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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, October 23, 1997

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 23, 1997

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

• (1000)

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now ready to render a ruling on the matters raised by the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton on October 7, 1997 and by the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River on October 2, 1997. These matters concern the delivery of legislative counsel services to all private members.

I want to thank other members who also made comments on this question.

[*Translation*]

Following the earlier submission made by the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River, I suggested that he speak with his representative on the Board of Internal Economy, since administrative matters of this sort come under its responsibility.

When dealing with similar questions, my predecessors have repeatedly indicated that these should be brought to the attention of the Board of Internal Economy and should not be raised on the floor of the House as a point of order nor as a question of privilege.

• (1005)

[*English*]

Although presented as a question of privilege, the matters raised by the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton involve, in my view, basic administrative issues.

As Speaker Sauvé indicated in two rulings on December 15, 1982, complaints or grievances dealing with the delivery of services by the legislative counsel, and in particular the drafting of private members' public bills, do not constitute the basis for a question of privilege but are, indeed, questions concerning the

services of the House. I refer hon. members to the *Debates* of December 5, 1982, pages 21603 to 21605.

I must therefore rule that the matters raised by the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton do not deal with privileges of members or of the House.

That being said, I wish to reassure hon. members that the matter will be revisited by the Board of Internal Economy. As a governing body of the House of Commons, the Board of Internal Economy has a long statutory history, originating in 1868. Initially composed of five members, its powers were essentially the same as they are today.

In 1985, however, in order to meet members' demands for opposition and backbench representation from that body, the membership of the board was increased to nine members. The intent of this recommendation was to enable private members to have "an effective voice in the decisions governing the management of the House".

[*Translation*]

Despite the fact that only four of the nine members are from the backbenches, their opinions and input are crucial, as the practice of the board is to arrive at its decisions by consensus.

[*English*]

Let me now refer to the power and authority of the board as provided in section 52.3 of the Parliament of Canada Act:

The Board shall act on all financial and administrative matters respecting

- (a) the House of Commons, its premises, its services and its staff; and
- (b) the members of the House of Commons.

In other words, the Board of Internal Economy is entrusted with specific administrative oversight functions such as the delivery of legislative counsel services to members.

[*Translation*]

I understand the concerns of members in respect of the legislative counsel services provided to them by the House. As your Speaker and also Chair of the Board of Internal Economy, I would like to take this occasion to briefly comment further on this matter.

[*English*]

The board reviewed this matter in the last Parliament when it established a subcommittee to consider proposed options and

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alternatives for the delivery of legislative counsel services to House committees and to private members.

At the time, the subcommittee considered many related issues which are still relevant today and which make this matter more complex than simply throwing more resources at it.

There is, for instance, the matter of what exactly is the proper function of legislative counsel, whether in respect of private members' public bills or government bills at committee or at report stage.

On some occasions, counsel, who are House staff responsible to the Speaker, are asked to play the role of advocate in the sense of explaining and defending private members' legislative initiatives.

There is also the practice of legislative counsel giving priority on a first come, first serve basis which is sometimes challenged by caucus and legislative priorities.

Finally, there is the fact that over half the private members' bills drafted in the last Parliament were never introduced in the House by private members.

As your Speaker I have taken to heart the concerns expressed by members regarding these services. In my capacity as chair of the Board of Internal Economy, I have already asked the board to conduct a review of these issues as it is the body designated to, by statute, act on all financial and administrative matters of the House.

I therefore invite members to submit their concerns directly to the board.

[*Translation*]

I thank you for allowing me to clarify the Chair's position on this very important matter.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1010)

[*English*]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the report of the administration of the House of Commons for the 35th Parliament.

* * *

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A), 1997-98

A message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting supplementary estimates (A) for the financial year ending March 31, 1998 was presented by the President of the Treasury Board and read by the Speaker to the House.

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation to the 38th annual meeting of the Canada-United States interparliamentary group which was held in Sydney, Nova Scotia and Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island from September 11 to September 15 of this year.

The meetings, like previous ones, outline the close personal and interpersonal relations between Canada and the United States. While we do not always agree on all aspects of this issue, we had the opportunity to honestly exchange viewpoints and information in a friendly manner showing the mutual respect that each country has for one another.

At the historic fortress of Louisburg we dealt with many important issues. Trade and economic matters, global peace and security and transport are questions that affect the billion dollars worth of trade a day going across our borders. We have not been able to directly resolve some of these important issues but we had the opportunity of putting forward in the strongest terms Canada's position as we approach the millennium.

Unfortunately the Pacific salmon dispute tainted the tremendous relationship that exists between the province of British Columbia, indeed all Canadians, and in particular the states of Washington, Alaska and Oregon.

With this in mind it was the consensus of all those attending, the Senate from the United States, the House of Representatives and members of Canadian Parliament, that they should convene a meeting on the west coast to deal with those issues that are supportive of the friendly relations that exist between the two countries. We will pursue that and advise the House accordingly as we proceed down that path.

* * *

• (1015)

[*Translation*]

CUSTOMS TARIFF

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-11, an Act respecting the imposition of duties of customs and other charges, to give effect to the International Convention on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, to provide relief against the imposition of certain duties of customs or other charges, to provide for other related matters and to amend or repeal certain Acts in consequence thereof.

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

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[English]

**ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE
SUPERANNUATION ACT**

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-12, an act to amend the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act.

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

* * *

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-264, an act to amend the Access to Information Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this private member's bill would introduce 46 substantial amendments to the Access to Information Act, in effect, overhauling it entirely.

It is an act that is of great interest to every member in the Chamber. Therefore, I would ask for unanimous consent to be allowed to speak for three minutes on my private member's bill and for it subsequently to go directly on to the order of precedence.

The Deputy Speaker: I will deal with the member's request after getting the bill introduced.

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

Mr. John Bryden: Mr. Speaker, I would request that you rule on my request for unanimous consent now, so that I can carry on with my remarks since I was in the middle of making them.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member has requested consent to speak for three minutes at this time on the bill and then have the bill placed on the Order Paper in the order of precedence.

Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: There is not unanimous consent.

* * *

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A)

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEES

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 move a motion concerning the referral of the estimates to the standing committees of the House.

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Marcel Massé moved:

That Supplementary Estimates (A), for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1998 laid upon the table on October 23, 1997, be referred to the several standing committees of the House in accordance with the detailed allocation attached.

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

- (1) To the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
 - Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Votes 1a, 5a, 15a, L20a, L25a, 35a, 40a and 50a
- (2) To the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food
 - Agriculture and Agri-Food, Votes 1a, 5a, 10a and 11a
- (3) To the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage
 - Canadian Heritage, Votes 1a, 5a, 10a, L21, 30a, 35a, 45a, 70a, 80a, 90a, 110a, 125a and 130a
- (4) To the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration
 - Citizenship and Immigration, Votes 1a and 10a
- (5) To the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development
 - Environment, Votes 1a, 5a, 10a and 15a
- (6) To the Standing Committee on Finance
 - Finance, Votes 1a, 15a and 40a
 - National Revenue, Vote 1a
- (7) To the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans
 - Fisheries and Oceans, Votes 1a, 5a and 10a
- (8) To the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade
 - Foreign Affairs, Votes 1a, 5a, 10a, 20a, 25a and 45a
- (9) To the Standing Committee on Health
 - Health, Votes 1a, 10a, 15a and 30a
- (10) To the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities
 - Human Resources Development, Votes 1a, 5a, 10a, 15a, 20a and 35a
- (11) To the Standing Committee on Industry
 - Industry, Votes 1a, 5a, 20a, 25a, 30a, 35a, 55a, 60a, 65a, 70a, 75a, 80a, 85a, 95a, 110a, 115a and 120a
- (12) To the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights
 - Justice, Votes 1a, 5a, 10a, 30a, 33a, 40a and 45a
 - Solicitor General, Votes 1a, 5a, 10a, 15a, 25a, 30a, 45a and 50a
- (13) To the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs

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- National Defence, Votes 1a, 5a, and 10a
- Veterans Affairs, Votes 1a and 10a

(14) To the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Government Operations

- Canadian Heritage, Vote 135a
- Natural Resources, Votes 1a and 10a
- Parliament, Vote 1a
- Privy Council, Votes 1a and 5a
- Public Works and Government Services, Votes 1a, 5a, 15a, 20a and 31a
- Treasury Board, Votes 1a and 10a

(15) To the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

- Parliament, Vote 5a

(16) To the Standing Committee on Transport

- Transport, Votes 1a, 5a, 10a and 31a

(17) To the Standing Committee on Library of Parliament

- Parliament, Vote 10a

(18) To the Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages

- Privy Council, Vote 25a

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

● (1020)

PETITIONS**THE FAMILY**

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today in the House of Commons to present a petition signed by 36 residents of my constituency who reside in Quesnel, British Columbia. My constituents request Parliament's support of a motion that was introduced by the member of Parliament for Yorkton—Melville which states:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Government should authorize a proclamation to be issued by the Governor General under the Great Seal of Canada amending section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to (a) recognize the fundamental right of individuals to pursue family life free from undue interference by the state and (b) recognize the fundamental right and responsibility of parents to direct the upbringing of their children, and urge the legislative assemblies of the other provinces to do likewise.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present from constituents in my riding and from others in the region several petitions.

The first one relates to the issue of nuclear weapons. Whereas there are over 30,000 nuclear weapons on earth, the petitioners call on Parliament to support the immediate initiation and conclusion by the year 2000 of an international convention that will set out a binding timetable for the abolition of all nuclear weapons.

NUCLEAR REACTORS

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition that relates to the sale of Candu reactors to China.

The petitioners call on Parliament to immediately withdraw from all arrangements concerning financial and technical assistance to China for nuclear reactor technology, and to ensure that the Government of Canada does not finance or subsidize the sale of Candu reactors to China or any other country.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a further petition that calls on Parliament to lift the GST off books and reading materials in Canada.

HIGHWAYS

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a final petition regarding the national highway system. It calls on Parliament to urge the federal government to join with the provincial governments to make a national highway system upgrading possible beginning in 1997.

PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS COMPENSATION FUND

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition today from my constituency of Mississauga South.

The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that police officers and firefighters are required to place their lives at risk on a daily basis, and that the benefits that police officers and firefighters receive for their families when they lose their lives in the line of duty are often insufficient to meet the needs of their families, and that all the public mourn the loss of police officers and firefighters who lose their lives in the line of duty.

The petitioners therefore pray and call on Parliament to establish a public safety officers compensation fund for the benefit of families of public safety officers, including police officers, firefighters, et cetera, who lose their lives in the service of Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—CANADIAN FISHING INDUSTRY

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC) moved:

That this House recognize the urgent need for action to address the serious problems in Canadian fisheries on both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, and calls upon the government to establish a comprehensive national fisheries policy that demonstrates real commitment to resource conservation, leadership on the issue of resource sharing with foreign interests, and sensitivity to the individuals, families and communities whose futures are linked to the health and sustainability of the Canadian fishing industry.

• (1025)

He said: I am honoured today to have the privilege of moving the very first motion of the Progressive Conservative caucus in this House on an opposition day on an issue that requires urgent attention, given recent events.

I would also remind the Chair that only a few days ago we pressed the Chair for an emergency debate, given the last set of events. We were unsuccessful in obtaining that debate, but we are using the very first opportunity available to us to put this matter before the House.

The crisis in the fishery on the east coast and on the west coast did not happen overnight. It is important, as we begin this debate, if we are going to have any intelligent discussion about its future, to recognize that the issues are complex. The issues we are dealing with today have developed over many years.

If the answers were easy, frankly, we would have solved a number of problems. In all honesty, we all have to recognize that the problems are not easy to solve. Governments, both provincial and federal, have grappled with these issues, with success in some cases. However we must recognize today, having done our best in some circumstances, nonetheless we are faced with a real crisis on both coasts.

The fishing industry affects the communities, the men, the women and a lot of rural areas across this country.

[Translation]

Not one region of the country is unaffected by this issue, by this crisis in the fisheries, whether they be in the Atlantic provinces, on the coast, in Gaspé, or in Ontario or some other place where they are directly or indirectly connected to the industry. I scarcely need to point out that the entire Canadian population is affected.

[English]

I would like to refer to the crisis in the salmon industry in British Columbia. That industry employs thousands of hard working men

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and women. The salmon industry accounts for about 30% of the total wholesale value of the west coast fishing industry.

Last year in B.C. was the lowest year in 36 years of commercial fleet revenues, totalling less than half the average of the 1990s. That in itself tells a story.

Poor resource management tops the list of reasons for the decline. Other factors that have brought the west coast salmon fishing industry to its knees include habitat destruction, changes in the ocean's climate—a complex issue which also affects the east coast—poaching, overfishing, new technology and overcapacity in the industry.

The issue of overcapacity is not new. For a number of years various commissions of inquiry have studied the issue. Task forces, one after another, have all commented on the very important problem of overcapitalization within the commercial salmon fleet and have recommended that the number of vessels be significantly reduced.

Among those within the B.C. industry, there is widespread recognition of the necessity to reduce the fleet. Less obvious is the question of the best way to make it happen. What is apparent is that the approach taken by the Liberal government to date has not worked.

In the spring of last year the federal government unveiled its Pacific salmon revitalization plan and presented it as a panacea for the problems in the B.C. fishing industry. It was called the Mifflin plan. It called for a speedy reduction of about 50% of the capacity of the commercial salmon fleet. Single-gear ships and area licensing would be implemented, as well as license stacking.

The people who knew the industry at the time, it needs to be said, told the government that this plan would not work, that the plan was flawed. The people who support their families through their hard work and earn their living through this industry in rural communities along the coast of British Columbia were the ones who spoke up. They told the government that this plan was a mistake. They told the government that the management strategy had to be longer term, that the pace of fleet reduction must be within the industry's capacity to absorb, and most of all it must be within the capacity of individual communities and families to absorb these very important changes.

I regret to say that the government did not listen. What we got was the typical Ottawa knows best and “We are on the eve of an election campaign and we have to move”. The Liberal government chose to move ahead with its plan.

• (1030)

Guess what happened. People were right. Strong opposition to the Mifflin plan expressed valid fears that it would wipe out

Supply

smaller fishers and home fleets in the coastal communities, concentrating the industry and fishing in larger boats in urban areas. In too many cases that is exactly what has happened as people have been thrown out of work and communities have been crippled by the implementation of this plan.

Not only that, but from the point of view of resource sustainability that must be the cornerstone of anything we undertake. In fact this is the very essence of the motion we have put before the House today. From the perspective of how we will maintain and manage this resource, this plan is a dismal failure. While it sought reduction to the actual number of boats there was no component to address total fishing effort.

What has it meant? It has meant that fewer boats are taking the same amount of salmon out of the water. The result is that we now have zero salmon stock conservation benefits. That is the net effect of the Mifflin plan.

The Liberal government has demonstrated a fondness about talking or doing some consultation in this area. A good example of it is that most of the consultation including some announced recently has not come before the implementation of the plan but after the implementation of the plan. Quite a consultation it will be.

Having inflicted this mess on the men and women of British Columbia and the salmon fishery over the course of the 1996 fishing season, the government now apparently scratches its head, shrugs and decides that maybe it is time that it actually talk to the people concerned and affected by the changes. Together with the provincial government they have formed a three member panel to study the effects of the Mifflin plan, study the damages they have inflicted on the people of British Columbia, to find out just how badly thought out it was.

I am sorry to report, without having the benefit of consultation, that what we know from the implementation of the plan is that some of the damage now incurred in these communities may very well be irrevocable. Many have already been forced out of the industry and those who remain have borrowed hundreds of thousands of dollars to stack licences. Now that they have borrowed the money and have not been able to generate the revenue to pay off the loan they are stuck. They are stuck in the plan. They cannot walk away from it. They cannot walk away from their commitments. They cannot walk away from their licences. They are struck within the whole framework.

Let me refer to the Liberal record on managing the Pacific fishery documented in the 1996 report for the B.C. Job Protection Commission. The imposition of an ill-conceived Mifflin plan on top of what was already a poor salmon season last year resulted in the loss of 7,800 direct jobs. If we apply the multiplier it means almost 20,000 jobs have been lost. That is the net result.

The impact of job losses, it needs to be stated, was felt the most in isolated communities, predominantly native communities with few alternatives of employment for the people in those communities. They are the ones in British Columbia who are now suffering the most from the plan.

One such community is Masset, British Columbia, home of about 1,500 people on the Queen Charlotte Island. It is just one rural place where as a direct result of the government's fisheries mismanagement the local fish processing plant closed down and left people without work.

I quote from a letter from someone who lives in that community, a woman who said:

—Fisheries and Oceans Canada seems to be slowly and systematically reallocating the catch away from the traditional commercial fishing sector, upon which our small community relies. I would add that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has seen fit to send a letter to the Sports Fishing Institute of B.C. indicating that the recreational fishermen can expect an allocation of chinook salmon in 1997. There has been no indication of any allocation to the traditional commercial sector.

That is the sector most affected. Would this be what the government considers leadership in managing our fisheries? If the Liberals think that responsible public policies means taking shots at the little guy and if success is choking off the viability of rural communities along the coast of British Columbia, I am sorry to report today that the Liberal government would have succeeded.

• (1035)

For the longest period the east coast has been dramatically affected by this issue. There are very grave problems in the policies of the government with regard to the east coast fishery. We have had a lot of pronouncements, posturing, endless study and so-called initiatives, but it all speaks to the broader issue of the management of the fishery on the east coast.

One of the reasons we chose to raise the issue as a caucus in the House of Commons today is that the auditor general spoke on it so vividly in the report produced only a few days ago. In particular he spoke about the management of the TAGS program.

The auditor general is a servant of the House. He does not report to any particular department in government. He does not report to cabinet. He reports to us, Mr. Speaker: to you, to me and to members of the House. The auditor general is at arm's length from the government.

He offered a very vivid report in which he said there was no management plan for the fishery. In the context of TAGS he pointed to it as being the major flaw which explains the dismal failure of the TAGS program.

Throughout most of the Atlantic region cod stocks are at historic low levels. Debate continues about the contributing factors. There

are many, as I said earlier in my remarks. It would be nice if we could say in this debate what is precisely wrong. I would like to be able to say that, or that one government decision was wrong over 30 years. If we were able to do that I would feel better. Why? Then we could fix the problem overnight. We could actually do what we are all here to do and help the people involved.

Whether it is the inshore fishers, offshore fleets, cold water temperature, size of quota, size of mesh, age of fish harvested, availability of food, the seal population, accessibility or reliable scientific debate, all these things affect the decisions we make. We are all prepared to acknowledge that the collapse of major stocks in the Atlantic ground fishery is a complex problem.

As with any complicated question it may be understandable that the solutions are not necessarily easy. The point of the debate today is to look to the future and the men and women who are in the industry now. What is inexcusable and unforgivable is that there is not a plan for the future. There is not an exercise of leadership on the government side that offers hope with regard to what must be done for the future.

The crisis in fishery management has been devastating for the communities and the families on the east coast. Literally hundreds of fishing communities have been seriously affected. By 1995 the groundfish fishery accounted for only 8% of the total catch, the value of landings on the Atlantic coast.

What answer was cooked up? It was the TAGS program. That was the government's answer announced with a great deal of fanfare in 1994. A lot of key code words were in there.

I will quote some that were part of the plan. It was to "provide an integrated approach to capacity reduction". It was to "call for partnerships with all stakeholders". It included "career planning and employment counselling" and "sustainable development in Canada's long term economic development". These words were associated with the \$1.9 billion allocation of funds, with a view to retiring licences. TAGS would have removed approximately 23% of the groundfish licences in place at that time.

This is much less than half the original target and will still leave 10,000 groundfish licences in place. The TAGS component of the program directed at retiring licences has failed even though \$1.9 billion has been put toward this effort.

What did the auditor general have to say about the government's success in achieving its objectives? In his recent report he drew the following conclusion:

Groundfish harvesting capacity was not significantly reduced through TAGS measures. Active labour adjustment measures were halted, and whether they actually contributed to reducing the number of persons dependent on the industry is not known.

Supply

Excess fishing capacity remains, and poses a major risk to the sustainability of the fishing industry.

• (1040)

That is a real indictment of the government. It was not by someone in the Chamber, not by someone with any partisan axe to grind, not by someone involved in the industry, but by an officer of the House of Commons who reports independently to us and has at his disposal the tools to evaluate these programs. He has indicted the government on TAGS for its failure to the men and women of Atlantic Canada.

We have a program that will run out of money six months before it is scheduled to without any sense or any indication. Every time I travel to the Atlantic, whether it is with my colleague from Burin—St. George, St. John's West or St. John's East, the people in the community always raise the same issue. How is it that the government came forward with the TAGS program, said it would be a five year program and now is telling us that will be over in four years?

