in China. Among those, we have raised the issue of the conditions in which children and babies find themselves.

The United Nations Human Rights Commission will be convening shortly. The Minister of Foreign Affairs will be attending that meeting in Geneva, along with, we hope, other parliamentarians. We will all have an opportunity to address these very serious issues, not only in China but in other areas of the world where we have serious concerns.

The Canadian government, through CIDA, has also put together a policy on human rights, democratic development and good governance. I would be very happy to share this with any parliamentarian here.

JUSTICE

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

On January 24 the minister appointed Mr. John Desotti of Sudbury, judge of the Ontario court in Sarnia. At the time of this appointment, was the minister aware that a three-year-old, unresolved complaint alleging professional misconduct was pending against Mr. Desotti before the Law Society of Upper Canada?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Yes, Mr. Speaker. In order to be fair to the man and fair to the facts, I hasten to add that I was also aware that the complaint had been investigated and dismissed by the Law Society of Upper Canada.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely clear that it was a three-year case, that a review into the matter was under way and that the appointment by this justice minister simply threw a cloak of immunity over Mr. Desotti and the Law Society of Upper Canada lost jurisdiction as a result of this appointment.

Because of his actions, which violated the fundamental principle of due process and violated the right of the complainants in this case to a fair hearing, I ask the minister what action he will take to have the appointment of Mr. Desotti rescinded until the complaint or the complainant receives a fair and just hearing and to ensure the ethics of the newly appointed judge are no longer in question?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, involvement in public life brings a certain responsibility, including a responsibility to be fair to the reputation of people. I invite the hon. member to bear that in mind.

What is required of us, as responsible public officials, is more than simply to cobble together bits of phrases that sound very righteous and to combine them with indignation.

Mr. Ramsay: Here is the file.

• (1155)

Mr. Rock: Mr. Speaker, I know the facts of this case, so let me tell the House and the hon. member what really happened.

A client complained to the Law Society about Mr. Desotti when he was in practice. The Law Society investigated that complaint and found it without foundation and decided not to proceed. In those circumstances, having regard to the fact that finding had been made and looking at the facts and the nature of the complaint, I exercised my judgment and I brought the man's name forward to cabinet because he is going to be a good judge.

Oral Questions

The client, unhappy with the fact that the complaint had been found without merit, asked for a review by a lay bench of the Law Society. It was while that review was pending that the appointment was made.

Our judgment and our determination was that the appointment was appropriate and I invite the hon. member to be fair to Mr. Desotti and to the system.

* * *

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday it was announced that non-commissioned members of the Canadian forces will receive a 2.2 per cent pay catch-up to bring them in line with federal public salaries. This is welcome news to the men and women who have dedicated their lives to serving of our country.

Will the Minister of National Defence tell the House when these truly deserving members of the Canadian forces can expect this measure to take effect? This is another good news story to follow up on his clarification of the purchase of equipment which he made just a few minutes ago.

Hon. David Mr. Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke for his intervention.

Very few other members in the House have had such a long and distinguished record in support of Canada's armed forces and I think that should be recognized.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Collette: Mr. Speaker, to answer the specific question, this measure, which is long overdue, will take place on April 1 of this year.

I would like to thank publicly the men and women of the armed forces and in particular, the 50,000 non-commissioned members who will be affected by this pay catch-up. These people have made a sacrifice over and above the sacrifice made by public servants in the last couple of years. They were not only caught with the freeze but their catch-up, which was due in the 1990-1993 period, was also caught in the freeze. This measure now corrects that injustice.

The morale of the men and women who serve in the armed forces is particularly good. I saw it last week in Bosnia. I hope this shows Canadians' appreciation for the work and the sacrifice that they have been making over the last few years.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]***CORRECTIONAL SERVICES**

Mr. Bernard St-Laurent (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General.

In her study on the Correctional Service of Canada, Janet Laishes indicates that almost half of the suicides committed by inmates in federal penitentiaries in the last four years occurred in the province of Quebec.

Would the minister therefore acknowledge that the shortage of correctional officers to supervise inmates is one of the main causes of this problem?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has raised an important issue. We are currently reviewing the report he referred to, but I am not ready right now to accept the premise to his question.

* * *

*[English]***GRAIN**

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in the budget the Minister of Finance briefly referred to the disposal of a fleet of grain hopper cars. This issue is extremely important to farmers and they need answers to some questions very soon. They need the government to reveal its intentions or even its inclinations of how it is going to deal with this matter.