Their lives have been disrupted. They have had to reorganize their families. They try to plan for the future. They planned for the next five years on the reasonable expectation that the government would meet its commitment. Now they are told "Do you know what, Harry? Do you know what, Bill? Do you know what, Selma? The program will end in four years and not five. We are sorry. You may have wanted to continue on to school but it is over. We are the Government of Canada in Ottawa. We know best". Tough luck is the message they are getting from the government. It is a cruel message to people who are in a position where they are vulnerable, weak and in transition.

The Auditor General of Canada seems to see that and understand that but for some reason the government does not seem to hear the message. That is not new. Maybe we should not be surprised.

My colleague from the riding of Saint John, New Brunswick, fought very hard for good reason in the House of Commons when the employment insurance legislation was brought in. The legislation had hidden behind it a reduction of \$33 million in benefits to the fishers in Atlantic Canada through a regulation.

The member for Saint John, who is with me today in the House of Commons—I remember it well—had me sign a petition so there could be debate on the regulation, not change it but debate it. She went to the Liberal caucus. There were 31 members of the Liberal caucus from Atlantic Canada out of 32. She asked them not to change the regulation but to sign a petition so we could debate it in the House of Commons and Canadians could hear what we had to say. Not one member would sign the petition. This was over and above everything else.

Finally, if we are to be successful in dealing with the issue we have to press the government, the House and all political parties to

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look to the future and move to a plan based on maintaining resource conservation, which has to be the cornerstone. Canada is a resource based economy whether it is the fishing industry, the forestry industry, the mining industry, the agriculture industry, the energy industry, hydrocarbons or hydroelectric energy.

Those who understand our economy would know that maintaining these resources on a sustainable basis is key to our future economic success and the success of our children. The same is true for the fishing industry.

The government needs to answer the cry of Canadians who want to know what exactly it intends to do so that they can move ahead and allow the industry to survive in the future.

I followed with great interest the debate of the government on the Pacific salmon treaty signed in 1985. Certainly from my own experience I freely offer some advice to the government today. I do not know whether it will be followed. I refer to an issue I dealt with in the 1990s when I was minister of the environment.

With my colleague at the time, the minister of fisheries, we fought hard in the international community to get an international convention on overfishing at the summit in Rio de Janeiro on the environment and the economy. We were successful. We did it in only six months. But we were successful for a reason. We pressed every cabinet member to raise the issue with other governments at the time.

I see that my time is running out. There will be further opportunity to add some comments in the question and comment period. I look forward to that. I look forward to the next few minutes and in the day of debate today to offering some ideas from our caucus on how the issue must move forward and how we can help Canadians on the east and west coasts to regain propriety of their communities, their pride, the opportunity to work and the opportunity to make their contributions to Canada.

• (1045)

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this motion certainly is a very straightforward motion. I have not conversed with my colleague the fisheries critic so I am not sure where we are coming from but from my perspective, I think it is a good motion. That is not the point.

The point is that this leader has a tremendous amount of gall. This leader was in government. He just finished saying he was in government as the environment minister working with John Crosbie who at the time was the fisheries minister. What was going on was that the fisheries science was being completely swept aside. Just take a look at the political interest from a Conservative perspective on that day in 1990. The problem has been created by successive Liberal and Conservative governments. It has never

been more true that Liberal, Tory, same old story when it comes to fisheries issues.

I find it absolutely amazing that this leader would stand up and make this kind of speech when it was he, his department and his party that actually were the major contributors to the problem in the first place.

Where the Reform Party is coming from on this issue is we respect the perspective of the people of the Atlantic and the people of the Pacific. The people in the area should have had the input. The people in the area who know what is going on should have had the input but they did not have an opportunity. It was centralized. It was drawn into Ottawa. The bureaucracy made the decision and it was at the time when the Progressive Conservative Party was in power that the issue absolutely peaked.

I ask this leader, how in the world he can stand up in this House condemning the Liberals as they should be condemned when in fact it was his policies that in the first place created this mess.

Hon. Jean J. Charest: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Kootenay—Columbia for announcing that the Reform Party will support our motion. I sincerely appreciate that.

I have to regret that he gets up and makes my point about one of the problems we have in this place. He started by saying he did not know how they would vote on it. He lives in British Columbia. This is a motion that is tabled today and he does not know how his party will pronounce. He is from British Columbia and he does not know what his critic's position is on this.

One would think that being from British Columbia where this is one of the main issues discussed over the last few months the member for Kootenay—Columbia would have a position. I am disappointed he does not. I imagine his constituents will be equally disappointed that he did not take the time to make out his position.

What we got instead, I do not want to comment on it. We have heard it a thousand times. It is the grandstanding. Notice the style, pointing the finger and saying it is the Tories' fault or the Liberals' fault. I can only imagine that the people who are affected by all these decisions today cannot be feeling very good. I do not understand what that does for them. For any unemployed British Columbian today, the member has offered zero in terms of any kind of hope for the future.

Instead, I would like to speak of what I would like to see the government do, contrary maybe to their approach. Who knows, maybe the Reformers during the day will give us some concrete ideas of what the future should be about.

First, in the case of the Pacific salmon fishery, what I think is important is that the government and the Prime Minister give very real instructions, strict instructions to his ministers to raise this issue at every opportunity with their American counterparts.

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When I was Minister of the Environment, every time we met with a minister of another government we systematically, no matter what the issue was, no matter what the responsibility of the minister may have been, whether it was trade or transport, would raise the issue with our counterpart of the other country. Why? Because we wanted to drive home the point that this was a very important issue for Canada. By forcing that issue and by raising it at every opportunity we were successful in doing exactly that.

I would like the government today to make a commitment to do that and to have every minister of the crown opposite raise the issue with every American counterpart. No matter what the circumstance or the issue of the day is they should take that opportunity to raise the issue. That would be the first thing to do. In other words keep the issue on the table.

• (1050)

Second is the matter of the treaty. This is a treaty which our government signed in 1985. No treaties are perfect. The member was alluding to what had been done. In 1985 the government of the day was able to secure this treaty. In the years that followed there was a management plan. It has only been in the last four years that there has not been a management plan. That is even more important.

The principle of equity that is found within the treaty is extremely important. We need to secure that principle, to press it. We need to keep it front and centre in everything we do to ensure that as we move forward with our American counterparts that the principle of equity will be front and centre with respect to any agreements we make in the future.

The third thing we need and which is sorely lacking is an industrial adjustment strategy. I regret that the hon. member for Kootenay—Columbia did not speak about that because it actually affects the people of British Columbia. What about the men and women who do not care about Liberal, Tory, same old story, and the huff and puff of the House of Commons? They have kids in school. They have bills to pay. They would like some help. This government should have an adjustment strategy which would allow them to make the transition into new jobs and give them some training. Some money should be put toward that end.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the words of the hon. member for Sherbrooke. It is true that he is not all that bothered because things did not go any better for the fishers of Gaspé when his party was in power. The fishers tell us now it was a fiasco. It started in their time but it seems that the hon. member is repenting a bit, and that is all for the better. He wants to help the government, but he ought to have helped his own at that time.

I, however, agree with him on two points. When he says decisions are made in Ottawa, that is true. In my former riding we had the Institut Maurice-Lamontagne, whose opinion is respected throughout the world. Its highly competent researchers have carried out studies in the Gaspé, the St. Lawrence, the Atlantic Ocean. The federal public servants have now come up with another study, and of course the study by the federal public servants takes precedence over the one by our own public servants, who are independent.

I would ask my colleague from Sherbrooke what he himself would do, if he were the government, for these little fishers in Gaspé who will go on unemployment this winter, if they have enough “stamps”. Yet these fishers are hard-working and want to work but, because of their profession—nearly all the cod quotas have been cut—they end up with nothing, or next to nothing. What would he do?

Hon. Jean J. Charest: Mr. Speaker, I travelled extensively in the Gaspé area. Actually, I worked very closely with someone he knows well and a very respected person in the Gaspé, namely Dr. Charles-Eugène Marin, a former member for Gaspé. I can see the hon. member nodding his head in agreement. I think that Dr. Marin has made extraordinary efforts for fishers in the Gaspé.

I think that one of the changes made and imposed by the federal government that have affected them the most and hurt them the most—and I am sure my hon. colleague will agree with me on that—is the unemployment insurance reform, including the fact that their benefits were cut by \$33 million. That is what I was talking about earlier.

My colleague, the hon. member for Saint John, New Brunswick, circulated a petition asking that a debate be held in this place on this issue. I think that approximately 40 signatures were needed. She was unable to get a single member of the Liberal Party of Canada from the Atlantic region to sign. This explains in part this government's arrogance and contempt for these men and women.

Seasonal workers depend not only on fisheries but also on forestry. Let us not forget the Eastern Plan, which was important to our region as it created jobs. Forestry is also important in the Gaspé region.

• (1055)

The federal government may cut left and right but try as it might, it cannot cut seasons. They can certainly not make winter disappear and privatize seasons in Canada. And unless they can cut one season, we will continue to live in a seasonal economy where these needs must be recognized. Our party, which, I hope, will form the next government, is committed to ensuring through the employment insurance legislation that these realities are recognized so that these people can earn an honest living.

*Supply**[English]*

I will finish with a little word of poetry. There is no position coming from the Reform Party. I will quote for Reformers the official position of their party in regard to the fishery. This is a direct quote from their leader in response to a question about TAGS. He repeatedly said that displaced fishermen and their families in the TAGS program were receiving "the last big social megaproject engineering thing to come out of Ottawa". I quote the Leader of the Opposition's plan for the future of the resource, "All you can do is say it is over". There is the plan of the Reform Party for the fishery of Canada.

Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that the leader of the fifth party has recognized this serious crisis did not happen overnight.

We on this side of the House welcome this debate which will allow us to put on the record the many ways we are moving as a government to address this crisis. The member for Sherbrooke criticized that there is not a plan for the future. Nothing could be further from the truth. We will show today where we are at in moving forward with a plan for the future to protect the resources and to protect the communities and the fisheries. As members opposite try to do in question period, I will put a few things in perspective.

As has been indicated this issue did not happen overnight. Where was the member for Sherbrooke in 1984 when the collapse of the groundfish stocks really took place? Where was he when the former fisheries ministers in the Mulroney government basically ignored the scientific reports of the day? The individual who just spoke, the leader of the fifth party, is none other than the same individual who served as the Minister of the Environment in the Mulroney government while foreign fleets were allowed to destroy the northern cod and the Grand Banks stocks.

We took on that issue when we formed the government in the last term. We challenged the issue and got some agreement. We are doing what we can with what is left. It is hard to conserve a stock that has been left in the kind of condition that the previous government left it in, but as a government we are showing every day that we are willing to take up that challenge.

The mover of the motion, the leader of the fifth party, is the very same individual who outlined under the so-called Charest platform a plan that would make the Department of Fisheries and Oceans disappear. Under the Charest platform the Department of Fisheries and Oceans would disappear and would be lumped into a department of sustainable development with several other departments. The voice for the fisheries at the cabinet table would disappear along with it. That is the kind of background the individual comes from.

The current minister has been speaking out at cabinet, standing up for fisheries issues across the country and around the world. The minister has made it very clear that the objective of the Government of Canada is the conservation and protection of Canada's fisheries resource and the achievement of a sustainable fishery and fishing industry, building a future for our resources and our people.

We know the outlook for the next two years will prove to be very challenging but we are moving forward. This will involve several role changes for stakeholders for the delivery and funding of programs. Contrary to what the leader of the fifth party states, we have identified several priorities to advance industry and program renewal. One such area is fisheries management itself.

• (1100)

We are moving forward on the implementation for the renewal of the fishing industry, the necessary reform of the government in Canada's fisheries management programs and achieving fundamental changes in relationships with fisheries and other client groups.

We are rapidly moving ahead with the establishment of integrated fisheries management plans for all the major and most sensitive fisheries and eventually extending this approach to all fishers.

We are developing with stakeholders in individual fisheries additional co-operative management arrangements which will form the basis for future partnering agreements. We are establishing other institutional mechanisms which will establish arm's length licence sanction tribunals for the decriminalization of many fisher violations and allow greater responsibility in allocation and management of decision making.

Another priority is Atlantic reform. On the domestic front industry restructuring has been initiated to build a fishery that is ecologically sustainable and commercially viable. The long term strategy for change is based on establishing a balance between resource supply and industry capacity, including a smaller more self-reliant industry, a core of professional full time fishers, controlled access to the resource and a co-operative management approach between government and industry for management of the fisheries resource.

We are also moving forward in Pacific reform, another area that the leader of the fifth party mentioned. Like the Atlantic, Pacific stock conservation is a growing public concern. Allocation conflict prevails and the economic viability of the salmon fishery has been jeopardized by cyclical declines in abundance, by low market prices and high fishing costs.

Following much consultation and independent review, recommendations have been produced on intersectoral salmon alloca-

tions involving the commercial, recreational and aboriginal sectors. Decisions on these recommendations will be required and are likely to be contentious.

Reforms designed to reduce capacity and participation and promote economic and ecological sustainability have been implemented. However, we recognize that these changes have been and will continue to be controversial. Staying the course on industry reform will be a continuing challenge but the minister and this government are certainly up to that challenge, as we have already shown.

The recently signed Canada-B.C. fisheries agreement on federal and provincial roles and responsibilities in the management of the west coast salmon fishery has major implications on the way the government of Canada will carry out its salmon conservation and fisheries management mandate in the future.

The challenge will be to find ways to cultivate constructive provincial involvement in departmental programs and processes through such institutional mechanisms as the new council of ministers, the Pacific fisheries resource conservation council, which will be in place for 1998, the Pacific stock assessment review committee and the proposed licensing and allocations board.

Arctic fisheries are also a priority of this government. These fisheries play an integral role in the lives of northern Canadians. Harvesting of fish and marine mammals provides a considerable portion of the food requirements and one of the few sources of income and employment in northern communities.

Pressure on Arctic fishery resources is increasing because of rapid human population growth and because protein, self-sufficiency and fishery development especially off Baffin Island are priorities of aboriginal groups and the territorial government. The focus of fishery management will continue to be on conservation for sustainable utilization through close co-operation with the legislative co-management boards.

• (1105)

Jointly, the government of Canada and the boards will establish fishery co-operative management plans and will fulfill their responsibilities under these plans. The negotiation and expected settlement of additional land claims would produce the formation of other co-operative management boards with fisheries management responsibilities.

There is a growing global concern about the health of oceans and the sustainability of the world's fishery stocks. Governments around the world are being increasingly challenged to demonstrate that their fisheries, as well as those managed through international arrangements, are environmentally sustainable. Working in partnership with the fishing industries we will move forward in those

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areas of creating international agreements to benefit Canada and the fisheries resource around the world. We are showing leadership in dealing with difficult choices.

I would like to propose an amendment. I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting the word "establish" and by substituting therefor the words "continue the implementation of".

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, I get tired when I am in the House of Commons and listen to members turning around and always talking about the past.

We have people who are hurting today. I cannot help what happened in the past. I want to change things around today for the future.

I had fishermen in my area come in to see me on Monday this week. One man sat there with tears in his eyes. He had his wife with him. They said: "We were loosing everything. We have lost our home and we are loosing the boat. We have no way to earn our living anymore".

I want to say to the hon. member from P.E.I. that I realize that he has fishermen in P.E.I. as well, but we want to know why the playing field is not equal. The people in my area, district 36, earn only \$17,000. That is it. Yet in district 35 they earn \$50,000 because they have a longer period of time for lobster fishing. The people in the other districts have longer periods. All they are asking is that DFO please treat them fairly. Will it please look at it, change it around? They want their dignity. I am sure that the hon. member from P.E.I. wants them to have their dignity as well.

I am so tired that every time it gets up in the House the opposition talks of the past. Let us deal with the present and the future.

I ask my hon. friend from P.E.I. will he help us with DFO to straighten this matter out.

Mr. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons I mentioned the past is so we do not continue to make those mistakes.

We recognize there is an over harvesting capacity. We have to reduce that capacity. The government is trying not to do what was done in the past, which was to ignore the scientific advice, continue harvesting and let people believe the resources were endless and abundant. We know they are not.

• (1110)

The leader of the fifth party stood up and condemned the TAGS program. One reason the Atlantic groundfish strategy was put in place was to deal with the families we knew would be in crisis.

The Reform Party will talk about the money that went into TAGS being a waste of money. It was no such thing. Yes, it may have been spent better and yes, we may have been able to achieve better progress in terms of reducing the harvesting ability. However, the

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fact is it helped people and communities to live and put bread on the table.

We have learned from the auditor general's report and we have seen some of the errors that are being made and we are moving forward with plans for the future in terms of retaining this resource for future communities and people.

Ms. Angela Vautour (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the amendment of continued planning. I will explain the kind of continued planning we have had, at least in my region where there are fishermen.

All connections have been cut off to the wharfs and fishermen are stuck paying for it, the same fishermen seeing cuts everywhere. Licences have been increased by 1000% which again is an attack on fishermen. Conservation does not exist when it comes to fishing. Fishermen are now speaking on lobster because the cod is gone. They are now speaking out about the conservation of lobster, but no one is listening. There are no consultations. The EI program is attacking the fishermen. If this is called continued planning, I would not want them to admit they were planning something.

How can they explain cutting off all funds to the wharfs, some of which are closing because people cannot afford them? There is only so much volunteer work that can be done. People have no money to give. How are they going to make sure that the lobster will still be there? People in Ottawa love to eat lobster, but the way our seasonal industry is being attacked they will not be there in five years.

Could the member please explain to me how they are going to make sure our fishing industry will survive all this.

Mr. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, I cannot imagine the member saying there is no consultation.

The fisheries resource conservation council and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans through its personnel hold all kinds of consultations with people in fishing communities. We are taking those recommendations of the fisheries resource conservation council seriously. We are looking at the stocks and trying to move forward in a way which will conserve and build those stocks so that they are sustainable in the future for the fishers and the fishing communities. We are working in partnership with fishermen for the future.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on the motion of the hon. member for Sherbrooke.

The member's motion refers to the urgent need for action to address the serious problems in Canadian fisheries on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. Fishermen on the east coast say they identified the problems to the government of the day in the early 1980s.

The hon. member from Sherbrooke assumes in his motion that there are no problems in Canada's third commercial fishery located inland. I will return to this fishery in a moment, but first let me make an observation.

In my 50 years of living on the prairies I have seen so many times occasions when the previous Progressive Conservative governments and the previous and current Liberal governments ignored the aspirations and problems of the citizens living in northwest Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

There have been many acts, errors and omissions by both these governments over the years, like the goods and services tax, the firearms act, the reduction in health care transfer payments, and I could go on and on.

• (1115)

The point is that once again in dealing with the problems in Canada's fisheries, the hon. member and leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, which aspires to become a national party, has ignored important parts of Canada. The parts of Canada I previously referred to I would like to name again because some members in this House seem to forget they are part of Canada also. They are northwest Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

What do these Canadians have to do with commercial fishing, many are possibly wondering. Would it surprise anyone in this House to know that there is a multimillion dollar freshwater fishery in these areas sometimes referred to by politicians from central Canada as the hinterlands.

We in the Reform Party recognize that when national problems are addressed, such as the Canadian fishery, we should always consider all of the problems along with solutions for all of the Canadian people affected. This freshwater fishery has problems and it is just as important that they are addressed along with those on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts.

I would like to point out to members of this House and to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans that he is responsible for the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation which has its headquarters in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It also has its fish plant located there. It is from these facilities that tens of millions of dollars of fish products are shipped across Canada and exported to places like Europe and the U.S.A.

I will get to the problems in this fishery in a moment, however due to the apparent lack of knowledge or lack of concern by the hon. member for Sherbrooke and possibly others in the House, I feel it necessary to describe this fishery, the people, the employment it creates and the hardships that will ensue if our problems

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are not dealt with as part of an overall solution to the problems identified in the motion.

The commercial fishermen who sell their fish through the FFMC include both aboriginal and non-aboriginal men and women. To many of the aboriginal fishermen there is little or no alternative to fishing as a way to be self-sustaining contributors to Canadian society. Would the government or the leader of the Progressive Conservatives have them go on welfare because there is no employment as a result of failing to deal with problems in the FFMC? For those with the possibility of other employment, why should they lose their business and way of life just because their problems are not being addressed?

I would now like to discuss the problems. I assure members I will relate how the fishermen's problems in the FFMC district are caused by the Liberal government and by motions that if supported by this House do not take into account the Canadian national fishery big picture.

The FFMC fishermen have problems with high water levels in many of our lakes and spawning streams reducing the number of fish. High input costs for items like fuel, boats, electronics, marketing and processing the catch are of great concern. There are concerns with high taxes, high employment insurance premiums, reduced employment insurance benefits and many others.

One could argue that some of the problems are the responsibility of the provinces, such as in Manitoba where our major lake water levels are subject to control by Manitoba Hydro for hydroelectricity production.

The major threat to the inland fishery at this time involves the blatant, outrageous, pork-barrelling patronage appointment of all time in Manitoba. I refer to the announcement of the hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans on October 16, 1997 that ex-Liberal member of Parliament Ron Fewchuk has been appointed president of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation effective November 28, 1997.

We all remember that Ron Fewchuk was elected in 1993 and when the 1997 election was imminent, he declined to contest the Liberal nomination. The major portion of his old riding was Selkirk—Interlake where Jon Gerrard ran unsuccessfully. What did it take to get him not to run? I think we all know now.

This patronage appointment will have an immense negative impact on the profitability of the FFMC because, in essence, the FFMC will now be paying two president equivalent salaries, one to the former president, Thomas Dunn who I understand is staying on at his president's salary, and one to the new president. The salary range is from \$88,000 to \$103,000. Remember that the FFMC gets no government moneys. Therefore, as the actions of this government drive up FFMC administrative costs, the lowly fishermen will make less if any profit.

• (1120)

Mr. Dunn, an accountant and FFMC president for many years, saved the corporation from bankruptcy and was an outstanding president. Why did Mr. Fewchuk have to be appointed? Sadly the only conclusion I can come to, and I am sure a majority of Canadians across this great country will do likewise, is Liberal patronage.

I have spoken to members of the elected board of the FFMC and to fishermen, all of whom oppose Fewchuk's appointment because they have no faith in his capabilities to run the day to day operation that management of the FFMC requires. This kind of administration and policy making is a big reason why there are few fish on the east coast and the B.C. and FFMC fisheries are under financial threat.

In conclusion, the major problem in the Canadian fisheries today, as it has been under successive Liberal governments, is the total ineptness of the ministers of fisheries and oceans. We must take action now to ensure the survival of the remaining fisheries and restore the east coast fishery.

The minister can take an important first step by rescinding the appointment of Ron Fewchuk and restore Mr. Dunn to the presidency.

I move:

That the amendment be amended by deleting the words "continue the implementation of" and substituting the following therefor: "implement".

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair has very great reservations about the admissibility of this amendment. It appears that the subamendment appears to change the intent of the amendment back to what the motion originally stated. Accordingly, since it appears to be contrary to what the amendment intended to do, I must rule the subamendment out of order.

The hon. member for Elk Island may have a submission on the point before I make a final ruling and I will hear him.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a point of distress to us that when a member of the opposition puts forward a motion of the day, as the Conservatives have done today, the government can hijack the purpose of that motion that we are debating by basically negating it. We have had such absurd cases where the government has actually moved an amendment as to say "delete all the words after the word 'that' and substitute therefor".

According to Beauchesne's citation 567, "the object of an amendment"—and this would certainly apply to a subamendment—"may be either to modify a question in such a way as to increase its acceptability—to the House". I am just citing parts of it. What we are doing here is we are talking about increasing the

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acceptability of this particular motion to the House, the government's amendment having hijacked the thing.

The Deputy Speaker: I hear what the hon. member is saying, but I think the point is that when the government or any member moves an amendment to a motion, its admissibility is determined on the basis of whether it is acceptable as an amendment to the motion.

• (1125)

What I am suggesting to the hon. member is that the subamendment negates the original amendment's intent, which was to change the first motion. I appreciate the fact that the hon. member may disagree with the amendment. I do not think that is the point in issue. The question is can a subamendment change an amendment by in effect negating the amendment. I suggest that it cannot. Therefore, I must rule it out of order.

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, before you make your final ruling, may I ask you, sir, if the intent of the amendment to the amendment is any different than that of the amendment to the original motion, it does change the character of the motion, but that was also the position of the government in the amendment which it brought to the original motion.

I would ask you to consider that, sir.

The Deputy Speaker: With great respect, I have considered the matter. My recollection is that the original motion said that the government should establish something and the amendment said that it should continue the implementation of something. That is a change from the original motion. It is a change which in the Chair's view is in order because any member is entitled to move an amendment that changes what is alleged to be a statement of fact in the first motion and turn it into something else. It did that.

The subamendment sought to move that back in effect to the original position. That is what is out of order. That is what I am ruling out of order. I think we should move on.

There may be questions or comments on the speech of the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake.

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

The Deputy Speaker: If the hon. member is rising on the same point of order, I have heard him once and I have heard the hon. member for Cariboo—Chilcotin. I am not disposed to hear more argument on this point. If it is a different point I will hear him.

Mr. Ken Epp: Mr. Speaker, it is clearly additional and relevant information and it was just pointed out to me.

Citation 923 deals specifically with allotted days. Citation 923(3) states:

The Opposition prerogative is very broad in the use of the allotted day and ought not to be interfered with except on the clearest and most certain procedural grounds.

That is why we are seeking to undo what the government has done in violation of this principle of Beauchesne.

The Deputy Speaker: I hear the hon. member for Elk Island. I want to stress to him that in making a ruling in respect of an amendment or subamendment, the Chair is bound to have regard to what has previously transpired.

When an amendment is moved, the amendment must be to the main motion. It is constrained. It can only seek to amend the main motion. A subamendment must amend only the amendment. That fact restricts the scope for amendment on a subamendment because it must follow in as part of the amendment itself.

In this case the subamendment is negating the amendment. The amendment is not negating the main motion.

As I say, I think the amendment is in order and I think the subamendment in this particular case with these words is not and I so rule.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Vancouver Island North.

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question for my colleague from Selkirk—Interlake deals with freshwater marketing.

Being from that part of the country, I know that the appointment which has been announced and has not yet been tabled in the House has created great consternation among many of the people involved in the fishery. I wonder if the member would like to elaborate somewhat on some of the real concerns which have been expressed by the people and how widespread those concerns are about this appointment.

• (1130)

Mr. Howard Hilstrom: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

Problems have arisen out of this appointment. I refer to a comment made by the hon. member for Malpeque who stated that bread and butter on the table was the important part for fishermen. Mr. Fewchuk will be receiving a president's salary. Mr. Dunn will not work for less than the salary he was already receiving, no doubt in the hundred thousand dollar range. We will have the FFMC, an unsubsidized corporation, paying two salaries out of the profits of fishermen on the lake.

These fishermen are not wealthy by any means. Native fishermen on the lake have no alternative employment. The problems we

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are talking about transfer to their families. It is actually a matter of sustenance and living an acceptable lifestyle.

Mr. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, there are also political levels and other jurisdictions than fishermen that are expressing great concern over the appointment.

I am not sure how free the hon. member is to elaborate on this point, but we do not have the full breadth of concern about the issue or what a terrible precedent it sets.

Mr. Lee Morrison: A precedent in this government?

Mr. John Duncan: It is only a precedent for the FFMC. We have certainly seen it in most other aspects of patronage emanating from this administration.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom: Mr. Speaker, the FFMC board is compromised of an appointed president and four appointed members by the government, along with five elected members by fishermen. These elected members and fishermen in the boats are coming to me expressing concern about the appointment and the qualifications of the appointee.

Problems have been brought to the attention of the provincial government of Manitoba. I understand one of its minister has been in contact with the federal fisheries minister. I have not spoken to the provincial minister, but it is my understanding that he too is expressing concern about the appointment and the negative impact it will have on the management of the corporation.

We could end up in a situation with two presidents in effect arguing with each other. Being a smaller fishery there is not the money for the kind of waste that will be created by the appointment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to the opposition motion on the lamentable failure of the federal groundfish strategy.

I take the liberty of pointing out that this is nothing new for me. A few years ago I wrote a document on the fact that eastern Quebec was the laboratory for the failure of federalism and the symbol of the results of the inefficient intervention of the federal government and other levels of government. I feel today that I am living a similar nightmare, since now all of the Atlantic provinces and the entire eastern region of Quebec and the North Shore are in the same situation.

The motion asks us to “recognize the urgent need for action to address the serious problems in Canadian fisheries” and also criticizes the lack of a national policy. I think everyone is quite aware of this, and the amendment proposed by the Liberal majority is totally unacceptable. They want us to say that the government will maintain the same approach.

• (1135)

This reminds me of the time when Réal Caouette, the Créditiste leader, said that we were on the edge of a precipice and that the Créditistes would move us forward. The Liberals have much the same attitude today. The auditor general himself and not the opposition said that the Atlantic groundfish strategy was poorly designed and poorly managed.

The auditor general added that there had been a kerfuffle between the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Department of Human Resources Development, a lack of rigour on the part of the departments involved and a poor estimate of most of the parameters used in developing the program.

In other words, the government struck out on all fronts. It did not properly assess the number of people that would be covered by the plan and then it did not ensure compliance with the criteria that were set. A lot of clarification is needed.

The auditor general was doing his job when he said that the program that had been defined had not been followed. Instead of acknowledging this, the Liberals accused the auditor general of being inhuman, because the program had provided subsistence for the people of the region.

The problem is that the government is not there to provide a subsistence living for people, but to ensure that economic development allows the regions to become self-sufficient. When a program that changes and diversifies regional economies is set up, it must be followed through and the desired results obtained.

If the program became a means of survival, it is not the fault of the communities in Atlantic Canada, eastern Quebec or Quebec's North Shore region. It is the government's fault. The auditor general is condemning the fact that the program was not properly managed and does not achieve the desired results.

After several years of involvement in a critical sector for which it is responsible under the Constitution, the federal government has failed miserably. All that is left is what I saw in Gander, Newfoundland, when the human resources development committee travelled to that region.

I expected to find in employment centres documentation on how to develop our economy or how to exploit our local assets. I did not see any of that. What I found in the display stand of the employment centre was a nice prospectus explaining how to find a job in western Canada. This, I think, accurately illustrates the current problem in Canada. The government has been using a strategy whereby people are expected to go where the jobs are, instead of promoting local opportunities.

It should be noted that at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, eastern Canada, and particularly the maritimes, was totally self-sufficient from an economic point of view. The region was then producing what it needed, and was playing an active role in North America's economy. However, the federal government, particularly during the Trudeau era, came up with a terrible deal for the country: to concentrate production and

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processing activities in Ontario and give transfer payments to eastern Canada and Quebec. For 20 years they have been telling us: "Federalism works very well. We give just as much money to the poorer provinces, and it comes from the rich provinces".

What most people, including senior federal officials, have not understood, is that people do not want subsistence policies. Of course, they want to survive, be able to eat three meals a day, have their children attend school, but what they want most of all is programs that will make it possible to create strong regional economies.

What the auditor general is telling us is that, in order to improve matters in the fishery, steps should have been taken to reduce the number of people involved in this sector and to assign them to other functions, so as to diversify regional entrepreneurship. Today we are looking at a terrible failure.

I hope that both government members and the public will understand the difference in the present situation. There is no point in criticizing the auditor general for having done his job. There is no point in blaming local communities and citizens who are trying to survive. What we must do in the present situation is ask ourselves whether the federal government handled the fisheries issue properly.

• (1140)

I think that the answer is a resounding "no" on every count. I would go so far as to say that one of the fundamental reasons for this state of affairs is that, for some time now, the federal government has managed the fisheries from Ottawa, rather than from the regions by means of a truly decentralized approach directed at the regions' individual needs.

For eastern Quebec, the Gaspé, the North Shore, and the Magdalen Islands, fishing is very important. It represents a relative percentage of the Quebec economy as a whole, but for the regions, it is very important. What is required is a targeted approach, unlike the approach that might work for the other Atlantic provinces or the western provinces.

The federal government has never managed to achieve this degree of fine-tuning. If ever there were to be a so-called national fisheries strategy in Canada, the first component would have to be complete decentralization to the provinces, who want to assume responsibility for this sector in order to avoid results like those we are now seeing.

Three years ago, people noticed that there were no longer any fish in the Atlantic. Since then, the government has told fishers they should find something else to do and promote entrepreneurship. But three years have gone by and nothing has been done.

There is no evidence today that the result will be a transformation of regional economies. The only result we see is that the subsistence program will have to be extended. People cannot be allowed to starve to death. We will, however, also have to make sure that things are back under control.

We are faced with an example very much like what happened in the 1980s, which led to a ghastly deficit. Today, in the fisheries sector we are faced with the same failure.

I believe it is important for the House to understand clearly that, all partisan politics aside, there are some interesting elements in the motion, statements which must be taken into consideration, but what is the most important is that the amendment proposed by the Liberals must absolutely not be accepted.

The Liberals are asking us to continue along the same path, while the auditor general has just said that the entire strategy was badly thought out and badly administered. They tell us that the financial support ought to represent 36% of the budget over five years, while the auditor general indicates that it will represent close to 76%. Do you think their evaluation was wrong?

The last federal election sent a message. Some regions of Canada sent a clear message to the government. I believe it ought to assume the responsible attitude of accepting major changes in its approach, and particularly ought to give local communities the necessary tools for development instead of sticking to the principle of providing mere subsistence to regions that may experience regional economic development problems. They must be given all of the tools they need to develop, instead.

The Liberal government cannot use the Conservative government as an excuse. They have been in power for three and a half years, soon coming up to four, and I believe they must be judged severely. The population of the Atlantic provinces has judged them, and the government must acknowledge this. The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy is the symbol par excellence of this at the present time.

I hope that the government's amendment will not gain the support of the Liberal MPs for the maritimes, for if it does they will be contradicting themselves. They have already done so on employment insurance reform, and we have seen the results of that in the last election.

[English]

Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I take issue with some of the remarks of the hon. member. He is trying to leave the impression that the federal government believe subsistence is

sufficient for fishing communities in the province he comes from. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Let us look at the number of programs that he talked about in terms of the Atlantic groundfish strategy and the partnership agreements we are moving forward with.

He sat on the committee in the last parliament where we ensured there would be employment insurance for communities in seasonal industries to protect the livelihoods of those people in the off seasons. So we are moving forward.

• (1145)

The member basically made allegations that we are not taking the region into consideration. The minister of fisheries held a bilateral meeting with his Quebec counterpart to discuss a number of issues of concern to Quebec on October 5 and 6.

At that meeting there was an agreement on the importance of quickly passing a modernized fisheries act which will deal with these fishers and communities that are affected. There was an agreement on the need for the federal minister to consult with provincial and territorial colleagues prior to the introduction of the legislation. That will happen.

There was an agreement to reconvene the meeting of ministers in six months time to review progress. There was also agreement with the Quebec minister to support the need for an ocean strategy. There is all kinds of discussion. It shows that federalism is working and that we have a strong national government in consultation with the various provincial ministers, recognizing the concerns of the regions and the concerns of communities and coming up with the appropriate policies to address them. We are on track for the future.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased by the question of my colleague opposite and I will let the people judge.

He says we are accusing the government of failing to allow local communities to develop. I would remind him of certain things, however. In Quebec alone, the situation affects 4,000 people. Problems with funding shortened the program by a year so the \$1.9 billion budget would not be exceeded. So, because money has not been spent in the right place, it will be available for less time. It was used for subsistence, but regional economies were not allowed to develop.

Then a serious error was made. The Canada manpower adjustment program was cut by \$190 million. It was decided that there was not enough money for it and that the money would be given to people daily in order to keep them alive. In the case of young men and women who completed two or three years of high school and signed up for fishing or took related courses, it was decided that they would not complete their training, that they would not be

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given any option and that their entrepreneurial skills would not be developed.

This is why people find that the Liberals' amendment proposing to continue this policy is not a very good idea. The Liberals should at least acknowledge that errors were made and that significant corrections are necessary. However, the amendment proposed is to carry on as before. This means that they will continue to spend money on people's subsistence, that regional economies will not be developed and that things will go unchanged.

The licence retirement program was even cut to \$30 million instead of \$135 million. Under the policy, \$135 million had been set aside to retire licences so that people could find other work. This amount was reduced to \$30 million, and now nobody wants to give up their licence. A person keeps it, it is not usable and they subsist off the plan. This strikes me as a poor show.

For all these reasons, therefore, I am asking people to judge whether it has been effective, and if it is relevant, as the government is saying, to continue the policy as it stands. I think the answer is right there for all to see. A change in direction is absolutely vital.

Quebec had an administrative agreement with the federal government from 1922 and to sometime in the 1980s. This agreement provided for reasonable management. A certain fishing practice had been developed so that, for example, coastal fishers with small boats would have a big enough catch.

The federal government cancelled the agreement with the provincial government, and I close on this point, at the very time it was discovered that the fish had disappeared. That fact is very clear. The federal government's action in recent years has been totally ineffective, and Parliament should never support this amendment, which would just have things go on as before.

• (1150)

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak on the Conservative motion. When I saw the motion from the leader of the Conservative Party I was very impressed.

It is obvious that my role in Parliament to work with other political parties to come up with political solutions to grave problems is working. I commend the leader of the Conservative Party and his caucus for the motion.

At the same time it is reprehensible that the Liberal government would try to amend the motion to satisfy its own needs. It is simply scandalous that it would try to do that.

I must say to the Conservative Party that I only wish that when its leader was in government for the nine years it had developed

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some kind of national policy back then. We might not be in the state we are in today. That is old history.

We have a new government that has been in power for over four years. I believe that it has to answer to the 20,000 fishers and their families in Atlantic Canada.

I wish the motion had also included not only the west coast but the Arctic and the inland fisheries as well. These are serious problems which we have and they intend to be ignored in the proper debate.

We support the national fisheries policy as long as the policy recognizes that harvesting the resource can only be sustainable through the use of small boat inshore fishers and not through the corporate trollers, and as long as there is an independent judicial inquiry into the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and its policies and practices in Atlantic Canada.

The reason I have been so adamant in calling for a judicial inquiry is that science has been literally ignored. There is evidence galore throughout history, at least since 1983 that I am aware of, that science has been ignored, ripped up and altered to satisfy the needs of the government of the day. Only through a judicial inquiry will the scientists from the Atlantic and west coasts be allowed to speak freely without the fear of job retribution or so-called gag orders which they are under right now.

I do not believe that the current management of the DFO has the intelligence and capability of instituting a national policy unless we have a judicial inquiry to find out exactly where things went wrong. I do not believe, according to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, that it would be a waste of time and money. I firmly believe that a judicial inquiry would go a long way in solving the problems of the current fisheries crisis.

Regarding the auditor general's report. He went a long way on the fiscal side of the TAGS program but he unfortunately left out the humane aspects of it. This is most unfortunate.

I look at Newfoundland. When it joined Confederation in 1949, unknown to it it also transferred its entire responsibility of the fishing industry, which survived well over 400 years, to the government of the day. In less than 50 years it is completely destroyed. This is completely unacceptable to the people in Newfoundland as well as the rest of Atlantic Canada.

It is the typical thing. This is why the west coast is so upset now. We have central Canadian views being forced on those in the west and those in the east. It simply does not work anymore. What needs to happen is complete consultation with the people within the industry; not just select groups that the government of the day chooses to speak to, but the people who work the resource in the small communities throughout Atlantic Canada and the west coast.

This is why I have constantly asked for the inquiry. I would hope that in my constant asking for it more groups will join and ask for it as well.

A report commissioned by the fisheries department director of Newfoundland stated that department scientists were routinely silenced while ill informed spokespersons conveyed false information to the public by inflating stock estimates to defend high quotas and by emphasizing the role of seals and cold water in the cod collapse instead of overfishing.

I could give example after example of what has been going on with these people. What has happened now is that 35,000 Atlantic Canadians are literally out of work and on an income support program. I find it reprehensible that the government would promise in 1994 the TAGS program for five years; not four but five. There are many thousands of people who made their financial commitments based on the fact that the TAGS program would run out in May of 1999, not May of 1998.

In question period and in other areas I have been given the answer that the government has consulted people within the industry to say "yes, we are the ones who consulted the cabinet to make the decision to cut the program from five to four years".

• (1155)

I can hardly stand in this House of Commons and honestly believe that the government would go to fishers in Atlantic Canada and say "would you like your income support dropped off by a year?" and getting an overwhelming yes to that response. I find it very difficult if that happens.

Again, an inquiry of that nature would get down to the truth, to exactly what happened and who cut that program off. I am of the firm belief that the finance department made that decision, not the fishers of Atlantic Canada and of Quebec.

We go on and on with this. It gets almost to the sound of a broken record. This government does not have the capability of instituting a national policy on its own. It must institute a national policy with comprehensive consultation with not only the fishing groups but other political parties as well. Only then will we have the solutions to a long term sustainable fishery.

I honestly believe that there are many thousands of people fishing in the industry who can still be fishing 10 years from now if we just come up with a comprehensive plan in order for them to do it.

As members know, if people go out to the outlying areas of Canada and speak to the fishermen and fisher women of Atlantic Canada and the west coast, fishing is in their blood. In most cases

many of these people are under educated in terms of academics. What they know is fishing.

Here we are in the government, in the House of Commons, saying to many of them they will no longer be able to have that way of life. To me it is completely unacceptable to say that to them because it is not the fault of the fishermen and fisher women of Atlantic Canada for the collapse of the ground stock. It is government policy. It is mislead information from the scientists, overcapacity by the huge trawlers that are out there now. We have trawlers out there now that are still dumping by-catch. We still have fish being dumped over the side as we speak today.