Will the Minister of Transport please give the House a couple of simple answers. When will the government dispose of the 13,000 hopper cars and more important, what is the department's asking price? The farmers who are interested in buying should at least know what the numbers are on the price tag.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question. I know him to be a visitor to the transport committee and an interested participant.

• (1200)

In answer to his question on the hopper cars, the current policy of the government is to get out of the business of transportation assets and transportation services. That is a very successful policy. This means we are trying to create efficiencies.

The price, as the hon. member will know, on the hopper cars has yet to be established. That is only fair because, as pointed out earlier this fall, what we have to do as a government is consult with the interested parties, CN and CP, but also there has been a call by

the farmers and the producers who will be using those grain cars and who want to have a say in the opportunity of taking ownership of those 13,300 grain cars.

We will have to get together and establish who will buy those hopper cars but only after all the parties have come to the table for a full and thorough discussion on the matter.

* * *

CHILD CARE

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for the Status of Women.

Page 38 of the red book says:

Quality accessible child care is an economic advantage for Canada. It enables single parents to end dependence on welfare and food banks by re-entering the workforce. It provides direct jobs for Canadians, particularly for women. On average, one person is employed for every five child care spaces created.

It is clear the Prime Minister has abandoned his promise to a national child care program. In the budget the Minister of Finance clearly has abandoned that promise as well. A voucher system is not a child care system.

Will the secretary of state for women state publicly today that she will support a national child care program for Canada?

Ms. Hedy Fry (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism)(Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asked a question that is extremely important. Everything she quoted in the red book is true; it was true then and it is true today.

The Minister of Human Resources Development is looking at how we can continue to keep that promise and implement it. We have to keep the process going. We have to discuss innovative ways we can accomplish this. If we cannot do it with provinces we still have a commitment to do it.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for Secretary of State for the Status of Women.

This week Canadians are celebrating International Women's Week, highlighted by International Woman's Day on March 8. It is an occasion to look back on the accomplishments of women in Canada and across the globe.

What is the government doing to further the cause of women's equality?

Ms. Hedy Fry (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism)(Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for a very good question on a very important day.

The cornerstone of the government's initiatives for equality among women is gender analysis. I said earlier how that empowers and will increase women's economic independence, will look at their social life and will look at their physical well-being.

We talked earlier about some of the initiatives we have taken with regard to child support, with regard to the WIS, with regard to the Canada student loan programs, with regard to employment insurance. By simply applying gender analysis we have looked at hours of work instead of weeks of work because we know so many women work hours in terms of part time jobs and need to get benefits.

We have talked about empowering education and looking at the issues that will help young women get an education. We have talked about the court challenges program and we have done it. We have looked at violence against women. We have looked at female genital mutilation. We have the Firearms Control Act, which will decrease violence against women. We have created centres of excellence for health. I could go on and on.

The Speaker: I have a point of order and then I will make my decision on the point of contempt raised by the hon. member for Beaver River.

* * *

[Translation]

POINTS OF ORDER

DOCUMENTS QUOTED IN THE HOUSE

Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order, pursuant to citation 495 of Beauséjour.

When the Leader of the Government in the House and Solicitor General of Canada quotes from a document, it would be better if this document were to be tabled, so that all members of Parliament can have a copy and stop misquoting it. I refer, of course, to the red book.

• (1205)

[English]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to comply with this well established precedent. Therefore I am pleased to table in the House the document from which I quoted. It is entitled "Creating Opportunity: The Liberal Plan for Canada".

For greater certainty, I present it to the table in both official languages.

[Translation]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I just want to ask you if we need the unanimous consent of the House to table a document.

Privilege

The Speaker: No, there is no need for unanimous consent of the House to table a document. When a minister or any hon. member quotes from a document, he or she has the right to ask for it to be tabled.

[English]

Mr. Gray: Mr. Speaker, because of the great interest in the material I have tabled, I wonder if I could have the unanimous consent of the House to have it printed in its entirety as an appendix to today's *Hansard*.

The Speaker: Does the hon. minister have unanimous consent to put the motion?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in light of the interest of members of Parliament with respect to the section of the red book that refers to child care, I wonder if I could seek unanimous consent to at least have that placed on the permanent record of the House.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to put the motion?

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

SFT COMMUNICATIONS BRIEFING BOOK—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I will now rule on the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Beaver River on Monday, March 4, 1996 concerning the alleged interference of an official of the Prime Minister's office in a request to the printing services of the House.

[Translation]

I want to thank the Deputy Leader of the Government in the House, the Chief Government Whip, the whip of the Reform Party and the hon. member for Mississauga-South for their comments on this question.