We have Cuban trawlers inside the 200 mile limit fishing our stock, but we have fishermen and fisher women sitting at home collecting TAGS program. It is simply unacceptable that we would do that. I would love the government to be able to respond to that at a later time, during question period.

One fisherman from the Sambro area who had a grade 5 education said to me "Peter, it is like this. You can have one fisherman making \$200,000 a year or you can have seven of us making \$30,000 a year. Make your choice".

I think the choice is quite clear, to be able to put as many of these people back into the fishing industry which they so desire. I am not saying that every single person will get back into the fishing industry. Obviously there has to be reallocation of some of these folks to other areas.

That can be done through an attrition process, through either retirement of the licences when they reach the ages of 50 or 55, retiring these people completely so that they can retire with dignity and with respect, as well as going out of the ITQ systems, the corporate individual transfer quotas, and move back to the way it used to be on a community based allocation. I believe that would be a firm response and a positive method on the way to go.

I again compliment the leader of the Conservative Party for his motion. I can assure him that the New Democratic Party caucus will be supporting him in every way we can.

Mr. Greg Thompson (Charlotte, PC): Madam Speaker, it is certainly nice to see you in the chair. I think this is the first time I have had the opportunity to speak while you are in the chair. I want to make a few comments, most of them with regard to the fishing industry in my riding of Charlotte. Of course, that is the one I am concerned about.

What really appalls me are the licensing fees and the changes this government has brought in in the last number of years. There are lobster fishermen in my riding whose licensing fees have gone from \$17 to \$3,000 in a single year.

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How could any fisherman in any jurisdiction in any country in this hemisphere survive those kinds of charges? Nobody can. It is forcing individual fishermen out of the business.

They have done the same thing with our scallop fishermen. Small fishermen now are being required in the riding of Charlotte to put monitors on board. In some cases it costs up to \$350 a day to put a monitor on board just so matters can be checked. It is like the big eye of government looking down on a small fishermen who can hardly afford to put fuel in his boat.

● (1200)

The most discouraging thing is that the laws, the rules and the regulations for these fishermen are applied differently, depending on what side of the bay they live on. Some of the restrictions do not apply to fishermen, for example, that are lucky enough to live in some parts of Nova Scotia. It is ridiculous. I have no quarrel with fishermen in Nova Scotia, but if the government is going to apply a policy to fishermen it should be applied evenly across the board. The government is putting fishermen in my riding at a tremendous disadvantage to people 40 miles across the water. It is absolutely insane.

The same applies to wharves and the reconstruction of wharves. New Brunswick does not have enough money in the budget, for goodness sakes, to buy 50 pounds of spikes for the number of wharves that are in the riding. This is absolutely ridiculous.

We pretend we have a multimillion dollar fishery, and we do, but how can fishermen survive? The government is actually forcing fishermen who are making the meagrest of all livings, to take money out of their back pocket at the end of the day to repair the very wharves for which the Government of Canada should be responsible. How in the name of goodness can the fishermen, under those set of circumstances, survive? The answer is very clear. They cannot survive under those kinds of circumstances.

That is not the end of it. The fisheries department entered into agreements with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs to bring natives into the fishery, which is fine. We want to see that happen. However, there is no co-ordination between the two departments. Neither department knows what is going on. They have no long term strategy. Again, it is throwing money at a problem with no vision for the future.

People are at a tremendous disadvantage now because of that lack of co-ordination. Fishermen in my riding are being sacrificed because neither of those two departments, fisheries nor Indian and northern affairs, want to take responsibility for their actions. We cannot continue. The fisheries in Atlantic Canada are on the rails and this government wants to simply abdicate its responsibilities.

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This type of motion should be on the floor of the House every single day for the next year so that Canadians can get the message that the fisheries are in tough shape. It is time that the government took responsibility for the very fishermen who it is supposed to be representing.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Madam Speaker, again we can hear the frustration in the voice of the hon. member from the Conservative Party.

I would like to advise him that this is the typical divide and conquer attitude that the current government is displaying with our fisher people in Atlantic Canada, not only between the fishers but as well as the First Nation fishers, not only between New Brunswick but also P.E.I., Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. It is the old divide and conquer with its quota systems that do not work. It is unfortunate because there is a lot of infighting among the fisheries. I expressed the same frustration that the member is speaking about.

This is the last time I will call for this today because I am being cut off. We have a judicial inquiry into the practices of DFO. I think we can come to a reasonable solution and solve some problems in the Atlantic fishery.

Mr. Bill Matthews (Burin—St. George's, PC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time. I guess there is not enough time today to talk about this motion and the situation in the fisheries on the west and east coasts of our country.

This morning I was at the parliamentary committee on fisheries and oceans listening to three inshore fishermen from Newfoundland and Labrador. Yesterday I travelled to the riding of Burin—St. George's to two isolated communities, Burgeo and Ramea where the fish plants have been closed for approximately five years. I witnessed firsthand the frustration of the inshore fishermen this morning and of the people in those communities yesterday, whose futures are so uncertain.

• (1205)

Out migration is a terrible problem. The youngest and brightest people who could be the most productive members of those communities are leaving. People do not know if they will be able to keep the very social fabric of those communities together. Town councils are trying to run the municipalities with a shrinking tax base. They do not know if they will be able to provide the services. On and on the problem goes throughout Atlantic Canada.

A parallel crisis is looming on the west coast with the Pacific salmon situation. If government does not react very quickly it will have an identical situation on the west coast to what is now being experienced on the east coast. Somehow government likes to pretend things are going well, that it is making the right decisions. There is no doubt in this case that it is the great pretender.

A lot of people on the west coast of the country have already experienced bankruptcy or are about to experience bankruptcy because they cannot make a living from where they traditionally fish. The Mifflin plan and other federal Liberal government plans have not worked in British Columbia.

For the last four years the government has failed to enter into a fish plan, agreement or arrangement with the U.S. There is talk now that the U.S. may even abandon the treaty. What will that do to salmon stocks on the west coast? They will be obliterated, wiped out. Yet the government seems to think everything is moving along okay, it has lots of time and the real enemies in this situation are British Columbians and Premier Glen Clark.

I say to this government and to the parliamentary secretary who sits there listening and taking his notes that they should pressure the minister of fisheries, pressure the Minister of Foreign Affairs, pressure the Prime Minister to recognize this very serious crisis on the west coast before the government finds itself in the same situation we have with Atlantic Canada. That is what I ask of the government.

These people are now starting to talk about the need for some kind of compensation and financial relief because they are losing their enterprises, because they cannot feed their families, because they are about to lose their homes. It is just not good enough that this sort of situation is allowed.

Solutions were suggested to the former minister of fisheries and to the current minister of fisheries who is from British Columbia. Changes need to be made to the area licensing management plan off British Columbia. It is too restrictive. Fishers cannot make a living under that system. Why does government not look at the suggestions that have been made? Why does it not consider these suggestions? Why is it so stubborn?

The Liberals get so inwardly drawn and are so stubborn about issues that they will not listen to the people concerned, the real people affected. The real people who understand the situation better than anyone else in this country and in this government are the fishers on the west and east coasts. These people know best. These people have made their livings for 20 or 30 years from those fisheries.

The government pretends it knows best. It completely ignores the fishers. No wonder the people in British Columbia say that the minister of fisheries is more interested in the steelhead than he is in the fishermen. Maybe it is because he has a steel head. Maybe it is because he is that hardheaded they compare him to a steelhead. I do not know, but something has to happen and happen fast.

We all know the situation on the east coast. Our east coast is in crisis. It is not only those people who have been TAGS recipients. I want to say this today because I feel so strongly about it. What we are trying to deal with in Atlantic Canada is not just for TAGS recipients but for the entire economy of Atlantic Canada. It is for

every retail business in Atlantic Canada, for every wholesale business in Atlantic Canada, for every car salesman, every clothing salesperson.

If something is not done in Atlantic Canada after May 1998, there will be a lot more out migration, many more jobs lost. That will happen if the government takes those millions of dollars out of Atlantic Canada. What choice is there? The government is saying to them "Get out or go on welfare". That is the question the government has to answer.

• (1210)

It was interesting to listen to members of the fisheries and oceans committee this morning, but it was more interesting to listen to the fisher people who were there. They are trying to stay and live in their communities in Atlantic Canada. They had good suggestions to make. They know what has caused the problems and they want to be part of the solution.

They were not listened to when they suggested for years that our fish stocks were going down the tube. Now that there is some regeneration of those fish stocks in certain areas, those same fisher people are being ignored and neglected again.

Those fisher people know better than the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. They know better than the officials in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. They know the real science. Why is the government not listening to them? Because they believe there is a scheme to get rid of them; to get them out.

I would like to direct a comment to members of the Reform Party. They have to make up their minds whether they are an ally to Atlantic Canada or an enemy. Every second day they change their message. They have to make up their minds. Do they believe there is a future for Atlantic Canada or do they believe that Canada should end at Ontario and go no farther east? That is the choice they have to make.

As an Atlantic Canadian member of Parliament, I find some of the statements which these people make revolting. They do not understand the issues of Atlantic Canada. How can they understand the issues of Atlantic Canada any more than I can understand the issues of the west?

Having said that, I feel today that I understand the problems and the issues in the Pacific salmon fishery better than they do. That is because I am sincerely interested in it. I bring passion to the issue. I am not here for the sake of talking about this issue, I want to talk about this issue.

I grew up with this issue. I have family in the industry. I have friends in the industry. I worked in the industry to help put myself through school. It gets annoying when people who have no feeling for or understanding of Atlantic Canada make statements and try to

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influence the government of the day as to what it should do. They try to influence the government as if they know what the solutions are for Atlantic Canada. They do not have a clue what the solutions are for Atlantic Canada. They really do not.

I am sorry I have to stand here today to say this, but I could not live with myself if I did not say exactly what I am saying to them. I hope that they come around and realize that this country is diverse and different. We need special attention in Atlantic Canada, not because of a problem which we created, but because of mismanagement by successive governments.

I say to Reform members that if someone in the Progressive Conservative governments of the past made a mistake, so be it. It was a mistake. It was wrong. Just as it is a mistake and is wrong today. Let us rise above that. We could live in the past forever. It is what will happen in Atlantic Canada after next May that I am worried about.

Madam Speaker, I guess I have to sit down.

An hon. member: No, you don't. You are sharing your time with me, so if you want to continue—

Mr. Bill Matthews: Is that all right, Madam Speaker?

An hon. member: We can go for 20 minutes, can't we?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): If the House agrees, I have no problem with it. Are we in agreement?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Jim Abbott: No.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Let the man speak.

Mr. Bob Kilger: Madam Speaker, in the normal course the member can speak for the full 20 minutes, but he is splitting his time. But if they are not splitting their time and they want to somehow reconfigure their speeches to 20 minutes from 10, that would certainly meet with our approval.

• (1215)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): That is exactly what the hon. member has been requesting so we shall proceed.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Madam Speaker, I thank the members for their concurrence. Now I have forgotten where I was. I know where I am, but I have forgotten where I was.

An hon. member: You are here in Ottawa.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Yes, I say to the hon. member from the Reform Party, I am here in Ottawa. But my life is not dictated to by

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Ottawa, I say to him and others. My life is dictated to by the people I was sent here to represent and they are in Atlantic Canada.

If there was a legitimate need in the west which there is in British Columbia, I can say to members I will stand here, highlight it and support it. I will support the people of British Columbia because there is an identified problem.

I only ask that those immediately to my left would recognize and identify the legitimate problem in the east that was not created by the people in the east. It was created by people who sat here in successive governments—

Mr. Howard Hilstrom: From the west?

Mr. Bill Matthews: Yes, and people from the west who happened to be in the cabinet who did not know a fish from that mace—

Mr. Jim Abbott: How about John Crosbie, did he know anything?

Mr. Bill Matthews: Yes he did and he still knows a lot. John Crosbie knows more than the whole 60 of them put together not only about fish but about anything else I say to hon. members.

There is one thing I can stand in this House and say about John Crosbie. I am not shy about defending John Crosbie. John Crosbie would not expect me to stand here today and say that everything he did was right. John Crosbie was always a man who if he made a mistake he admitted it. The first clue to success and the first way to be successful is to recognize when one is wrong.

I guess today we are asking the government to recognize that there are things that have been done wrong over the years which are really impacting upon our people today. And TAGS is a part of it.

Having said that, TAGS was necessary. If it was not for TAGS the Reform wish of Atlantic Canada disappearing may have already been realized. I say that quite sincerely. It may have already been over but the question is now what will come after TAGS. We are hearing many suggestions. We are preoccupied with it these days in Atlantic Canada. Many people there have very good suggestions.

When Mr. Harrigan and others go around this country I hope they talk to the people who are really involved in the industry, the people who have had to try to stay alive for the last four or five years on a meagre income. There is a perception that has been portrayed throughout this country by certain groups that this has been a total waste and this dependence has to end. I am sure people to my right know who I am talking about.

These people have been only kept alive. They have not been able to live in mansions. They have not been able to drive new cars.

They have not been able to pay for their children's tuition for post-secondary education. They have only been kept alive.

What was wrong is that successive governments of Canada mismanaged the fishery to a degree that those people could no longer earn a living from that resource, a common resource, a people's resource. What was wrong with the government recognizing its mistakes and the problem it has created?

What is wrong now when we ask as a party and other parties in this House ask for solutions to the problem and to help those people in Atlantic Canada after May 1998? We must not forget that this program was designed to continue to May 1999. The federal government has cut a year off that program.

Why has there been a year cut off the program? Because there were 52% more take up on the income support component than was anticipated. I ask you, Madam Speaker, to think about that. How could anyone underestimate by 52% the take up on income support of a program that followed NCARP, the previous program? All the government had to do was transfer the files from NCARP to TAGS, from DFO to HRD but can you imagine that they underestimated the income support take up by 52%.

So people wonder why I am here today and why I am so frustrated and why I behave and speak the way I do. I want members to listen to this. It is because my worst fear is that after NCARP and TAGS it is most conceivable that if there is something after TAGS, we could even make it worse.

• (1220)

There should be no lessons left to be learned about TAGS. We should already know the answers, we should know what will follow. There are certain components that are going to be compulsory. There is going to have to be early retirement. There is going to have to be effective licence buy-out if we are going to reduce the harvesting capacity.

I say to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans this time not to just buy the licence out from the fisher person and pay him the \$100,000, \$150,000 or \$200,000 and allow his boat and gear to remain fishing. If we are really sincere about reducing harvesting capacity, it should come out of the industry. That is where there has been a big failure.

Last week when the House was not sitting, I met with fisher groups in two areas of my riding. I say to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and to members that today there are more people fishing in those areas, more boats, more vessels fishing than there were before the moratorium. And there is a reflection cast upon Atlantic Canada and Atlantic Canadians that they seem to be the problem. Can you blame us for wanting to make a living, for trying to stay alive?

The government program has failed and I have to say to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans since he is listening that this is a very complex problem that has taken a number of years to get to this point. I have to very seriously question whether the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has the ability or the competence to straighten out the Atlantic fishing problems. I am not saying that just for the sake of saying it. But I question the department. I have to ask if it is really capable of dealing with the complex problems in the east and the west. I do not take great comfort that it has the ability to deal with it.

I guess I am running out of time but I want to repeat the problems in the west for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. I plead with the minister and the government to get more involved than they have already been in the Pacific salmon issue. There is a direct parallel, an identical situation brewing in British Columbia as is now taking place in the east. If the minister and the Prime Minister do not roll up their sleeves and get more involved in the issue, we will be here in the not too distant future talking about the Pacific salmon crisis and the people affected just as we are talking about Atlantic Canada and TAGS.

It does no good just to pay lip service. Why is the Prime Minister not more involved in the issue in the west? Why is the federal government more preoccupied with attacking Premier Glen Clark? Why have Glen Clark and British Columbians become the enemies? The Americans, the Alaskans are the problem. They are the ones who have consistently overfished. The Alaskans are still fishing at pre-1994 catch rates, yet the British Columbians are targeted as the bad guys.

I say to the minister that if he had gone to the troubled areas of British Columbia we would not have had that altercation with the blockade of the ferry. If he had gone there and talked to those people, we would not have had the problem. We would not have had the blockade.

Mr. Norman Doyle: Why didn't he go?

Mr. Bill Matthews: I have no idea. You will have to ask him that. He may have been fishing.

It is a very, very complex problem. However I am very proud to say that at least my party and our leader have initiated this debate. As my colleague has said, we should have more days like this because we are dealing with the future of regions of the country, particularly the Atlantic region. If we do not debate and suggest solutions, then there is a region of the country that may just disappear. It is the role and responsibility of the federal government to find solutions.

This country is so diverse and our problems are so different. All that the people of Atlantic Canada are asking is to continue to be a part of this great nation and to be treated with dignity and respect and be allowed to stay where they have lived, worked and been educated.

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• (1225)

In concluding, I would like to move the following amendment. I move:

That the amendment be amended by deleting the words "continue the implementation of" and substituting therefor the word "implement".

Why I say that is, how can you continue the implementation of something that you have never implemented, such as a national policy on sustainable fisheries? How can you continue to implement something when the auditor general so clearly highlighted in his report that there is no clearly defined national policy on sustainable fisheries?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Questions and comments.

Mr. Jim Abbott: Madam Speaker, he has proposed a subamendment.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): We will consider the receivability of the amendment and will get back to you very shortly. In the meantime I think we should proceed with questions and comments.

Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what solutions does the hon. member for Burin—St. George's have? He had a lot of criticism in his remarks. Having sat through several fisheries meetings now, I would like him to soon get to the point of proposing some solutions that we could add to what we are already proposing in terms of our national fisheries policy.

In his passion he got a little carried away and I would like to clear up a couple of facts.

He tried to leave the impression that this government is doing nothing on the west coast in terms of the salmon treaty. Nothing could be further from the truth. On that issue, the minister of fisheries has travelled extensively, to Oregon and Washington and has met with senators and congressmen and people in British Columbia. The Prime Minister has appointed two special representatives to report back to him. We are dealing with that issue and we are making progress. It surprises me that the member for Burin—St. George's is now crawling into bed with the NDP premier of the province of B.C. I can hardly believe that.

I hope he is at least admitting that we did what we had to do on the east coast in terms of dealing with the initial crisis in the downturn of the fishery. We tried to be there to support the communities and the fisher people. We in fact have welcomed the auditor general's critique of that particular program and what fisheries and oceans is doing. We said in committee the other day that we are going to use those results to learn some lessons. And we have in fact. I think the hon. member agrees with this point. We have appointed Mr. Harrigan to look at the impact on those

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communities and he is doing that at the moment in going to those communities now.

Having said that and having tried to clear up those facts, out of all his remarks could the hon. member highlight for me a couple of areas where he is proposing solutions in terms of a comprehensive national fisheries policy which the motion suggests. I have not heard anything in terms of solutions.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Before proceeding with questions and comments, I advise the House that the subamendment has already been ruled out of order by the Deputy Speaker this morning. Therefore, that decision stands and we will proceed with questions and comments.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the parliamentary secretary asking about solutions. We are talking about a national policy for a sustainable fisheries.

• (1230)

Can we imagine being minister of fisheries and oceans and trying to make management decisions about fisheries on either coast without adequate research and adequate science? Therein lies a big problem. The government has gutted the research and science budgets of DFO. The solution is to get money back into the research and science budgets and to get research and science activities operating on both coasts to determine exactly what fish are there and what environmental problems are being experienced.

We hear talk on the east coast about the effects of cold water, the effects of seals and the effects of foreign overfishing. We are now talking about a fishery of the future without in essence a budget for science and research.

I ask the parliamentary secretary and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans how they can make any management decisions. How can we ever hope to have a sustainable fisheries if we do not have proper and adequate research and science? Excuse the pun, but we have been floundering around too long.

It was indicated at the parliamentary committee this morning that a former minister of fisheries set a total allowable catch of double what the scientific community recommended. That is bad enough. We can blame that on the minister. However, to be making management decisions when they do not have anything to base them on and then trying to shift the blame on to people in those regions of the country for all they have done—

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Do you want to spend money or cut taxes?

Mr. Bill Matthews: I have not met the hon. member. Maybe I should never meet him. Does he realize the value of fish resources to the people of Canada? Both of them are in big trouble.

The member is saying that they would not spend any money on research and science. They would keep on making the same old

mistakes. They would let the stocks go down the tube and more people would be unemployed.

Does it not make more sense to put money into science and research so that we make sound management decisions, have a sustainable fishery and keep people employed on the Atlantic and west coasts? What is wrong with spending some money to do that?

Are they going to cut spending money on everything? Maybe that is the member's solution. If they do that they will wipe out Atlantic Canada.

An hon. member: I am trying to help.

Mr. Bill Matthews: He is not trying to help me. He is not trying to help Atlantic Canadians. He is trying to help Paul Martin and his quest to become prime minister. He has lost sight of his priorities.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. With due respect, I am sitting here and listening to the member referring to the finance minister by name.

I wonder if you would admonish the member, Mr. Speaker, and advise him not to use the minister's name.

The Deputy Speaker: I have been making gestures to the hon. member who was speaking. I thank the hon. member for Mississauga South for drawing the rules to the attention of the House. I have been striving to do that. Given his distance from the Chair, perhaps he was unable to hear me.

Perhaps we could proceed with the next question.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I fully respect the member and the passion he brings to the debate. I mean that with all sincerity.

We can take a look at the fact that the department had adequate research and science and consistently under the government of his party made political decisions that created the problem. He says we have been floundering around too long and guess who has been in charge. He talks about the mismanagement of successive governments. The member referred to NCARP about which former Fisheries Minister John Crosbie said:

The government will have to change the assistance. It will not be able to go on paying people for doing nothing.

• (1235)

When his leader of today was environment minister the Tory government knew for at least five years before the 1992 moratorium that cod stocks were seriously declining. The former environment minister, now leader of his party, could have used this information to save dwindling cod stocks while there was still hope.

This member and the member for Saint John say that we should not be dealing in the past, that we have to deal with the future. I

agree. If the people who created the problem in the first place have the audacity to stand in the Chamber today and say we are wrong and they have all the answers, what hope do the people of Atlantic Canada have?

The Reform Party is gaining ground in Atlantic Canada for the simple reason that we bring a fresh approach. Clearly the Liberal approach, the Tory approach and the NDP approach have ended up putting Atlantic Canada into the position it is in currently. That is a crying shame because of the kind of people and the kind of resources in Atlantic Canada.

The Reform Party has some fresh new ideas, not the regurgitated ideas of the member's party. In the same way as the parliamentary secretary to the fisheries minister asked, I specifically ask what the new ideas are. They will have to break away from the past failures of the Conservatives on this issue.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for using the name of the finance minister. I could have said other things.

I want to respond to the hon. member. I have been here since June 2. I am new to the House of Commons. Whoever made mistakes made mistakes. I will not stand here and try to defend mistakes that were made by former governments. That is not my role. That is the way it is with me.

Mr. Jim Abbott: What is the new idea?

Mr. Bill Matthews: I know the member's new idea. There would be no Atlantic Canada if the member had his way. He would cut us off. There would be nothing in the east. The elitists from the west cannot identify with the problem in the east.

Are they really gaining ground in Atlantic Canada? Is there any doubt about that?

Mr. Darrel Stinson: For three years you can let them dry back there.

Mr. Bill Matthews: What are you talking about? Let what dry?

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The time for questions and comments has expired.

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have noticed many times when I rise to answer questions that this microphone is defective.

The Deputy Speaker: The light is not working in the front row. That is why it is not on. I assure the minister, when I sit down, that his microphone will be switched on and all will hear him. The lights are not working today, just so that he is aware.

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Hon. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to know my switch is activated by your sitting down in the chair.

I congratulate the hon. member, the Conservative Party critic, but he does remind me of the words of a former minister of fisheries of the House, namely Mr. John Crosbie, who said "No one will pressure more for short-sighted and bad decisions than provincial fisheries ministers".

The member was a former minister in Newfoundland. Month after month, year after year, Mr. Crosbie had to put up with the pressure of bad decisions being made that led to the collapse of the fishery. He is as responsible as any member here. It is amazing that during the time Mr. Mulroney was in government the Liberal Party did not make decisions. I wished to explain to the hon. member of the Reform Party.

• (1240)

I refer to the problem Mr. Crosbie outlined in his new book. I recommend that hon. members buy it; it is cheap at the price. The book points out that people like the hon. member were the cause of the decline of the Atlantic fisheries. Indeed they were the cause of the collapse of the Atlantic fisheries. For him to come here today and happily say that he is new here and not here to defend mistakes, as he literally did two minutes ago, is a bit thick.

I refer to the motion before the House:

That this House recognize the urgent need for action to address the serious problems in Canadian fisheries on both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, and calls upon the government to establish a comprehensive national fisheries policy that demonstrates real commitment to resource conservation, leadership on the issue of resource sharing with foreign interests, and sensitivity to the individuals, families and communities whose futures are linked to the health and sustainability of the Canadian fisheries industry.

We have put an amendment forward. My hon. colleagues, the parliamentary secretary, has put an amendment forward pointing out that the objectives outlined in this resolution are in fact the current policy of the government which took over from the Conservative Party and changed the very policies that created the problem we have.

The hon. member, typically Conservative, forgot one basic. He talked about from coast to coast. There are three coasts to Canada. The Arctic coast is also important, with important fisheries. He should recognize, like many of his Conservative friends, that he is living in the past when he refers to only two coasts.

He mentioned science. Recently I had the opportunity to travel in the Arctic region. I was on a coast guard vessel, the *Louis St. Laurent*, now the world's premier platform for scientific work in ice regions. Some first class work is being done under the surface heating and Sheba-Jois programs. This program involves freezing the ice-breaker in the ice for 12 months. People are coming to us

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wanting to work with DFO scientists in this very important area. It refers to global warming and other issues, namely reflection of the surface and other problems we face in the Arctic.

At least 20 American organizations including all the premier research organizations in the United States, for example Scripps and Woods Hall, are putting up \$5.1 million of the total \$8.1 million cost. They would not come to Canada to work with us if they knew that our science was not the best in the world. The American organizations involved could go anywhere in the world to work with any other nation or could do it themselves. They come here because we do the best work in the world. Our scientists at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and in our universities are the best in the world.

It is important for the hon. member to recognize that his criticisms are off the mark when it comes to science. They are cheap shots at our good scientists. As a member of the fisheries committee he should ask its chairman and the parliamentary secretary to make sure the committee has the scientists before it. Then he can learn what he obviously does not know now, which he admits by getting up and saying that he is new here and knows nothing.

He referred to the Atlantic groundfish stocks and the consequence of the collapse. We have had to cope with the consequence to business, communities and individuals. They have all had to change a way of life and a tradition their families practised for generations. I know the hon. member has experience with that. We needed a national effort to assist those in trouble and to rebuild a sustainable Atlantic fishery.

Members opposite, members of the Conservative Party and the member who was a provincial minister of fishery, cannot sit here and pretend they had nothing to do with it. They cannot pretend they had nothing to do with the state of the groundfishery off Atlantic Canada in their years of government when the cod stocks collapsed and 40,000 Atlantic Canadians were out of work. Rather than sit on the sidelines and look for someone to blame, this government has applied what we have learned from the lessons of that groundfish collapse.

• (1245)

We have learned that the stocks are not inexhaustible. I quote a former department of agriculture publication about codfish and the east coast fisheries in 1885: "Unless the order of nature is overthrown, for centuries to come our fisheries will continue to be fertile". We proved that wrong in Atlantic Canada. We proved that the fishery is exhaustible and the policies that created that were the policies of the previous Conservative government and the policies of the previous speaker who was the minister of fisheries of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We have had to recognize that we need to change our ways. Fleet sectors have changed their ways, individuals have changed their ways, processes have changed their ways, governments have

changed their ways. The people who have not changed their ways are the reactionaries of the Conservative Party who sit opposite.

Studies have dissected the failings of the past. Prescriptions have been put forward as the way for the future. We have all embraced the need for change with the sole exception of the Conservative Party. We have all attempted to face the future with new prescriptions.

The fishery of Atlantic Canada is being downsized and restructured. It has secured new sources of raw material and focused on new products. Some of that raw material comes from the Bering Sea. It has been and is becoming more resilient, adaptive and despite all odds has moved forward.

Through the painful lesson of stock reduction and moratoria we have been reminded that we must always put conservation of the resource first. We in government have learned the need to change our relationship with the industry and we know now that we cannot do it ourselves, that partnership and co-operation with the other players are essential. I offer to the hon. member and his party that co-operation, that willingness to work with them so we can get away from the attitudes that so dominated the Conservative Party year after year in the past.

I will quickly mention the international commitment to conservation through our efforts to negotiate the United Nations fisheries agreement on straddling stocks and through NAFO, the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization. In recent years we have worked successfully through NAFO to put in place the necessary control mechanisms such as onboard observers and port inspections as well as management decisions in accordance with the best scientific advice, international scientific advice as well as Canadian advice, which is still the best of all international science available.

When it comes into force, the UN fish agreement will provide the foundation in international law for effective conservation of straddling and highly migratory stocks on the high seas. That means groundfish.

Opposition members come into this House and call for a national fisheries policy. Unfortunately the only thing they can say about their proposed national fisheries policy is that they would like it to be "comprehensive". When my parliamentary secretary even asked the gift question to the Tories of what they would do, they had no answer for him whatsoever.

So let us look at what does constitute a national fisheries policy. Does it mean a national policy across the country which my hon. friend was hinting at when he started to talk about British Columbia, a national standard, one size fits all policy at a time when we are recognizing the importance of diversity? Of course not. Does it mean, and this is even more troubling, that opposition members have ignored the views and input of fishermen and their organizations from across the country? Does it mean they are so divorced from reality that they are not even aware there are differing views of what the fishery of the future should be? Are they pretending that our job as legislators is to be responsive to those views or not?

Are they asking us to do what they did, which is to ignore the very people who make their living from the fishery?

I have met with fishermen from coast to coast to coast. Had the hon. member not had such a comfortable summer, had he looked at what was going on within the fishery, he would have known that instead of making the errors which he did in his earlier presentation.

● (1250)

I have been to St. John's, his city, six times since becoming Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

First in the national policy we must develop an environmentally sustainable fishery. Conservation must be first. We must accept the notion that conservation is central to the economic viability of individuals and companies engaged in the fishery and of the well-being of the communities that depend on the fisheries for their very existence.

I challenge any member opposite to tell me that environmental sustainability is not the best principle for the fishery. I challenge any member opposite to rise and tell me that there is any better way of putting in place that conservation concept than through the precautionary principle of making sure we err on the side of caution.

I challenge any member opposite to rise in their place and tell us why they did not put conservation first and why they did not apply the conservation principle in the decade they were in power here in Ottawa and in the similar period when they were in power in St. John's.

The second principle which I have put forward very clearly is that the fishery of the future must be economically viable. It must be managed so as to provide participants with a good livelihood, something better than subsistence. The fishery must not be seen, as it has been in the past, as the employer of last resort or as the doorway to some government program of support.

As a nation we have been blessed with a diverse and valuable marine resource base. We must continue to develop that base and develop the tools to manage it so that we have a good return for the participants to be able to sustain their coastal communities, not just in the best years but year in and year out in the fishery. That means there must be a recognition that the fishery will be smaller.

Once again I refer the hon. member to the words of wisdom of my predecessor, the hon. John Crosbie, when he discussed this in his book. If he looked at the St. John's newspaper this morning he would know that there are excerpts quoted in that very paper. He would see in those excerpts Mr. Crosbie's recognition of the errors of the past and his commitment to a sustainable fishery in the future based on that reduced size.

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There have to be fewer participants and harvesting capacity must be more in balance with the capacity of the resource.

The fishery of the future must be internationally competitive. The vast bulk of our fishery resource product is sold overseas. We must continue to focus on quality. We must continue to pay more attention to stability of supply, ensuring a competitive price.

The final principle that I will put forward of this government's sustainable fisheries policy is that the fishery must be self-reliant. Fishermen must continue to work with us as partners in management, not as adversaries, as marked the situation when the hon. member was the provincial minister of fisheries for Newfoundland and Labrador.

That adversarial relationship is another aspect of the fishery which we inherited from the very party which has put forward this motion in the House today. Those members should rise in the House and explain how they allowed the fishery to deteriorate to the state it did.

The Fisheries Council of Canada has said that fact that the groundfish stocks collapsed to such an extent should serve as a warning that the fishery of the future should not mirror the fishery of the past. The warning is clear.

On the day I was appointed Minister of Fisheries and Oceans I declared conservation to be my major goal and it will remain so. It means that when I take a tough decision, as I did in Newfoundland on the recent food fishery decision, I will not be put off course by complaints from opposition members. A Conservative member, a colleague, a former member of the legislature, headed up an organization simply to oppose me on that science based decision of the food fishery.

● (1255)

Let me quickly turn to the west coast. I have no apology to make with respect to the west coast. The policy we have followed is to get the best deal we can for British Columbia fishermen.

The hon. member was making some rather foolish remarks about the west coast fishery. We have learned the lessons from the east coast fishery and we are applying fleet reduction on the west coast fishery. We are reducing the number of fishermen. We are introducing area licensing so that we can avoid the problems that have plagued the east coast fishery over the years.

I have here the list of targets and achieved targets. For example, area 23 in Barkley Sound, the sockeye return has reached 260,000 fish. The escapement target is expected to be achieved. In area B, the south coast seine, the catch of 3.6 million sockeye toward an allocation of 3.8 million, only 200,000 out and the fishery was continuing. In the same area 2.7 million pinks have been harvested

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out of an allocation of 2.5 million. In other words, we were over .2 on the pinks and under .2 on the sockeye.

In Area D, allocation is very closed to being achieved. In Area E, which the Fraser River, Juan de Fuca, an allocation of 1.4 million sockeye has been achieved. In Area F allocation has been achieved. In Area G the fishery closed September 21 with an estimate catch of 1.307 million sockeye toward an allocation of 1.377 million. We were under by 70,000 in that fishery. In area H a catch of 713,000 sockeye was recorded against an allocation of 688,000. We are over again there. We are meeting targets. We are meeting the allocation levels despite the difficulty of marine forecasting.

I suggest to the member that he pay particular attention to what is taking place on the west coast. I would also like to point out that when it comes to dealing with Americans we have followed the policy of making sure that we worked with the measures that have the best chance of achieving the best deal for our west coast fishermen.

It is easy to attack the Americans roundly by such measures as the blockade of a ferry. That is easy to do. What it does not do is achieve the results for west coast fishermen. The member knows because of his experience that if we are to have an international area of fishery such as the west coast of North America and the northeast Pacific, the United States and Canada must work together. He knows that.

Last week the premier of the province recognized that and after all his months of complaining and criticizing that we kept contact with the Americans and discussed this with the Americans, he has now reversed himself and said that we did not discuss it enough. We did not have enough contact with them.

Even the premier of B.C. has made a 180 degree change of direction, done his somersault. The only person who is left out there preaching the concept that we should continue to attack the Americans is none other than the hon. critic of the Conservative party.

We have adopted the measures that are most likely to achieve success. I want that understood. I would be happy to answer any questions he may have.

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am gratified to hear the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans talking about erring on the side of caution and of his concern for conservation. I share those goals very much.

I would like to ask the minister two or three questions in that regard.

I live in an area on the upper Fraser River. Not much fishing takes place there, but a lot of fish spawn there. There have been a

lot of problems in that area for a good period of time. For example, why was a young rancher charged with disrupting a fish habitat when he cleared out a beaver dam to make stale, stagnant water fresh so that the fish could live there again? Why was another person who wished to rescue young fry from the back waters that had begun to dry up told he could be charged if those fish were rescued and put into an environment where they could live instead of becoming bird food? That person was told it was simply nature's way and the birds need food too.

● (1300)

The real questions I want to ask are with regard to the Likely hatchery. That hatchery was cut back from a production of about two million fish to about 200,000 fish and then shut down because it was uneconomic. Now local volunteers are raising about \$1,500 a month to feed the fish that they strip and put into spawning channels and care for throughout the year. Why will there be no assistance to these people in the conservation of the chinook salmon?

This fall the spawning channels in the Horsefly River have been left closed so that the sockeye salmon cannot spawn there. These salmon are destroying the natural spawning of the riverbed because there is no room for them. Yet these spawning channels have remained closed. It is a large run this year and the devastation of that fish stock is evident to everyone who has been there.

The people of Cariboo—Chilcotin hold the conservation of these fish stocks to be a very high priority. Yet we have had no co-operation from the Conservative government, from Mr. Tobin when he was the minister and now from this minister.

I would like the minister to answer these questions on the basis of his concern for caution and conservation.

Hon. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is at liberty to make me aware of the particulars of the young rancher's case, which I do not know, or the issue with respect to the beaver dam on somebody's property in British Columbia. Again I am unaware of the details of that.

I would suggest to the hon. member that the measures taken by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans are not the only measures sometimes taken with respect to water courses. The department of agriculture and the ministry of agriculture for the province of British Columbia are involved as well. Enforcement may not be by DFO officials. It may be by members of the fish and game branch of the province of British Columbia. I simply do not have the details. If the hon. member will give me those details I am willing to look into those cases.

The hon. member spoke about hatcheries. They do have remarkably successful results in some instances but not all. It depends on what type of salmon the hatchery is designed to produce, whether

it is chum, sockeye, chinook, coho or indeed whether it is steelhead.

I am happy to look into the issue for him to find that out but the assumption that every hatchery is an improvement is not entirely correct in all instances. I have to point out to him and his colleague who is sitting next to him that there are major genetic problems with taking a small group of fish and flooding the entire gene pool of a particular species of salmon. Genetics is a problem that we are facing with hatcheries around the country. It is a worldwide problem and if that is the situation I certainly will be in touch with him.

On the Horsefly sockeye channel I simply do not know why that would be the case. If the hon. member will discuss it with me later I will get him the details. Sometimes we have closed artificial spawning channels when the optimum number of fish have spawned. That is appropriate because any extra fish simply stir up the gravel and do not increase the production of fish. I will have to check on that. I am happy to do it on the member's behalf.

The Deputy Speaker: On a point of order, the hon. member for Burin—St. George's.

Mr. Bill Matthews (Burin—St. George's, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am reluctant to rise on a point of order, but I feel compelled to do so. I wish to say to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans that unknowingly he referred to me on six occasions as a former minister of fisheries in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is on the record and I want to correct it and inform the minister, speaking on a need for money for—

The Deputy Speaker: I do not believe this is a point of order. The hon. member may get an opportunity in debate subsequently to refute a point but I do not hear a point of order in anything the hon. member is saying at this stage, but I will listen further.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Mr. Speaker, I am reluctant to do this, but if something has been put on the record of this House that is incorrect and untrue, then certainly the member who was referred to should have a chance to stand and correct the record. If that is not a point of order I do not know what a point of order is.

The Deputy Speaker: A point of order is an argument about the rules of the House and whether they are being correctly applied. The hon. member cannot use a point of order to refute arguments that are made in debate.

• (1305)

An hon. member: It is the only time you will recognize me, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: A point of order is for a specific purpose and the Chair is not going to let it be used for other things. I am sure the hon. member will get an opportunity or will have one of

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his colleagues make an intervention in the debate to correct the minister's error if such is made.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to comment on the statement by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

I will do my best to keep it short as I believe we only have 10 minutes for questions and comments. The minister listed four principles that should, in his opinion and according to the amendment, continue to improve the overall policy. One of the four stated principles is emphasis on sustainability versus prudent harvesting. He wants to balance the harvesting capacity with the biomass production capacity. He wants the fisheries to become more self-reliant through joint management. His ultimate goal is preservation.

I could perhaps agree with him on the last of the four principles, but I have serious concerns about the others. I encourage the minister to listen to my speech this afternoon. But what about the minister, who this morning talked about balancing the harvesting capacity with the biomass? What does his department have in mind? How do they think this can be done when, according to the auditor general's report, nothing has been done to even begin rationalizing fisheries? I wonder how they can talk about improving something when the machine is stuck in neutral.

I would like the minister to explain to us how he intends to start balancing all that. I know that the minister has not been fisheries minister for long, but I would like to give him food for thought. He may want to consult his predecessors. I understand that a major problem is precisely that the provinces were largely left out of the process. Perhaps the federal government did not co-operate enough with the provinces.

Why do I make this point? Some will say: "Sure, you Bloc Québécois people are only interested in achieving sovereignty". But before achieving sovereignty, we would like to leave a legacy of good management to Canadians. Why is it important to talk with the provinces? It is the provinces that finance the boats and issue the processing permits. Did the minister think about offering quotas to his provincial partners in order to reassure them so he could achieve some form of rationalization?

My second point to the minister is that when he talks about making fisheries somewhat more self-reliant, he is in fact talking about co-management. But I hope he is not referring to the same type of co-management as that provided in the bill introduced during the last Parliament. The reason is very simple: fishers are tired of having to pay the bills. Co-management means "you will help me pay operating costs". I have yet to see any place where fishers are allowed to manage or enjoy profits, and particularly to take advantage of the options available. There was a clause in the former bill to the effect that it is up to the minister to invite this or

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that group. That is why fishers' associations feel their rights are being infringed upon.

So, here are my two questions: First, how does the minister intend to balance the harvesting capacity—what does he do with the provinces?—and second, does co-management simply mean to him that costs should be shared with the fishers?