[English]

In her submission the hon. member argued that an employee of the Prime Minister's office had attempted to coerce, intimidate and incite the staff of the House of Commons to refuse a request for printing which she had made on February 28. This, she claimed, constituted a contempt of the House and she requested that I rule a prima facie case.

As hon. members know, I did rule on the matter of the printing of this document when it was first raised on February 28. As I noted at that time, the House staff erred by not complying with the request made by the hon. member for Beaver River, which was entirely in accordance with the guidelines of the Board of Internal Economy.

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The document was subsequently printed and I, in the House, apologized to her for any inconvenience. I also met privately with the member and she was made aware of all the circumstances surrounding this matter.

[*Translation*]

The Chair takes very seriously any matter concerning the privileges of members, particularly any matter which may constitute a contempt of the House.

• (1210)

The hon. member for Beaver River is correct in pointing out that new forms of contempt may arise and the House should not be constrained in dealing with them.

[*English*]

In dealing with matters of privilege and contempt, it is the House which determines whether a breach of its privileges or a contempt has occurred. It is the role of the Chair, based on evidence presented by the member, to determine whether or not the alleged contempt is of such importance that the regular business of the House should be set aside to deal with the matter immediately; that is, whether or not the matter is *prima facie*.

Therefore it is the responsibility of any member in raising a question of privilege, particularly a possible contempt, to bring forth sufficient evidence to enable the Speaker to find that a *prima facie* case exists.

[*Translation*]

Beauchesne's, 6th Edition, Citation 117(1) states in part:

Once the claim of breach of privilege has been made, it is the duty of the Speaker to decide if a *prima facie* case can be established. The Speaker requires to be satisfied,—that privilege appears to be sufficiently involved to justify giving such precedence—

[*English*]

Since the original matter was raised on February 28 I have had further discussions with senior House officials. There is no doubt that House staff was responsible for the mismanagement of this printing request.

Since the official from the Prime Minister's office did not initiate the situation but rather reacted based on inquiry from House staff, it is difficult to conclude from the facts presented by the hon. member that the official coerced, intimidated or incited the staff of the House of Commons.

It appears to me that what occurred in this case was done inadvertently and that it represents an unfortunate but isolated incident.

I must find that the hon. member did not provide the Chair with sufficient evidence to allow it to find that a *prima facie* contempt had occurred.

I assure all members that the staff of the House of Commons continues to strive for a high standard of competence and professionalism in the services it officers. However, I do want to remind the staff as well as government officials that in dealing with members of Parliament confidentiality is key and that members must be able to rely on their complete discretion.

[*Translation*]

I would like to thank the hon. member for Beaver River for having raised this very serious issue and assure her, and all members of this Houses, that corrective steps have been put in place to ensure that such an occurrence does not take place again.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B), 1995-96

A message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1996, was presented by the Hon. the President of the Treasury Board and read by the Speaker of the House.

* * *

• (1215)

CANADIAN ARTISTS AND PRODUCERS PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Labour and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) and to section 61 of the Status of the Artist Act, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the first annual report of the Canadian Artists and Producers Professional Relations Tribunal.

Pursuant to Standing Order 32(5), this report is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development.

* * *

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Labour and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 19 petitions presented during the first session.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S WEEK

Ms. Hedy Fry (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism)(Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is International Women's Day. It is a day when men and women around the world join together to mark the achievements of women and the struggles of women, to witness the tragedy of the many women who daily suffer poverty and violence silently and powerlessly. However, it is also a day to celebrate the courage of the world's women, to celebrate the gains they have made toward equality and to pledge support to them as they continue the inexorable march toward economic and social justice.

Today we applaud the remarkable Canadians who have made outstanding contributions toward that struggle for equality. I want to acknowledge one such remarkable individual, Senator Florence Bird, former head of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, journalist and activist.

Later today I will attend the first presentation of the annual Florence Bird award. This award honours the work of a communicator who has succeeded in sensitizing the public to the fact that women's rights are not special interest rights or marginal rights but basic human rights.

Through the efforts of Canadians like Senator Bird and today's award winner Karen Levine, executive producer of CBC Radio's "As it Happens", Canada has earned a reputation for excellence in advancing women's equality. Initiatives such as the Florence Bird award will ensure the important role of public awareness continues. However, public awareness alone will not ensure women's equality. It is only one part of many initiatives that will finally achieve our objective.

[*Translation*]

Our government will continue to do its part to promote equality, for it is a basic Canadian value. It is part of our national identity as well as a source of pride.