Hon. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I am happy that the hon. member has asked these questions. First of all, I want to tell him that I am anxiously awaiting his speech and will listen carefully to the first points he will raise. I will read his speech afterwards, and perhaps we can have lunch together and discuss some of the points on which we are not in complete agreement.

As for his first question on co-operation with the provinces, I met with Quebec's Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in Saint-Jean a few weeks ago. Our discussions were very constructive. He was very nice, and in the interviews he gave after our meetings, he mentioned that we had got along well together and that we will continue to hold discussions regarding close co-operation.

• (1310)

The hon. member has put his finger on a specific problem. Without this co-operation at the provincial level, there may be an increase in the capacity of fleets at the same time as the federal government wants to, and must, reduce the size of the catch.

As for his second question, it will be in the new legislation, but I think that the rules do not allow me to speak about it before the bill is tabled in the House. We can also get together to discuss the changes sought by the hon. member. Like his colleague who used to sit on the Standing Committee on Transport, he is well aware that I am very favourable to suggestions from the opposition regarding bills.

[English]

Mr. Greg Thompson (Charlotte, PC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I want to bring to the minister's attention that he was dead wrong in his facts when he was referring to the hon. member for Burin—St. George's as a former minister. He was never ever a former—

The Deputy Speaker: I think the hon. member will recognize that that is not a point of order.

Hon. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I apologize if I have mis-described him, but I understand that he was on the resource policy committee of cabinet which included oversight of the department of fisheries—

The Deputy Speaker: We are getting into debate rather than a point of order, as I suspected we might. We will move on.

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, whenever I take part in something like this I am most unhappy with the fact that we finally have everybody in the room, we can ask some really good questions and get answers and comments, but there is never enough time for it to happen. There is something inappropriate about the way this place works because that is inevitably the result.

Mr. Lynn Myers: It is called democracy.

Mr. John Duncan: It is called democracy, but there are some democratic reforms which are necessary.

The federal government has prime responsibility for one natural resource and that is fish. Without a doubt, it is the worst managed resource in Canada. It has a terrible track record.

To quote my Liberal colleague from Huron—Bruce this week at the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, if fisheries were agriculture they would be managed properly.

The Canadian fisheries have sustained a tremendous number of Canadians for a long time in every region of the country, but there has been a betrayal of the entire fishery through mismanagement, lack of serious consideration of legitimate scientific research, and betrayal of the fishermen dependent on good management by both this Liberal administration and the previous Tory administration.

The taxpayer pays taxes in good faith, expecting that money spent for accurate scientific data will be put to its best use and the data collected will be used to make wise management decisions, not ignored or altered for political expediency.

The open politicization of fisheries management was demonstrated very clearly by my colleague from Selkirk—Interlake in his speech earlier today when he indicated how the minister is using his appointment powers at the expense of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation to tidy up Liberal patronage for an MP from the previous Parliament who did not qualify for the MP pension scheme.

The politicization of the fisheries puts the resource at risk. When the resource is at risk the fish stocks suffer, the fishermen suffer and the communities which depend on fishing suffer, not the politicians.

Newfoundland and Labrador lost 25,000 people in the last year. That is sad. No one has ever apologized for the largest layoff in Canadian history. No one seems to be accountable.

• (1315)

There has been an ongoing front page dispute that has revolved around the Pacific salmon treaty with the United States all summer long and it continues to this day. The Pacific salmon treaty was a rushed document produced during the Mulroney era in 1985. It was

rushed to completion to meet a signing ceremony for the shamrock summit between Reagan and Mulroney.

One of the major architects of the treaty told me earlier this year that much to his dismay the treaty as it currently exists is unworkable, that it is a failure. There has been no fishing plan attached to this treaty since 1993 when this government came into power and prior to this year there has been no priority on paying attention to the Pacific salmon treaty. Even now the commitment from our foreign affairs department as to the priority of resolving issues around Pacific salmon with the United States is questioned by many. Our federal fisheries minister has failed to demonstrate that resolution of the treaty is his number one priority. People involved—

An hon. member: Rubbish.

Mr. John Duncan: Well if it is true I would like to have that on the record. If that is the minister's number one priority I would be absolutely delighted to have him put that on the record. We have a window of four or five months this winter to get that resolved. Is the minister of fisheries the one who is primarily accountable or is it the minister of foreign affairs? We do not know right now. People are questioning who is the accountable party.

Hon. David Anderson: We both work on it. So does the Prime Minister.

Mr. John Duncan: That is not clear responsibility. Somebody has to take the lead. In the absence of hearing anything clearly I would have to assume that the minister of fisheries will wear it if it is not resolved.

People involved with the west coast fisheries know one thing clearly. Without a working treaty the salmon resource on the west coast is at great risk. In September I wrote to the Canadian envoy, Mr. Strangway, who is dealing with the Pacific salmon treaty. I asked him to act as a catalyst for a Pacific salmon symposium where we can get scientists from both Canada and the U.S. to put fisheries science on the table with respect to the migratory salmon on the west coast. This could be a possible turning point in educating the public and could bring political resolve to fix this intolerable dispute.

A week after I sent the letter, I received endorsement of this concept from American federal politicians from Alaska and Washington. We are looking for a commitment from the minister to endorse this concept so we can expedite this symposium. I would like to hear that too.

The science from both sides of the border needs to be in the public domain at the same time and needs to be subject to peer review. We need a commitment from the minister that DFO scientists will be allowed to attend this symposium and to speak publicly about the state of fish stocks without a muzzle.

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The auditor general makes a very strong statement in last week's report about sustainability in the fisheries. The department has stated that its mandate is conservation of the fisheries resource base and that is implied in current legislation. Nevertheless the auditor general found no clearly stated national policy for sustainable fisheries. How does the minister reconcile his claim that conservation is his priority when his policy on the west coast this summer was to ignore conservation principles?

On July 27 the minister said "Conservation is my first, second and third priority. Glen Clark has asked me to fish aggressively and jeopardize conservation of the stocks. I have refused". Three days later the minister gave fishermen the order to "fish aggressively to overwhelm the efforts of the smaller U.S. fleet intercepting Fraser bound fish".

Hon. David Anderson: That is wrong. I never used that word. Vigorously is the word I used.

Mr. John Duncan: That is a quote.

Hon. David Anderson: It is wrong.

Mr. John Duncan: On the east coast we had a collapse of the cod fishery which essentially occurred as a result of the actions of the previous Tory administration and the fallout from this collapse has been exacerbated by the Liberals. We know the Tory government knew for at least five years before the 1992 moratorium that cod stocks were seriously declining. The then environment minister and now leader of the Progressive Conservatives, the member for Sherbrooke, could have used this information to save dwindling cod stocks while there was still hope.

• (1320)

Scientific studies said cod stocks would not recover until the end of the decade. Why was the moratorium put in place for two years only? They hoped the problem would go away. Rather than address the problem, the former government decided to experiment on fishermen. They wanted this program to get them past the next election. The Liberals then put in a five year program to get them past the next election again. This would take it to May 1999, but now that we have had the election early, they want to cancel the program early. Politics is rampant.

In April of this year the minister of fisheries announced he would re-open three areas of the cod fishery in Atlantic Canada without any support from fisheries scientists anywhere. With many fisheries scientists actually condemning the act, how could the minister have even contemplated such a move given the disastrous state of the Atlantic cod stocks? Now we have one set of information and two opinions. The former minister, Brian Tobin, recently stated that Atlantic cod are being "fished to the point of extinction".

This is not a happy story. We have fleet overcapacity on both coasts. We end up with these gigantic social upheavals, fleet

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restructuring, displaced fishermen and communities marginalized. DFO has proven itself to be inept in handling these circumstances.

One more example of political incompetence, this morning in the *Globe* the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans stated that he wished the United States would live up to its obligations under the Pacific salmon treaty. I agree.

I also think that Canada should live up to its obligations under the international treaty which since 1955 allows the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission to run a very successful sea lamprey program. It has run successfully for 40 years and is the backbone of the Great Lakes commercial and recreational fisheries. Two years ago it was put at risk by the Liberal government. The government is currently \$200,000 in arrears and has not responded to requests for budget allocations at least since July 2 of this year.

We went through the auditor general's report last week which condemned the government for turning the Atlantic groundfish strategy from what was supposed to be a fleet restructuring to primarily a poorly managed income support program and seriously criticized the lack of conservation focus on the government.

On the west coast the combination of restructuring the industry and low prices has resulted in the displacement of fishermen, associated workers, their families and communities. The minister announced in November and again in January an aid package for B.C. that consisted of a \$7.7 million retirement program which has come to nothing, and a \$30 million transition program. With this \$30 million program we have seen a lack of strong commitment from the minister and the affected parties are very concerned that the government will renege on this commitment as well.

The minister this past winter went further and said they would spend whatever it takes. I can tell the minister that federal commitments are much less than \$30 million and there are demonstrated transition proposals. What is he waiting for?

Why should any fisherman believe the government when it is renegeing on TAGS and failing to deliver on its retirement and transition programs in B.C.? Why make announcements, raise expectations and affect personal plans and then renege? This is not fair to fishermen or their families.

Obviously a primary alternative employment for displaced traditional fishery workers is in alternate fisheries. We have heard many examples of DFO foot dragging in terms of responding to enlightened proposals to deal with putting people to work but still in fisheries related work.

I have correspondence on abalone on the west coast, sealing proposals on the east coast. Why is the government still sitting on the Liberal task force report on aquaculture which has been in the

hands of the government since November 1996? We understand that there are some enlightened proposals in there.

• (1325)

We need a vision for the fishery. There is a need for more room at the table for fisheries managers from the provinces and communities because they are the most directly affected and are most directly accountable.

There is a better way. We need to depoliticize the licensing process. We need to separate scientific research from political control within the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

I agree with the minister that the scientists we have in Canada are among the very best in the world and in many cases are the best in the world. But we also have many documented cases this year of these very scientists complaining about the political interference and manipulation under which they suffer. The *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences* ran a major article on this.

We had many scientists sign on. We had our previous fisheries critic for the east coast make appointments to visit fisheries scientists working for the department in the Atlantic provinces. When he arrived he was told he had no business going to visit scientists, that he must talk to the assistant deputy minister of science in Ottawa. This is total politicization and it is unacceptable.

We have some proposals that I think would work across the country in terms of helping fishermen, helping their families. We know that disposable income is an important concept. A family of four with one income of \$30,000 would see 89% shaved off their tax bill with our proposals.

By cutting unemployment insurance premiums, what we have is a circumstance whereby employers will begin to add to their payrolls rather than lay off workers because Liberals and Tories put a tax on jobs.

We believe that the long term solution relies more on the people in the affected fisheries than on programs and plans designed by the federal government and operated out of Ottawa.

As a transition measure we are convinced that money currently devoted to regional development and a program such as TAGS should be given directly to municipalities or provincial governments. It would be money delivered in a much more focused and much less wasteful fashion.

Mr. Speaker, I understand I have three and a half minutes left. I would like to use that time for questions and comments. I would particularly like to have a discourse with the minister, but of course that is dependent on his co-operativeness in this regard.

The Deputy Speaker: I appreciate the hon. member's wishes. Unfortunately, the rules do not permit me to add the extra time to

the 10 minutes allowed for questions and comments following on the hon. member's speech, unless the House gives its consent to do that. We will start with questions and comments.

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, now you are sitting down and my mike works. It is the part of your body that activates the mikes that intrigues us all.

The hon. member has said that nothing has been done to assist displaced west coast fishermen. I want to ask him this question. Is he aware that 54 weeks ago the job protection commissioner of the province of British Columbia and the province of British Columbia requested that the federal government spend \$20 million on assistance for displaced fishers?

Is he aware that since then we have in fact under programs with HRD in co-operation with local community groups spent \$21 million under that initial program, that we have another \$7.6 million being spent under that program and that we have in addition \$15 million for habitat programs out of the Department of the Environment, of which \$7.25 million will be put out this year and the remainder in later years?

• (1330)

Is he aware we have spent more than 50% over and above what was requested by the job protection commissioner and the province of British Columbia over one year ago?

Mr. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, the \$15 million the minister refers to is a separate announcement. It has nothing to do with the \$30 million that was promised.

The political apparatus of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is playing a shell game with people in British Columbia. It wants to count the same money two, three or four times and make two, three or four announcements.

I understand that the money that has been allocated, without the shell game and depending on how you count it, is somewhere between \$12 and \$18 million. These are the best numbers I have. The minister is saying it is \$21 million and \$7.6 million. If those numbers are correct, I would be very happy to receive documentation from the minister. I will certainly go out of my way to apologize to him if those numbers are clean and do not reflect previous announcements, which is what keeps happening in most people's opinion.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question for the Reform member from Vancouver Island is more or less a statement and is a clarification of what the minister said earlier.

I believe that no one has defended the rights of scientists to speak more than I have in the House of Commons by continually asking for a judicial inquiry.

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I reiterate two points for the member from the Reform. First, because he has a lot of concerns with the science that is going on and the misinformation that is appearing, will he join me in calling for an inquiry?

Second, the minister spoke earlier about the faith that he has in the expertise of the scientists within the DFO. He failed to mention that the DFO still has to go through another two years of cuts. He failed to mention that the coast guard, since its merger with DFO, has turned one of the finest institutes in the world, the Bedford Institute of Technology, into a morale mess. It is one of the finest institutes of the world for fisheries and oceans studies. The morale in that building in Bedford, Nova Scotia is at an all-time low because of the policies of the federal government.

Will he now join with me in asking the minister and the government to remove this suppression or gag order from scientists so that they can speak freely about their findings and their interpretation of science, without fear of losing their jobs?

Mr. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the questions.

I would like to take the three questions I detected in the intervention in reverse order.

In regard to the DFO and the coast guard, depending on which part of the country you go to, there are regional differences as to who has had the most dramatic impact on whom. In some cases the coast guard has been the loser. In other cases DFO has been the loser in this amalgamation.

We do not think there has to be a loser. We think the mandate of the coast guard is best fulfilled not through an amalgamation with fisheries and oceans. They have a mutually exclusive mandate. We think the coast guard should be a part of the military. That would fix the whole problem. We are in some general concurrence.

This certainly has created problems with respect to the cuts the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is suffering. Our major observation is that the field operations and the regional services are the ones that take the brunt of the cuts. The centralized operation, particularly in Ottawa, has actually added personnel in a high-priced category over the last two or three years. We think this is absolutely and totally inappropriate.

• (1335)

As for calling for an inquiry, we are talking about the rights of scientists. Science should be on the table. The public should know what the science is. That will keep the politicians honest when they make moves which might go against the science. The way to make that happen is through structural change and legislation which ensures that scientists have freedom in making their opinions known.

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That is the way to go, as opposed to a full blown inquiry, because an inquiry will inevitably get bogged down. As well, if the inquiry is not going the way the administration wants it to go, it will end up being ineffectual, just like several of the inquiries we have seen in recent times.

That is a more practical and immediate way for us to go. That is what I would promote.

Mr. Eric Lowther (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member to comment on a news item which was recently reported. A well known premier in the Atlantic region decided to step down and, having stepped down, he was free to speak his mind. Mr. Frank McKenna announced that he felt the grants and subsidies which had been provided to the Atlantic region had effectively become an opiate for that region. He was advocating that maybe one of the best thing that could be done would be to have a tax reduction in that region.

I wonder if the hon. member would be willing to speak to that particular item.

Mr. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I certainly spoke about tax measures which could be taken. We also have other things in mind for the Atlantic region which we think are very positive.

There is a market of 14 million people between the Atlantic provinces and New England and there are very poor infrastructure links at the current time. A very solid way for government to invest in the Atlantic region would be to ensure that those infrastructure links are strengthened.

We have seen a strong report from the port of Halifax. The Halifax Chamber of Commerce estimated in 1996 that conversion to a post panamax port would result in 24,000 full time permanent jobs in that area. That is the kind of proposal which we think the federal government should be strongly behind.

We know that one of the major problems in developing a non-subsidized seal industry on the east coast is the bureaucratic inspection system on meat products coming from seals which basically categorizes the seal as a fish rather than a mammal. It has become a real problem.

We think the government has shown a lack of resolve on the Voisey's Bay operation. This is a major employer. Thousands of people could be put to work and it is being held up because of bureaucratic red tape and a lack of resolve emanating right here in Ottawa.

Those are some very strong ideas. As I mentioned before, we have alternative fisheries, we have aquacultural opportunities, and they just get totally bogged down because the department is playing by old, timid rules. There is no advocacy going on, other than for the way things have been done before. It is just not working. We need major structural, systemic change. We need to re-focus.

• (1340)

Mr. Charles Hubbard (Miramichi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time this afternoon with the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

This morning the fisheries committee met and we heard from various fisher people in Atlantic Canada and some of their concerns with the TAGS policy. They are concerns which we hope we can hear in the committee on fisheries and oceans.

In the weeks ahead under the capable leadership of our chairperson, we will try to hear the reports from Atlantic Canada and the concerns with the fishery, and hopefully provide some solutions to what their concerns might be.

I come from a community in which the fishery is very important. In fact, the community has approximately 10 small fishing wharves and approximately 400 boats that are out on the water during the fishing seasons. There are three fish plants relying on the resources from the sea.

I think we in Atlantic Canada appreciate the fact that the sea is a great resource for all of us. We go out with our boats, we get our gear, our nets together and of course, hopefully we will have a successful fishing season.

For those involved with the groundfish, especially cod, the last 10 years have not been good. In fact the past five years when they were not able to fish in most areas has been a tremendous blight on the economy in Atlantic Canada. I am glad that the House has taken a day to look at these problems of the Atlantic fishery, and also to discuss some of the problems on the west coast.

This year we celebrated the 500th anniversary of the landing of Cabot's ship on the shores of Newfoundland. For at least 500 years, in fact before 1497, the Grand Banks and those waters off the coast of Newfoundland were looked on as a tremendous resource for fish, that great protein source that our people have. For almost 500 years we have had a successful fishery.

I think all of us in this House recognize that in the last 30 or 40 years our fishing techniques, our new methods and all those ships that are coming from offshore to visit our waters have put a tremendous drain on that great fishery.

In terms of our own area, the Miramichi, which I mentioned before, we have had to look at difficult situations in terms of our own fisheries. In fact, if we look at the last decade, most of the fishermen on the Miramichi who hold groundfish licences have not been able to fish groundfish.

None of them have participated in the TAGS program because, as fishermen, they saw the decline of the cod stocks in the last generation as a reason why they should not be out fishing that resource. They have waited for a return of the cod fishery and they

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have waited in vain because right now, we still do not see prospects of the cod returning to Miramichi Bay.

We have seen in terms of our Atlantic salmon that, since the 1970s, the Atlantic salmon has no longer been a commercial fishery. In fact, the several hundred fishermen who had that as part of their licences in the early 1960s and into the 1970s, have had to give up those licences.

Many of them sold them back to the government. In any case, the Atlantic salmon fishery has declined to the stage where today it is only a recreational fishery and then only in terms of a limited catch that can be kept by any recreational fisherman.

In fact this year the recreational fishery in the Miramichi is allowed approximately eight tags. Among those eight tags, they are only allowed to keep the smaller fish which are referred to as grilse, which are less than 26 inches in length.

We heard across the House the problems of the hatcheries. I think I would be remiss if I did not point out that I was a bit disappointed to find that this year DFO has closed all the hatcheries in Atlantic Canada.

In my own case of the Miramichi, we had the oldest fish hatchery in Canada trying to promote and enhance the Atlantic salmon. That hatchery, which existed since before Confederation is a historical site in terms of our sites and monuments. It is sometimes called the oldest hatchery in North America and was turned over this month to a local group that is attempting now to run it on a limited budget. DFO should be criticized for having closed the Atlantic salmon hatcheries.

• (1345)

In terms of our lobster fishery we have to look at the concept of gear. Most of our lobster fishermen, for example, had 350 traps they could put in the water. Historically they were traps made of wood approximately three feet in length. Putting out 350 traps has been changed now to the concept of putting out steel traps which are four feet in length. Many lobster fishermen are concerned what effect a change in gear will have on that fishery, the main source for fishermen on Miramichi Bay.

We also have to think about what fish really are. They are a resource. They travel across the great oceans of this continent. They are available not only to Canadian fishermen but to many other fishermen who visit our waters and fish sometimes within the 200 mile limit with the permission of our country and often times outside the 200 mile limit.

We think of the Americans, our neighbours. We think of the French fleet that sometimes fish off the shores of St. Pierre and Michelon. We think of the Spaniards and other members of the

European Union who fish off our shores. In other words, they have tremendous pressure on the Atlantic fishery.

The minister and his officials have worked hard through such organizations as NASCO and NAFO to try to make international arrangements by which our fishing resources could be enhanced and conserved for future generations. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Department of External Affairs have to look at concepts and agreements among the various nations of the world.