[*English*]

This government believes each and every individual group and community in Canada must be treated equally and with respect. As Secretary of State for the Status of Women, I have made the economic equality of women a priority. Women are today among the poorest in our society in Canada and in the world. Poverty of women has a negative impact on the well-being of children, on the economic viability of a nation and on its social structures.

Economic independence is the first step in eradicating poverty, violence and low health status. If women were economically independent, they would be able to create better lives for themselves and their families. They would be better able to contribute to the economy and to the life of a nation and the benefits would accrue to all of us. In the budget we put in place a number of

Routine Proceedings

measures that will improve the economic status of women in all stages of their lives: as mothers, workers, business owners, students and as seniors.

The budget demonstrates our commitment to the federal plan for gender equality which outlines our specific commitment to advance women's equality through the process of gender based analysis. Gender based analysis means that every new policy program and law must be critiqued to see whether it creates a disadvantage to men or women.

Women and men in general experience life differently, economically, socially and physiologically. We need public policy that recognizes those differences. The child support package does exactly that. It recognizes that the majority of custodial parents are women and that many children are poor because their mothers are poor. It will make child support predictable, consistent and fairer for all children and their parents.

The seniors benefit package has made adjustments not only to ensure that low and modest income seniors are better supported but it also recognizes through the splitting of cheques to couples that family income is not always shared equally.

• (1220)

I cannot think of a more appropriate time to announce the child support package and the seniors benefit than during International Women's Week. These initiatives illustrate how good public policy must take a closer look at the reality of men's and women's lives if it wishes to be relevant and effective.

Yet the principle of gender analysis should not be limited to government policy alone. It should be extended to the judicial system, education and health services. It should be a starting point for decision making throughout society, for each one of us has a role to play in creating equality, in building the Canada of tomorrow, a Canada of prosperity, security and hope, a Canada we will be proud to bequeath to our sons and especially to our daughters, a Canada that will continue to stand as a model to the world.

Today on International Women's Day we owe as much to the world's women, their husbands and their children.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on this International Women's Day, I wish to honour women from all walks of life, from all occupations, from all cultures, from all faiths; mothers, single women, women with partners; in short, all women who make up our society.

The main purpose of International Women's Day is to take stock of women's progress toward equality and of what remains to be done.

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The fourth international conference on women, which was held in Beijing earlier this year, was quite helpful in achieving this goal. An action plan was established, which participating countries vowed to implement at home.

As far as Canada is concerned, the Secretary of State for the Status of Women just gave us an overview of her government's efforts to achieve equality for women. This is very good, and I applaud her government's declared commitment to the issue of equality between men and women.

Before outlining some of her government's policies, the secretary of state paid tribute, and with good reason, to a great Canadian, Florence Bird. Needless to say, we wish to join in this tribute. As for myself, I would like to remind the House of the work done by a great Quebecer, Simonne Monet-Chartrand.

This staunch and tireless militant feminist was known throughout Quebec and Canada. Yesterday, the award created in her honour was given to Danielle Fournier, who has been involved with various community-based organizations over the past 16 years.

I would now like to come back to the Canadian policy on the status of women and raise a few questions about the impact it will have on women. The secretary of state said earlier that equality was a basic Canadian value. Very well.

However, this statement raises a few questions and comments as far as I am concerned. First, there is the cost issue. How much is the government prepared to pay to promote equality for women? Let me phrase the question differently: On this International Women's Day, will the government undertake to invest as much in helping women enter the job market as it has already invested and will invest in all its initiatives to promote Canadian unity? If indeed equality for women is a basic Canadian value, is it worth at least \$14 million, or the amount the government plans to spend on propaganda this year?

Women's groups have seen their meagre grants cut by 31 per cent over the past six years, and would certainly be delighted to learn that they can expect to receive \$14 million instead of the \$8,165,000 currently allocated to them this year in Status of Women Canada's estimates. I agree with the principle, but what about the costs?

I have another question, on the same subject. How are equal rights to be interpreted and the sexual equality plan to be used in the context of the three budgets tabled to date by this government?

One might be tempted to adopt a cynical view and wonder if this right is not, in fact, a right to unemployment insurance, to poverty and to income supplements, given that the government did not propose any job creation initiative.

• (1225)

I remind the secretary of state that, in her speech, she referred to economic equality. This raises another issue: how can one achieve

economic equality when one does not have a job and must fight with the government to keep the few miserable dollars that one gets from it to survive? I am anxious to discuss this issue with the secretary of state.

I do not want to use International Women's Day as a pretext to give a negative report on the government. However, I want to stress the importance, in the current context, of solidarity between women, and also between men and women.

It is by working together that we will gradually eliminate the obstacles that still prevent women from enjoying true equality. These obstacles are violence, pornography, poverty, unemployment, pay inequity, sexual exploitation and genital mutilation, to mention just a few.

I believe a great deal of solidarity is required to build a just and fair society. Governments will have to promote that solidarity through every means at their disposal.

In conclusion, I want to remind the House of the conditions in which women from other countries live. This morning, Taslima Nasreen reminded us that, today, elsewhere, many women will be raped, sold, forced to engage in prostitution, repudiated, strangled by their husband, brutalized, disfigured or lapidated because they gave birth to a girl.

I would ask this House to observe one minute of silence for all these women.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Does the House agree?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Editor's Note: The House stood in silence.*]

[*English*]

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to have this opportunity to speak on International Women's Day. It gives me a chance to acknowledge the contributions of women across Canada, not only the professionals but all the women who have had a very positive influence on their families, friends and even on strangers.

It is a pleasure to respond to the comments of the Secretary of State for the Status of Women and Multiculturalism because I too want to talk about equality. The secretary of state said that equality is a fundamental Canadian value. She stated that equality is a right in this country, not a special right but a human right. She went on to state that her government has a strong belief that every person, every group and every community in this country is entitled to equality.

Routine Proceedings

• (1230)

What she did not say is that in spite of its commitment to equality, the Liberal government has passed a great deal of legislation that will treat people differently based on their race, their ethnic background, their language, their physical abilities and their gender.

How can the secretary of state possibly say that the government is interested in equality when a person has to fill out a form about their ethnic background, their aboriginal status, their disabilities or their gender before it decides how they will be treated?

How can the government state that it believes in equality on one hand and then grant distinct society status to some Canadians on the other hand?

Equality is important in this country. Actually it is vital to the existence of this country. But it has to be true equality. It has to mean that all laws apply equally to all Canadians, regardless of race, creed, colour or gender. It has to mean that all Canadians have the same opportunities regardless of race, creed, colour or gender. Only then will this country achieve the true equality that is so essential and vital to the continued existence of our nation.

The secretary of state claims that economic equality is at the forefront of her objectives. She states that many of the issues that women face: poverty, violence and poor health are linked to economic inequity. Does she suggest that marginalizing women is a positive way to deal with and foster equality in Canadian society?

It is an interesting statement that the secretary makes. Is she suggesting that men are spared poverty? Is she suggesting that men are not victims of violent crime? Is she suggesting that men do not suffer from poor health? If she really believes that poor health is only an issue for women, how does she explain that the average Canadian male will only live to 74.5 years while the average Canadian female will live to be 81 years old.

There is no question that poverty, violence and poor health are issues that must concern the federal government. But I would like to think that any fair minded government would be concerned about these issues equally for all Canadians, not just a select group.

However, the government does not appear to be fair minded. Its response to these problems appears to be the creation of, and I quote "the federal plan for gender equality" which will see a gender based analysis of every new policy, program and law.

In other words, the government thinks it can solve the problem of the economic inequality that women face by having a bunch of

highly paid bureaucrats sitting around discussing how everything the government does will impact on women.

If the government is really concerned about the economic situation of women, I will be happy to give them a piece of advice. Quit wasting the taxpayers' money so that women and men can have more money to spend on their families, on their children and on themselves instead of paying higher taxes and the high priced salaries of bureaucrats who are sitting around reviewing legislation for gender inequality.

Striving for equality is a noble pursuit but it has to be true equality. As a baby boomer, I have witnessed a great change in the role of Canadian women. There is no question that there was institutionalized discrimination against women in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

I have had my share of run-ins with male chauvinists who believe that a woman's place is in the home. I have also confronted a great number of females who share that belief. It is not something that only men believe. However, I am happy to say that the vast majority of men and women that I deal with truly believe that men and women should have equal opportunities and be treated equally.

• (1235)

The one noticeable exception is this Liberal government. It still seems to think that women need some form of government intervention to compete with men on an equal basis. I find it somewhat insulting that the government thinks that I need some form of assistance to compete equally with my male colleagues. That may be the case on that side of the House, but I assure you, Mr. Speaker, it is not the case on this side of the House.

If the government is really concerned about creating equality it should remember that to be truly effective, equality, like justice, must be blind. Every Canadian should have the same rights and privileges, as well as the same duties and responsibilities, regardless of their race, their creed, their colour or their gender.