We think of the tremendous tuna resource we have today. It is worth as much as \$30 a pound to some of our Atlantic fishermen. Those tuna are being chased not only by our Atlantic fishery but by other nations of the world, especially Japan.

I hope the minister will look at some of the communications problems of his department. If we look at politicians in the House today, some criticize us for what has happened to the fishery. Others will criticize our scientists. Some criticize the very management of DFO. We have to recognize that there has to be better communications.

For a good period of time we have heard concerns about seals and how they are affecting cod stocks off the coast of Atlantic Canada. A tremendous report produced by our science division indicated that the seals were not a major source of difficulty in terms of how many cod stocks they were eating. The report went on to say that seals were caught and dissected and their stomach contents indicated they had eaten very few cod.

I showed that report to some fishermen in the area of Hardwicke. After reading the report an elderly fisherman said to me "When there is no codfish for fishermen, how could there be codfish for the seals?"

Sometimes we look at science but science has to be measured against the people who are out there fishing, the people with experience, the people who know what their jobs are all about.

Today we hear of the many changes happening within DFO. We hear that fees are being charged. We hear there are observers out there and that various methods are being used. We commend the department for some of those steps it has taken.

In any case, as a member from Atlantic Canada I want to say that it is very complex. We cannot point fingers but we have to look at the fact that this resource has tremendous pressure on it. We cannot really blame those who are here today or those who were here before us. Many people have relied on that source of income. Certainly many fishing people, especially in Newfoundland, relied on TAGS and are concerned. We have to be concerned that the human needs of every person in this great country of ours are met.

• (1350)

From the west coast we have the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway. I am sure she will take some time to talk about the west

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coast fishery, but in terms of the east coast I hope we as parliamentarians can work together to offer some vision and some possible solution to a very complex and difficult problem.

Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am interested in the fact that although he comes from the Miramichi the hon. member has extended his comments to the outer shelf, which is what I want to address in my question. I know there are no sharks in the Miramichi except perhaps for a few Liberal bagmen, but we will not worry about them.

I want to speak for the sharks. I wonder what the hon. member thinks about the fact that the shark population in the north Atlantic, including our territorial waters, is being decimated. The sharks are being taken in almost unlimited quantities. It is a fishery of unbelievable cruelty. It makes any other branch of the fishery or the sealery seem utterly benign.

When they destroy sharks as they surely will—these things will become extinct—we will lose the main control on the seal population that exists. This in turn filters down to the fish which provide the increased numbers of seals with their sustenance.

Why is the DFO not out there doing a little surveillance, some controlling and keeping people from decimating the shark population?

Mr. Charles Hubbard: Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to try to reply to the hon. member. I know he has been in the cattle business and in the oil business. I believe he has a son who has been connected with the Bedford Institute of Oceanography. He has a very broad knowledge in terms of all this, a knowledge that probably surpasses some of my own.

We have to look at the fact that Canada alone cannot control all of that. In terms of the tuna, swordfish and sharks, it is part of our international obligations. We have to negotiate with other countries in terms of those species.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of representing Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough which is almost three-quarters surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean. I have a great number of fisher persons in that riding who are having tremendous difficulty in getting consultation with the government, members of DFO, and in particular members of the ministry of fisheries office.

With respect to consultation and the idea of fisher persons having direct input into the policy process and procedure by which they are governed, what is the government doing in a substantial way to foster this ability for actual input and consultation?

The Canso Trawlerman's Association and Pat Fougere have been repeatedly trying to have a meeting with the minister of fisheries as have the zone 18 fishermen and crab fishermen. The idea of

information flowing back and forth is a substantial problem that needs to be addressed.

I am very interested to hear what the hon. member proposes in terms of increased consultation and input from those in the industry who have the most working knowledge of the problems that face fishermen on both coasts of this great country.

Mr. Charles Hubbard: Mr. Speaker, the member mentions a good point. Only this morning our committee met by video conference with Mr. Sam Ellsworth, president of the Halifax West Commercial Fishermen's Association, and Mr. Ron Newell, president of the Southwest Fishermen's Quota Group, Halifax. Our committee will certainly be visiting the east coast. I hope we will hear input from all.

As my speech indicated, fishermen with experience are just as important to us as those scientists who have Ph.Ds but have never set foot on some of the great ships and boats out there fishing on our waters.

● (1355)

I think we will hear from all groups. I know the minister will be interested in hearing our report.

Ms. Angela Vautour (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Miramichi is quite aware of the situation in our region where the cost of unemployment insurance has made it extremely difficult for people to survive in rural communities. On top of that the federal government, DFO, has opted out of the funding of wharfs.

Does the member for Miramichi recognize that this is a problem? Is he willing to work on making sure that our fishermen have secure decent wharfs from which to fish?

Mr. Charles Hubbard: Mr. Speaker, it is not often one is given an opportunity to speak of constituent concerns directly on the floor of the House.

We do have 10 wharfs. We are very pleased that in most of those areas fishermen's committees have been set up. In terms of the member asking the question, the nearest one I have to her constituency is the wharf at Saint-Louis de Kent which together with the wharfs at Point Sapin and Escuminac are attempting to provide resources. A significant amount of money was granted to the wharf at Saint-Louis. The committee, under the leadership of Gerald Robichaud, has done very well in trying to meet the needs of the fishermen in that area.

The Deputy Speaker: I believe the time for questions and comments consequent on the hon. member's speech has expired. In light of the hour we will proceed to statements under Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

RÉAL CAOUETTE

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, those who knew Réal Caouette remember his famous phrase: "Write me in Ottawa. No need for a stamp, it will get to me". Now he has his own stamp.

We are paying tribute not just to a politician, but to a friend. Mrs. Suzanne Curé-Caouette said that her husband would have been very pleased and honoured to know that Canada was recognizing what he had done for the country. She said that "throughout his career, he tried to bring people together and to make politics understandable".

Réal Caouette was born in Amos in 1917. He became a national political force when he took up the leadership of the Quebec Social Credit movement in 1939 and was elected to the House of Commons in 1946. Everyone will remember his television broadcasts in which he sometimes used a blackboard to get his point across.

Thank you, Réal, and thank you, Suzanne.

* * *

[English]

RIGHTS OF VICTIMS

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last week I spoke with a woman in Duncan, British Columbia, whose sister was killed by her husband six years ago. He got one year because he was drunk. She told me that at that time the family was assured it would be notified of any change in the offender status.

A few weeks ago a friend called to tell her that her sister's killer was spotted in a nearby town. He was released on early parole and they were not told anything. This woman and her family are terrified of him. There is also a very real concern that he may attempt to gain custody of his daughter who witnessed the killing.

I asked if they had made request for notification in writing as is required by the parole board, and she told me that they had not because nobody told them that they should. They were merely told that they would be notified.

Although this case is provincial due to the light sentence, it is typical of stories coming out of the federal system. It is high time the solicitor general took appropriate steps to ensure that victims are properly informed of their rights.

S. O. 31

[Translation]

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we must take advantage of Small Business Week to recall the importance of small businesses to the economy of Quebec. In 1995, there were 177,000 businesses with fewer than five employees. If we add to that the 436,000 self-employed workers, we have some idea of the changes the work force is currently undergoing.

Moreover, between 1978 and 1995, the proportion of total jobs which were in businesses with 50 employees or less rose from 28% to 38%, while the proportion for large businesses dropped from 46% to 37%.

• (1400)

These entrepreneurs and self-employed workers work hard. Often, their businesses are less cost-effective. They have trouble getting credit, and even more trouble obtaining the risk capital that is so indispensable for startup and for growth, which is always a perilous undertaking.

Women are increasingly achieving success in these areas. Let us pay homage to these men and women, whose efforts must be given more than mere lip service.

* * *

[English]

GREEN-A-THON

Mr. Julian Reed (Halton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, cleaning up our environment and making a difference in our community is not only on the minds of our leaders but is important to Canada's youth as well.

On Friday, October 24, 1997 McKenzie-Smith Bennett public school, Robert Little public school and St. Joseph's separate school, all of Acton, Ontario in my riding of Halton, will be holding a Green-A-Thon.

Some 1,300 students will participate in this event along with teachers and supervisors. The Credit Valley conservation authority has also been working very closely with the schools in planning the activities. The children will be raking leaves for seniors and the town churches in addition to cleaning up creeks as well as school property.

I commend the efforts made by all the teachers and students in making this event possible. I wish them much success in this endeavour.

* * *

FISHERIES

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is the real cause of dwindling fish stocks? Is it greedy seals or is it overfishing?

S. O. 31

Until a few days ago fisheries officers were engaged in a seal cull in British Columbia. The purpose of the cull was said to be saving endangered stocks of chinook salmon, cutthroat trout and steelheads.

Is killing seals a desirable solution or should we instead sustain the fishery? Should we harvest more than nature can replace or instead stay within the limits imposed by nature?

To achieve sustainable development we need long term sustainable solutions. The recovery of an endangered species does not justify the destruction of another species.

The problem lies not with seals but with us.

* * *

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in 1996 impaired driving killed over 1,700 people in Canada and injured more than 100,000. This epidemic which is causing these terrible tragedies shows no sign of decreasing.

Representatives of MADD Canada are in Ottawa this week to talk to members of Parliament and reinforce just how serious this problem is.

It is crucial that federal and provincial governments stop treating impaired driving as simply another social ill. In fact, impaired driving is a senseless crime that can be eradicated if we have the will to do it.

Governments must adopt a zero tolerance policy toward impaired driving. Anything short of this will simply result in more senseless deaths.

I ask my colleagues in the House to join with me to fight against impaired driving, to ensure that more innocent Canadians do not become victims of irresponsible impaired drivers.

* * *

MINING

Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the mining industry's continued support to community development throughout Canada.

Last week Falconbridge Limited pledged a \$360,000 donation to the Cambrian College Special Needs Regional Resource Centre in the region of Sudbury. In turn, the membership of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers CAW Local 598 pledged an additional \$10,000 and the United Steel Workers of America Local 6855 pledged \$3,000 to the centre.

The special needs centre is a world class institution that provides students with disabilities the tools and skills to reach their full academic and employment potential.

The generosity of the Falconbridge nickel mines and its employees clearly demonstrates their commitment to the community. We thank them and applaud them.

* * *

[Translation]

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday the Business Development Bank of Canada presented the prestigious Young Entrepreneur Awards for the 10th year in a row.

At a special awards ceremony held at the Metro Toronto Convention Center, 12 outstanding young business people aged 29 and under from each province and territory were honoured. This ceremony officially launched Small Business Week.

• (1405)

Winners were chosen by a panel of judges made up of business professionals, entrepreneurs, members of local boards of trade and chambers of commerce, and representatives from the Export Development Corporation and BDC.

They were judged on operating success, connection with new economy activities, innovation and community involvement. The bank also introduced the Export Achievement Award, which was presented to one of the 12 winners. This award is presented by the Export Development Corporation in partnership with BDC.

Congratulations to the young winners.

* * *

MARINE PILOTS

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a momentous event recently took place in the port of Quebec City.

One of the largest drilling rigs in the world, the *Spirit of Columbus*, arrived in Quebec City. Anyone who knows the St. Lawrence River well can appreciate that, were it not for the skill of the St. Lawrence pilots, this rig would never have made it into the port in Quebec City.

I would like to pay special tribute to all members of the Corporation of the Lower St. Lawrence Pilots, who, through their determination, courage and expertise, were able to convince the port of Quebec City, Hydro-Québec and Petrobas officials that their rig could arrive safely in port.

The association's president, Paul-Yvan Viel, and the president of the international association of marine pilots, Michel Pouliot, themselves acted as pilots to guide the *Spirit of Columbus* to Quebec City.

Congratulations and hurray for our Quebec marine pilots.

S. O. 31

[English]

VIOLENCE

Ms. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from October 19 to October 25 the YWCA of/du Canada is holding the second annual YWCA Week Without Violence.

This important international initiative is being held in 17 countries and recognizes the devastating economic, social and health consequences violence produces.

Consider these statistics. More than 100 women are victims of domestic homicide every year by an actual or former husband or common law partner. Approximately one-half of women 16 and over have been victims of violence as defined by the Canadian Criminal Code. The great majority of personal crimes committed against women are not reported to the police. Sixty per cent of women in Canada are afraid to walk alone in their neighbourhoods after dark. Boys who have witnessed violence against their mothers eventually tend to be more violent toward their spouses. Violence costs the Canadian economy approximately \$4 billion every year.

This year 36 YWCAs and YMCAs across Canada are working to find solutions to violence. I am proud to offer my support to the YWCA—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Yellowhead.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Cliff Breitkreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have a letter from a constituent protesting the early release of sex offenders including Michael Chretien and the killer who first raped her teenage daughter and was released early even though a high risk.

Sadly the saga of Liberal justice continues. Serial child killer and rapist Clifford Olson was granted an early parole hearing this summer. Can it get worse, Mr. Speaker? You would think not, but it does.

Recently Albertans were shocked. Larry Takahashi, according to the investigating officer, raped at least 100 Edmonton women. What did he get? Life in jail, a few lashes, the noose? No, he got day passes for heaven's sake.

Canadians are pleading for the justice minister to fix the Criminal Code. Canadians are begging the solicitor general to overhaul the parole board. For God's sake, do something.

[Translation]

GADELOUPE

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are witnessing today what appears to be an unprecedented conspiracy against our cousin and friend, France.

We have just learned that recently, without its own government knowing it, a foreign separatist movement had one of its experts attend a meeting of the Guadelupian movement, an organization dedicated to withdrawing this West Indian island from French trusteeship.

This truly looks like interference in the domestic policy of one of Canada's friends. In light of the seriousness of this situation, we demand a clear and unequivocal answer to the following question: Did the Quebec separatist movement delegate hand his hosts a note saying that Quebec will be with Guadeloupe on the road it chooses to take, yes or no?

* * *

• (1410)

[English]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mrs. Michelle Dockrill (Bras d'Or, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last month \$7.2 million in infrastructure projects were announced for Cape Breton county, creating 214 short term jobs. Good news? Maybe not. When my constituents tried to find out about those jobs no answers were forthcoming.

Even more interesting, there are four byelections going on in Nova Scotia as our seatless premier tries to win a place in the legislature.

Recently when I crossed the border into the premier's sought after riding, I was shocked by the beehive of infrastructure activity.

Why are the only jobs created in Cape Breton always designed to help Liberals win elections? Why do those jobs always disappear when the polls close?

Nova Scotians are fed up with being exploited, fed up with only getting the roads fixed at election time.

Cape Bretoners deserve to know how and when they can get information about these projects regardless of their political affiliation.

As for the byelections, Nova Scotians will not be hoodwinked again. I look forward to congratulating four new NDP MLAs on November 5.

*Oral Questions***OFFICIAL OPPOSITION**

Mr. Murray Calder (Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an effective official opposition is the conscience of Parliament. An effective official opposition poses well thought out and researched questions during question period.

The member for Edmonton North is quoted in the Ottawa *Sun* as having goofed not once but twice in the last three weeks in her campaign to dig up dirt.

Reform has promised to hold bingo fund-raisers at Stornoway to pay down the national debt.

One of the best examples of an oxymoron and government waste in this House is Reform research.

* * *

[Translation]

BREAST CANCER

Ms. Diane St-Jacques (Shefford, PC): Mr. Speaker, with breast cancer awareness month drawing to a close and our attention turning to other causes, it is essential that we not give up the fight.

This illness is devastating for victims, their families and their friends. I myself lost my mother to breast cancer five years ago.

It is estimated that, every 30 minutes, someone is diagnosed with breast cancer, that one million Canadian women are afflicted and that over 5,000 of them die from this illness annually. These statistics are a reminder to us of the importance of prevention.

We must continue to support agencies providing assistance to those with breast cancer, and also to make women aware of the importance of these preventive examinations.

* * *

[English]

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, across Canada small and medium size businesses are helping to power Canada's economic renewal. Their ability to innovate and to respond quickly to changing markets is enabling smaller businesses to create jobs for Canadians in increasing numbers.

[Translation]

It is small business week and I would ask the House to join with me in paying tribute to the achievements of this vital sector of our economy.

[English]

I also take this opportunity to salute a company in my riding which exemplifies a very successful small business. Alumicor Limited, located in Rexdale, is a company that manufactures, among other things, architectural aluminium storefronts. Founded in 1959, Alumicor Limited is a great Canadian success story. Currently the company has grown to employ 200 people. It has four offices across the country and generates sales in the \$20 million range.

During this small business week Canadian entrepreneurs can celebrate the contribution they make to the Canadian economy and to all Canadians.

The Speaker: Colleagues, I would like to give you a few pieces of information. The first is that when you stand to make your statement, many times there is talking going on, but these microphones are very sensitive and you need not raise your voices too loud to have all of us hear you. It will come through. It will be all right.

• (1415)

The second thing has to do with microphones. I would tell all of the front bench on the government side, your lights will not come on. We have a small technical problem.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: We will now go to oral questions.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we too have noticed that the lights are out. We have asked the environment minister nine times this week to explain the Liberal position on CO₂ emissions that she will take to the Kyoto summit and still no answer.

Considering the fact that she has agreed to sign this agreement, we want to know how much her promises are going to cost Canadian taxpayers. The conference board states that it is going to cost thousands of dollars per family.

Does the minister believe that a cost of thousands of dollars per family is an acceptable cost for the Kyoto deal?

Hon. Christine Stewart (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, climate change is, no doubt, a very serious issue. The international community agrees with the science on this issue. The cost for Canada will be enormous if we do nothing and that includes the cost in western Canada.

Oral Questions

The government is committed to signing on to a legally binding target in Kyoto. The economic fear-mongering on the other side of the House is totally unrealistic. There is much opportunity on this issue, including investments in technology which will help us to meet—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister could allay the fears by frankly expressing and telling the House the cost. That is all we are asking. That is the 10th non-answer in a row.

Let us see if the Minister of Natural Resources can help the environment minister out of her dilemma.

Yesterday, outside the House, this minister said that the government was considering new taxes to pay for this emissions treaty. He mused about energy taxes. He mused about fuel taxes. It is a Liberal instinct: if in doubt, tax.

What kind of taxes are the Liberals cooking up now? Is it taxes on the industry? Is it taxes at the pump? Is it taxes on fuel bills in the home?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are a variety of ways by which countries around the world can come to grips with climate change. There are self-initiated efforts by the private sector. There are measures to support energy efficiency. There are incentives for science and technology, technology commercialization and transfer. There are renewable sources of energy. There are joint implementation plans. There are emission credits and trading.

Only the Reform Party is fixated on taxation.

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Talk about gaseous emissions, Mr. Speaker.

Since the government is considering new taxes to pay for the Kyoto treaty, surely it is time to hear from the finance department on this subject. Perhaps the finance minister will be the author of the new national energy program.

Is the finance minister prepared to let the government sign a treaty without knowing what it costs? Is he in favour of an energy tax or does he have to wait for his boss to come back from Europe to sort this mess out?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this issue of taxation, let me quote the Calgary *Sun* of October 15, 1994 where this quote appears in relation to certain forms of taxation, not a carbon tax but other forms of taxation related to the environment. It reads: "It is worth consideration. If it is truly an environmental tax then I do not have a serious problem. I think the public is, by and large, willing to pay a reasonable amount

to address an environmental problem. I guess our greatest fear was a carbon tax imposed on the wellhead". That quote is attributed to Premier Ralph Klein.

• (1420)

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the environment minister talks about the inevitable cost of complying with the Kyoto summit and the resource minister says that the Reform Party is only fixated on taxation. A recently produced study by the Canadian Petroleum Producers Association says that those costs could be \$180 billion to the Canadian economy and \$1 per litre of gasoline.

Is this the minister's idea of reasonable costs?

Hon. Christine Stewart (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our nation together will be looking at how we can address this important issue. In the challenge there are many economic opportunities. I would like to know what Reform is proposing. Is it proposing that we hide our heads in the sand and not go to Kyoto? What is its resolution of this?

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House are not talking about arbitrary figures on a piece of paper that mean nothing. We are talking about peoples' lives, thousands of jobs, the ability of people to support their families.

Does the minister really think that \$1 a litre gasoline and doubling home heating fuel costs is a reasonable cost today?

Hon. Christine Stewart (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Insurance Bureau of Canada tells us that the cost of losses due to disasters between 1992 and 1996 rose 65% from the previous five-year period as a result of greenhouse gas emissions.

The year 1996 proved to be the industry's worst year in Canada and with the floods in the west this year, I doubt that 1997 will be much better.

What does the Reform Party propose we do as a nation if it is not to work together to resolve and attack these problems?

* * *

[Translation]

QUEBEC-FRANCE AGREEMENT ON CHILD SUPPORT

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the saga concerning the agreement reached between Quebec and France continues because the federal government systematically refuses to approve this accord.