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to seek the unanimous consent of the House to respond on behalf of the New Democratic Party to the ministerial statement.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on International Women's Day I would like to thank and congratulate the new Secretary of State for the Status of Women for her comments. Especially, as this is a day of celebration, I would like to congratulate all of those women, in all walks of life, who

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contribute so much to every community and who bind the country together through the kind of work which they do in the family, in the community, in the business world, in the political world, as homemakers, as truck drivers, whatever profession or work the women are doing. I want to congratulate every woman who has made a substantial contribution historically to the country.

In terms of the federal government's commitment to women, about which the minister spoke, I have no doubt that in a rhetorical sense the government is committed to the advancement of women. However, the proof of what one says is really in what one does.

In relation to the budget, which the secretary of state presented in such favourable terms, I would like to know how the ending of a national child care program and reducing grants to women's organizations by 5 per cent, which already work on very limited funds without core funding, contributes to the equality of women. How does a reduction in provincial and territorial federal transfers, which means a reduction in social programs, contribute to the advancement of women? How does the federal government's refusal to pay the outstanding amount of pay equity that is due to women working for the federal public service—some 80,000 women are owed \$1.5 billion, as has been directed by the human rights commission—contribute to the advancement of women. Finally, how in this budget, with a lack of focus on jobs, can this government be seen to be furthering the equality of women?

Similarly, I would like to know how the changes to the unemployment insurance system and the lack of benefits for women in many areas of this country, such as seasonal workers and part time workers, can in any way further the equality of women.

With respect to the budget the government certainly deserves to receive a D minus on furthering equality for women. The Secretary of State for the Status of Women must deal openly and honestly with women when she is talking about her general commitment.

We still, because of the economic policies of this and prior governments, are dealing with an increasing gap between the rich and the poor. One in five children in this country live in poverty. We have a long way to go.

On this International Women's Day I would challenge the secretary of state responsible for women to seriously address the issues which I have raised with respect to child care and facilitating independence for women and families. I would seriously challenge her to deal with the issue of violence against women, pornography and the inequities which still remain with the huge wage gaps between women and men in most non-unionized sectors.

Finally, I hope that on International Women's Day the government and all members of the House will join me in celebrating the women of this country and their work and will commit to working for equality, in all fields, for women in Canada and abroad.

• (1240)

WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAM ACT

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (for Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce a Bill C-13, an act to provide for the establishment and operation of a program to enable certain persons to receive protection in relation to certain inquiries, investigations or prosecutions.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I wish to state that this bill is in the same form as Bill C-78 of the first session of the 35th Parliament at the time of prorogation. I therefore request that it be reinstated as provided in the special order adopted on March 4, 1996.

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The Chair is satisfied that this bill is in the same form as Bill C-78 was at the time of prorogation of the first session of the 35th Parliament.

* * *

CANADA TRANSPORTATION ACT

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (for Minister of Transport) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-14, an act to continue the National Transportation Agency as the Canadian Transportation Agency, to consolidate and revise the National Transportation Act 1987 and the Railway Act, and to amend or repeal other acts as a consequence thereof.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I wish to state that this bill is in the same form as Bill C-101 of the first session of the 35th Parliament at the time of prorogation. I therefore request that it be reinstated as provided in the special order adopted on March 4, 1996.

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

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The Chair is satisfied that this bill is in the same form as Bill C-101 was at the time of prorogation of the first session of the 35th legislature.

Therefore, in accordance with the motion passed Monday, March 4, 1996, the bill is deemed to have been studied by the Standing Committee on Transport and reported with amendments.

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[English]

BANK ACT

Hon. Douglas Peters (for the (Minister of Finance, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-15, an act to amend, enact and repeal certain laws relating to financial institutions.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I wish to state that this bill is in the same form as Bill C-100 of the first session of 35th Parliament at the time of prorogation. I therefore request that it be reinstated as provided in the special order adopted on March 4, 1996.

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The Chair is satisfied that this bill is in the same form as Bill C-100 was at the time of prorogation of the first session of the 35th Parliament.

Accordingly pursuant to an order made Monday, March 4, 1996 the bill is deemed to have been read the second time, considered by the Standing Committee on Finance and reported with amendments.

* * *

• (1245)

[Translation]

CONTRAVENTIONS ACT

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Labour and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce a bill entitled an act to amend the Contraventions Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

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

* * *

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (for Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-17, an act to amend the Criminal Code and certain other acts.

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

* * *

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ACT

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (for Minister of Health) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-18, an act to establish a Department of Health and to amend and repeal certain acts.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill is in the same form as Bill C-95 of the first session of the 35th Parliament at the time of prorogation. I therefore request that it be reinstated as provided in the special order adopted on March 4.

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The Chair is satisfied that this bill is in the same form as Bill C-95 at the time of prorogation of the first session of the 35th Parliament.

Accordingly, pursuant to order made Monday, March 4, the bill is deemed to have been read the second time, considered by the Standing Committee on Health and reported with amendments.

* * *

INTERVENOR FUNDING ACT

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-229, an act to provide for funding for intervenors in hearings before certain boards and agencies.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill is in the same form as Bill C-339 at the time of prorogation of the first session of the 35th Parliament. I request that it be reinstated pursuant to special order of March 4.

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The Chair is satisfied that this bill is in the same form as Bill C-339 at the time of prorogation of the first session of the 35th Parliament.

Accordingly, pursuant to order made Monday, March 4, the bill is deemed to have been read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

* * *

NEGOTIATION TERMS OF SEPARATION ACT

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-230, an act to provide for a national referendum to authorize the government to negotiate terms of separation with a province that has voted for separation from Canada.

He said: Mr. Speaker, today I am tabling an act to provide for a national referendum. It would set conditions which must be met before the federal government can negotiate terms of separation with a province that has voted to leave Canada.

Democratically, the first condition must be to ensure that separation really is the will of the majority. Therefore my bill requires Parliament to determine whether advanced advertisement for a provincial separation referendum, as well as the ballots themselves, stated in both official languages that a yes vote means becoming a foreign state, losing representation in Parliament,

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losing Canadian citizenship and passport and losing the unrestricted right to enter, travel and work in Canada.

My bill challenges the separatists to follow some rules. If they do, my bill requires Canada to hold a binding national referendum authorizing Canada to negotiate. This bill would establish a framework in which both the people of Quebec and all Canadians would have their say on the future of our country.

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

* * *

● (1250)

[*Translation*]

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B)

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 81(5) and 81(6), I wish to introduce a motion concerning the referral of the estimates to the standing committees of the House.

There is a lengthy list associated with the motion. If it is agreeable to the House, I would ask that the list be printed in Hansard as if it had been read.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Massé: Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1996, tabled March 8, 1996, be referred to the standing committees of the House in accordance with the attached detailed allocation:

[*Editor's Note: List referred to above is as follows:*]

To the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Votes 1b, 5b, 6b, 7b, 15b, 36b, 37b, 40b and 45b

To the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food
Agriculture and Agri-Food, Votes 1b and 15b

To the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage
Canadian Heritage, Votes 1b, 10b, 26b, 27b, 40b, 45b, 60b, 70b, 75b, 85b, 90b, 100b, 101b, 110b, 115b and 145b

To the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration
Citizenship and Immigration, Votes 1b and 5b

To the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development
Privy Council, Vote 30b

To the Standing Committee on Finance
Finance, Votes 31b and 55b
National Revenue, Votes 1b and 5b

To the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans
Fisheries and Oceans, Votes 1b and 5b

To the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade
Foreign Affairs, Votes 1b, 10b, 20b and 21b

To the Standing Committee on Government Operations
Parliament, Vote 1b
Canadian Heritage, Vote 140b
Privy Council, Vote 1b
Public Works and Government Services, Votes 2b, 10b, 15b, 20b, 22b, 23b and 30b
Treasury Board, Vote 10b

To the Standing Committee on Health
Health, Votes 10b, 15b and 30b

To the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development
Human Resources Development, Votes 1b, 10b, 15b and 30b

To the Standing Committee on Industry
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Votes 1b and 5b
Industry, Votes 5b, 10b, 30b, 65b, 75b, 90b, 95b and 105b
Western Economic Diversification, Vote 1b

To the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs
Justice, Votes 1b, 5b, 20b, 25b, 35b and 45b
Solicitor General, Votes 1b, 15b, 20b, 25b, 35b, 40b and 50b

To the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs
National Defence, Votes 1b and 10b
Veterans Affairs, Votes 1b and 21b

To the Standing Committee on Natural Resources
Natural Resources, Votes 1b, 20b, 35b and 40b

To the Standing Committee on Transport
Transport, Votes 10b, 25b, 35b and 36b

(Motion agreed to.)

Routine Proceedings

[English]

PETITIONS

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to table in the House today. The first is signed by constituents from Kindersley—Lloydminster in the Kindersley area.

The petition states that the Liberals made commitments to the Canadian public, many of them pre-election promises which have now been disregarded or ignored by the Liberal government. The Canadian public is becoming more and more cynical of its elected officials because of these antics; most recently with the Liberals' promise to eliminate the goods and services tax, a promise which it has broken.

Therefore the petitioners request that Parliament oppose and condemn the federal government's plan to rework the goods and services tax into a value added tax which may be expanded to foodstuffs and prescription drugs.

PORT OF CHURCHILL

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from the communities of Eston and Elrose calling on the federal government to make sure there is full utilization of the port of Churchill to improve the economies of the prairie provinces and Canada as well.

The petitioners call on the federal government to act immediately to develop a strategy in order to utilize this important seaport to ship other exports as well as grain. They pray and call on the House to direct the minister responsible for the wheat board to ensure that for the upcoming shipping season the port is used to its maximum and at the very least 5 per cent of Canada's annual grain shipments be shipped through the port of Churchill.

TAXATION

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Third, Mr. Speaker, I have a petition that perhaps is a bit late but which may be appropriate for next year as well. It was anticipating the budget which was read a few days ago, prior to my being able to table this.

The petitioners are also from my riding, in the Kindersley-Coleville area as well as Brock and Biggar. They are telling the federal government they are paying approximately 52 per cent of the cost of a litre of gasoline to the government in the form of taxes. Last year the tax was increased by 1.5 cents per litre in the federal budget. They are hearing rumours that it may be increased by 2 cents per litre.

The petitioners also say that in the past 10 years the excise tax on gasoline has increased by 566 per cent and they do not want any more tax increases on gas in this budget or, I presume, in future budgets.

I am glad to present these petitions on behalf of my constituents.

VETERANS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from the good constituents of the riding of Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte who will shortly be well represented again by another Liberal MP, Gerry Byrne.

These petitioners are calling on Parliament to consider extending the advisability of compensation to veterans of the merchant navy to the status equivalent to other veterans.

• (1255)

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present. The first contains 1,500 signatures of constituents from the riding of Comox—Alberni, largely from Port Alberni.

The petitioners request that Parliament allow Canadian citizens to vote directly in a national binding referendum on the restoration of the death penalty for first degree murder convictions.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in this petition the petitioners request that Parliament recognize the right of conscientious objectors to not pay for the military.

* * *

[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Labour and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions stand.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement, Government Orders will be extended by 23 minutes.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***CANADA LABOUR CODE**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-3, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code (nuclear undertakings) and to make a related amendment to another act, be read a second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. George Proud (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, prior to question period when I was speaking on Bill C-3, I talked about the concerns some members have regarding the possible discrepancies between federal and provincial employment standards. As I said, this is not so.

Although the standards are not identical under federal and provincial laws, they are comparable. Of course these are minimum standards only. Collective agreements and company policies often exceed these minimums.

Consider the case of the collective agreement that applies to the power workers in Ontario for the most part. Its provisions exceed the labour standards of both the Canada Labour Code and the Ontario Employment Standards Act. By way of example, the Canada Labour Code provides for nine holidays with pay, the Ontario law for eight. The collective agreement at Ontario Hydro exceeds these levels with 10 holidays.

[Translation]

I will give the House another example of labour standards. Let us take the example of hours of work. An employee's hours of work are limited in two ways.

[English]

First, payment of overtime at a rate of one and one-half times the regular rate is required after eight hours in a day and 40 hours in a week under the Canada Labour Code, and after 44 hours in a week under the Ontario Employment Standards Act. Second, there exists a maximum limit on hours of work, which is 48 hours under the

Canada Labour Code, and eight hours in a day and 48 hours under the Ontario law.

At the same time flexibility is essential to a well managed operation, so both federal and Ontario law allows for employees to work in excess of the legislated maximums in the case of an emergency or by a permit. Where a permit has been issued under Ontario law, such work requires the consent of the employees' representatives.

The collective agreement between Ontario Hydro and the Power Workers Union meets or exceeds these standards. I could go on with further examples but hon. members can see that having all provincial labour laws apply to Ontario Hydro's nuclear workers is the best guarantee for stability at Ontario Hydro.

For that reason I ask that all hon. members support the passage of Bill C-3. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this bill today and I look forward to its early passage.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

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

An hon. member: On division.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

It is not the government's intention to proceed with any other legislation this afternoon. I therefore call upon the Chair to call it 2.30 p.m., the regular time of adjournment.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Pursuant to Standing Order 24, the House stands adjourned until Monday, March 11 at 11 a.m.

(The House adjourned at 1.01 p.m.)

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MAIL  POSTE

Canada Post Corporation/Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

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