Will the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs confirm that Ottawa is rejecting the Quebec-France agreement because it includes the expression "contracting party" to designate Quebec, and because it refers to the use of diplomatic channels as a means to solve any dispute?

Oral Questions

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are several problems with the draft agreement, including the suggestion that Quebec is a contracting party to international conventions signed between existing or future states. But this is just one problem.

Another problem is that the draft agreement includes areas not covered by the Canada-France treaty, thus technically preventing it from becoming a formal agreement, both in France and in Canada.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as regards the expression "contracting party", I remind the minister that it was included in the 1987 agreement signed by Robert Bourassa and Jacques Chirac, yet the federal government did not take exception to it and approved the agreement.

I ask the minister, who is constantly taking cover behind the framework agreement, whether he recognizes that the 1987 agreement signed by Robert Bourassa and Jacques Chirac, that is between Quebec and France, made no reference to the framework agreement of the time but was nevertheless approved by the federal government.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the agreement was approved because it did not contradict in any way the Canada-France treaty at the time.

Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

The minister is refusing to approve the Quebec-France agreement claiming the need to refer to the Canada-France agreement.

Will the minister acknowledge that the master agreement he is referring does not even apply at the moment, since it has not been ratified by the French National Assembly?

• (1425)

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, article 26 of the Canada-France agreement provides the following:

France and the provinces and territories of Canada may enter into arrangements concerning any matter dealt with in this Convention that is within provincial or territorial jurisdiction, to the extent that such arrangements are not inconsistent with the provisions of this Convention.

The provisions of the Canada-France agreement must be met when agreements are to be signed with the provinces.

Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs did not answer the question.

I repeat my question: Is this agreement in effect and is he objecting to the conclusion of an agreement between Quebec and France on a treaty that is not even in effect?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the treaty is not yet in effect, but it is through this treaty that agreements may be signed between the provinces and the French government until it does take effect.

One thing must be clearly understood: Quebeckers cannot have rights with force of law in France, unless it is in the context of a treaty between governments, according to French provisions, in fact. For the good of Quebeckers, may the Government of Quebec negotiate with the Government of Canada as quickly as possible.

* * *

[English]

LABOUR

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in July the trade minister gave assurances that Canada was fighting to protect our labour standards in negotiating the multilateral agreement on investment.

A leaked document now reveals that the minister was giving these assurances at the very same time Canada's negotiators were sitting on the sidelines in total silence. It was left to the United States to propose tough labour and environmental standards. This government sold us out on NAFTA. It is now selling us out on the MAI.

When will the Minister for International Trade stop using labour and environmental protection as bargaining chips for international investors?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the third or fourth party, whatever it is, should stop using hysteria as opposed to selling the government or Canada short.

It is very important for Canada to be at the MAI table not only for the purposes of attracting foreign investment to Canada, which is about jobs and economic activity, but there is as much investment by Canadians abroad as we have investment coming in. It is a two way street and we need to protect that.

Insofar as labour and environment—

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is the problem. Labour and environmental standards are always an afterthought with the government. The Liberals have become wimps when it comes to protecting our labour and environmental standards in trade deals.

When asked about Canada's failure to fight for tough standards in the MAI, the trade minister said he does not want the binding

version, the Cadillac version. If clean air, clean water, decent wages and safe working conditions are the minister's Cadillac model, imagine what his economy model must look like.

Will the trade minister instruct our negotiators to stand up for Canadian workers and a clean environment when they meet next week in Paris to continue negotiations on the MAI?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, this minister said no such thing to the *The Globe and Mail* reporter. We never said that they would be used as bargaining chips. We never said that Canada would not support binding references to both labour and environment.

The Canadian position has been made very clear. You cannot judge a position from one set of meetings going back to 1995. Canada has said as much as the Americans with respect to labour and environment. We want both issues addressed by the MAI just the way NAFTA has addressed both environment and labour to its satisfaction.

* * *

FISHERIES

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, thousands of jobs in the fishing industry on the Pacific coast have been lost in 1996 because of a bad season, but also because of the government's policies.

I would like to know whether the Minister of Human Resources Development is going to make some funding available, funding that has since dried up, to help the coastal communities, and whether the government is preparing an adjustment strategy for those coastal communities so that the families affected can be helped?

● (1430)

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government remains very preoccupied with the situation in Newfoundland and I welcome the question put to me by the Conservative leader.

I think he is absolutely right that some of these situations need to be monitored very closely. At the beginning of this month I asked one of my very senior officials, a person who is very talented, to review the post TAGS situation and its impact on the communities, the fishers, their families and on the provincial finances as well. He is supposed to bring a report back to me in December.

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, the minister and the government will also know that thousands of Canadians on both coasts, east coast and west coast, are dramatically affected by the dwindling stocks, by the situation that we are in today.

Oral Questions

If the Reformers do not care about this issue and will not ask questions, maybe they will want to listen to what happens in this House. I want to know from the government, when will there be a national policy on fisheries, one that has as its cornerstone the issue of sustainable development for this country so that these Canadians will know that there is a future for the fishery in Canada.

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, had the hon. member bothered to attend the debate that took place today in the House up to the question period and if he bothers to wait and come back to the House after question period, he will discover that it is a Tory motion on this very issue that we are discussing.

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Many times we have slips of the lip and I am sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition will want to withdraw that. Oh, excuse me, not you, the member would withdraw that.

Hon. Jean J. Charest: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Leader of the Opposition would actually want to withdraw.

The Speaker: I put it to you directly, will you withdraw the word please.

Hon. Jean J. Charest: Mr. Speaker, out of respect for the Chair and for the House, I will withdraw the word.

* * *

ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Nanaimo—Alberni, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in response to the last question to the environment minister, she answered by stating that the way to solve the global warming problem is to work together. I have to ask, why is she not doing that?

Ordinary Canadians will be paying for this deal. The provinces will now likely have to administer it. It only makes sense to have the provinces' agreement before she gets to Kyoto. I once again ask the minister, will the minister ensure that she has the agreement of all the provinces before she gets to Kyoto, and not after?

Hon. Christine Stewart (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the provinces are working with me in discussing this very important issue. They are well apprised of what we are doing as a responsible nation in the international community.

There are many thousands of Canadians who are very concerned about this issue. The Reform seems blind to that reality. There are many companies, including Loeb grocers, who have reduced their greenhouse gas emissions, their energy costs by 30% by reducing the speed limits on their delivery trucks to 90 to 95 kilometres an hour. They are saving 30% of their—

Oral Questions

The Speaker: The hon. member for Nanaimo—Alberni.

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Nanaimo—Alberni, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, she simply will not answer the question.

The environment minister said in the House yesterday that she is going to strike a deal in Kyoto and only then get the co-operation from the provinces. This is clearly unacceptable to the provinces. Alberta's environment minister has publicly stated that Alberta will not accept legally binding limits arrived at this manner.

• (1435)

I ask the environment minister once again, will the minister commit to getting the agreement of the provinces before she goes to Kyoto, yes or no?

Hon. Christine Stewart (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in discussing this issue with my provincial counterparts yesterday, including the minister from Alberta, I believe that we are satisfied that we are working together on this issue in a transparent manner. I also believe that the minister of the environment in Alberta is very concerned about the negative impact of climate change on his province.

* * *

[Translation]

FRANCE-QUEBEC AGREEMENT ON COLLECTION OF SUPPORT PAYMENTS

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have just learned that the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs is insisting on blocking the agreement between Quebec City and Paris for the simple reason that the Canadian agreement has yet to be signed and is therefore not yet in existence.

How can the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs block an agreement negotiated in good faith between Quebec City and Paris just because there is a Canadian agreement that has not yet been signed, that does not have force of law and that does not therefore exist?

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the master agreement between France and Canada exists. The basis for that is international public law.

No agreement between Quebec and France can have legal force outside Canada without the support of the Government of Canada. The Government of France has already indicated that the federal government's agreement preliminary to the signing of a legal agreement—

The Speaker: I apologize for interrupting the hon. member. The member for Roberval.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the secretary is very kind, but he must realize the Government of Canada is in the process of changing 20 years of international practice, because other agreements have already been signed and there is a way to approve them.

My question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. I do not want him to dodge the issue, I would like him to answer. How can he base his position on an agreement that does not exist, that is, the one between Canada and France, thus denying women and children in Quebec their child support? How can he do that?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have answered this question a number of times, and the answer is that Quebecers can only have rights that have force in law in France under a treaty signed by two governments.

I would add one thing. The fact that things have dragged on so long is due to the partisanship of the other side.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: We keep trying to practice empty-chair politics. Between 1994 and 1996, Canada negotiated with France, and the Quebec government refused to take part. Now it has tried to negotiate a parallel agreement, which cannot have force of law in France because of French, Canadian and international provisions.

* * *

[English]

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we have some prison guards with us today, including Roy Tremblay. Roy recently was asked to relocate an inmate from one cell to another. In the process of moving this inmate and relocating him, he got poked with a needle. This inmate has full blown AIDS.

The guards have been after the system for days and days to provide them with puncture safety gloves, which it has failed to do. Will the solicitor general scrap his idea of a tattoo parlour for the cons and provide these guards with the material they need to do their jobs?

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe the entire Chamber is aware that I am very concerned for the employees of the Canadian corrections service. I think they do good work. I support them regularly. I will take under consideration the suggestion of the member.

• (1440)

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, they have been asking for these things for a long time. Talk is cheap. They had better turn the lights on in the second row as well.

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A few days ago we were talking about knives and cleavers in the kitchen. Remember that? They heard the plea and guess what? They got some cord and they attached the knives and cleavers to the tables like we asked. Isn't that neat? The knives can cut the cord.

Will the solicitor general provide us today with some information that will say to the guards who are present that we will chain both of these knives to the tables so they cannot be turned into lethal weapons against the people who work there?

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Union of Solicitor General Employees has brought the issue to the attention of the management of CSC and the knives have been attached to the tables.

* * *

[Translation]

QUEBEC-FRANCE AGREEMENT ON SUPPORT PAYMENTS

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

In his desire to place the Quebec-France agreement on collection of support payments within an umbrella agreement, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs is creating a situation which is extremely prejudicial to the women and children of Quebec.

Will the minister confirm that the umbrella agreement under which he wishes to place the Quebec-France agreement contains no provisions for access to legal aid by Quebec women in the territory of France, as there is in the agreement between Quebec and France he is willfully blocking?

[English]

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is an umbrella agreement between Canada and France on which there has been practice for 30 years. The juridical force of judgments of Canadian courts in France depends on this umbrella agreement.

Without an agreement between Quebec and France being concluded within the framework of that agreement, no judgments of Canadian courts can be applied in France.

Therefore, it is the single mothers and their children of Canada who cannot receive payments in France because the Quebec government will not conform to the agreement.

[Translation]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ): Mr. Speaker, once again we see clearly that the Liberal government understands nothing, and women will be the ones hurt by this policy.

Can the minister confirm that the umbrella agreement to which he wishes to subordinate the agreement entered into by Quebec and France calls for a period of limitation for collecting support payments which gives women fewer rights than the one negotiated between Quebec and France?

[English]

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of France in its communication of October 21 made it clear that the preliminary approval of Canada is necessary for any agreement between Quebec and France to have force in international law.

It is the Quebec government that is preventing single mothers and their children from receiving their benefits in France.

* * *

NATIONAL PAROLE BOARD

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the solicitor general admitted that the parole board is responsible to no one. Here is an example.

In 1986 school teacher Robert Noyes was sentenced to an indefinite term and declared a dangerous offender after pleading guilty to 19 charges of molesting children in British Columbia. Mr. Noyes' victims have learned that this dangerous pedophile has been granted unescorted temporary absences from his Quebec prison.

Can the solicitor general explain why he has placed the community at risk?

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said a number of times, the National Parole Board is an arm's length organization. Were I to interfere with its decisions, members opposite would be telling me that it was ministerial interference.

The reality is that the National Parole Board is guided by the interests of public safety. Safety is served by a gradual release system and that is what it pursues.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the lights are still not on in the second row.

During a parole hearing Mr. Noyes confessed to having at least 60 victims and hundreds of incidents of abuse. He has been diagnosed an incurable pedophile by Correctional Service Canada.

● (1445)

How can the solicitor general sleep at night when he knows he is responsible for letting dangerous pedophiles out on the street, or doesn't he think he is responsible?

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an important principle to understand that the National Parole Board makes decisions based on public safety issues with

Oral Questions

the best advice and information it has available at the time. It is very important to recognize that a gradual release program is the most effective way to guarantee public safety.

The Speaker: I know all hon. members would want to hear the questions as well as the responses.

* * *

[Translation]

AIRPORT SECURITY

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, recently, when we asked the Minister of Transport why the RCMP was still present at the Dorval and Mirabel airports, his answer was that the situation was a temporary one.

My question is for the Minister of Transport. Can he explain why Ottawa has reversed its decision regarding the RCMP's presence in Montreal, when ADM and the Sûreté du Québec were on the point of reaching an agreement? Why? That is clear.

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I explained that renovations are being done at Dorval airport. It is a period of change and we are going to leave the RCMP there for the time being.

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[English]

NUCLEAR SAFETY

Mr. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

Quite recently residents of Pickering have been very concerned about the lack of safety measures that exist at their nuclear facility.

Although the Government of Ontario has primary responsibility for this facility, could the Minister of Natural Resources assure my constituents that the Atomic Energy Control Board of Canada is on top of these rather troubling developments and will insist on corrective action to ensure the plant's very safe operation?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the primary operational responsibility obviously rests with Ontario Hydro, which is a provincial crown corporation. Regulatory matters in relation to nuclear safety are in the professional hands of the atomic energy control board. I have met with the chair of the board and I have been assured of the board's solid handle on the safety issues pertaining to Ontario Hydro.

The board is closely monitoring the situation with both on site and off site surveillance. That monitoring led to the original wake-up call to Ontario Hydro that has brought the matter to

public attention and remedial action and, yes, if further action is warranted the control board will—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Blackstrap.

* * *

PENITENTIARIES

Mr. Allan Kerpan (Blackstrap, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, here is another example of what guards face every day. Despite spending \$50 million to retrofit Kingston Penitentiary, Correctional Service Canada has put guards at further risk by implementing a locking system which effectively gives inmates the keys to their own cells.

In Bowden, Alberta, inmates are given and do hold the keys to their own cells. Is this a mistake or does the solicitor general honestly believe that inmates in a penitentiary can be trusted to lock themselves in?

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important for everybody to note that Correctional Service Canada, the National Parole Board and the Ministry of the Solicitor General are all driven by the interests of public safety.

All evidence shows that the best way to deal with public safety in a corrections system is a gradual controlled release system, which is what we are engaged in.

Mr. Allan Kerpan (Blackstrap, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I can see in the second row that the lights are on but no one is home.

By not having a secure locking system the solicitor general is leaving the door open for trouble, for assaults and for riots at Kingston.

This week the emergency response team was called on four times because surprise, surprise, the inmates refused to lock themselves in. What will the solicitor general do to change this preposterous system?

• (1450)

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very committed to the safety of the officers of Correctional Service Canada.

I visited these facilities. We have discussed these issues and I have every confidence that in the management of the system we are looking after the safety of the inmates.

* * *

FINANCE

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Emergency shelters for the homeless across the country are running out of space and the cold weather has not yet hit. The government has abandoned programs that help the poorest and

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most vulnerable in society. The cuts have been devastating, including in my own riding of Vancouver East.

Will the minister take responsibility for this crisis of growing homelessness and outline what specific steps his government will take to shelter the homeless?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no one can remain impervious to the terrible scenes of homelessness. No one can remain impervious to the degradation in which a large number of our fellow citizens find themselves.

As a result the government has consistently refused to engage in scorch and burn policies advocated by others. When we had to cut, which we had to do, we did it in a humane way with plenty of notice. At the same time we engaged in a series of programs such as the child tax benefits and the reinjection of \$6 billion into the CHST to enable the provinces and the municipalities—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver East.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is not good enough. The government has cut billions of dollars from social programs and thrown in the towel on jobs and housing. Its child tax benefit does not help the poorest of the poor.

When will the minister establish national standards and give real support to ensure that no one goes hungry or homeless because their income has been pushed below survival levels?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no one, and certainly not this government, wanted to find themselves in the financial difficulty that we found ourselves when we took office. The fact is that if we had not acted our ability now to take positive action to help the people the hon. member is referring to would have been severely circumscribed.

We are now in a position to do that which a Liberal government and a responsible government wants to do. I would simply say that the hon. member ought to read what some of her own people have said. Don't be misled by politicians who make expensive promises. Saskatchewan followed that path in the 1980s and—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Compton—Stanstead.

* * *

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC): Mr. Speaker, the *Vanessa*, a Dutch owned tanker vessel, just sunk at 1 o'clock Atlantic time. There are 30 people in lifeboats waiting to be rescued. Naval Lieutenant John Larson from the Halifax rescue staff has told my staff "Our helicopters can't go because it is just out of range".

When are we getting our helicopters?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with whatever other aircraft we have available and ships that may be available in the area I am sure we will do all we can in terms of that rescue situation.

With respect to the helicopters, I anticipate that we will have this matter brought forward very soon. We are anxious to get on with making sure that the fine, dedicated people who are involved in our search and rescue missions have proper equipment. We want to make sure we get good value for the taxpayers' dollars and that we get the best operational aircraft to carry out search and rescue.

Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC): Mr. Speaker, those 30 people are facing eight metre waves out there. Canada is not properly equipped for today's operation. We hope it all goes well and they all get back safely. However we have waited long enough.

I ask the minister of defence again where our helicopters are. When are we going to get them?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a search and rescue operation and we will do all that we possibly can in terms of those 30 people.

Meanwhile we have for some period of time been going through a process of evaluating the proponents for the new search and rescue helicopters. If in fact the member's party had not fouled the matter up previously we might have had something today.

* * *

• (1455)

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, farmers in my area of Ontario are very concerned about the issue of supply management.

My question is for the minister of agriculture. I want to know exactly what the government plans to do to protect supply management in preparation for the impending talks at the next World Trade Organization meeting.

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the last round of multinational negotiations the government successfully supported and defended the interests of the supply managed sector. We have also very effectively put in place tariff protection for the producers of dairy, egg and poultry products in this country.

We also very effectively and successfully, in co-operation with the producers, processors and the provinces, succeeded in the arguments with the U.S. NAFTA challenge opposing our actions in the dairy, egg and poultry sector.

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We will continue to use that as a template as we negotiate and set our strategies and we go forward into future multilateral and bilateral negotiations.

* * *

PENITENTIARIES

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the solicitor general.

The pressure cooker of the Kingston prison is ready to blow: prisoners assault guards without fear of consequence, sue for compensation with 13 prison lawsuits claiming \$23 million and guards disciplined if they do not keep the jail quiet. The result is hundreds of unsettled union grievances and perhaps even riots in the making.

Will the minister convince his colleague ministers of the need to take back control of these con run prisons and do what is right rather than what is convenient?

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question because it gives me the opportunity to bring to the attention of everyone the kind of fearmongering that is going on in terms of these institutions.

It is a fearmongering that even the union says does nothing to help the situation.

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[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

In preparation for the Kyoto conference, the federal government is getting ready to redefine its strategy to reduce greenhouse emissions. This morning, we learned that one of the main victims of global warming will be the St. Lawrence River, with all the catastrophic effects that one would expect.

Does the minister admit that Quebec might be at a serious disadvantage because of its inability to agree with Canada's

[English]

Hon. Christine Stewart (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, this is a national issue and a national challenge but there are national opportunities. There is not one area of the country that will not be negatively affected by the results of climate change.

Canada will be working collaboratively with Quebec and every province of the country to find appropriate resolutions. If we do not, we risk our water, agriculture, fisheries and forests. It is a serious issue.

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada's aboriginal peoples are used to hearing a lot of words but seeing very little action from the government which stressed the importance of partnership in the throne speech. Almost one full year after the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples the government has yet to respond. Is that what partnership means to the government?

My question is for the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs. Will the government end its silence and commit to a full and complete public response to the recommendations before the November 21 anniversary of the release of the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples?

Mr. Bernard Patry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, RCAP is one of the most important tools in the department of Indian affairs. There are great needs and great hopes within the first nations.

No one is happy with what is happening right now with the status quo. In the near future we hope to have a full response to RCAP. It is the intention of the government to provide a good response and not just a response. The government wants to address all the problems of the first nation.

* * *

• (1500)

SHIPBUILDING

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

The shipbuilding industry in Canada operates at an unfair competitive disadvantage as other countries around the world have shipbuilding policies that give them bank loans, equity funding, lease packages and shipyard credit.

The Minister of Industry stated that unless you elected a Liberal none of the priorities for this government would be in the top ten priorities of his department.

Will the minister create a shipbuilding policy that will even the playing field for Canadian shipyards competing against shipyards in foreign countries and help—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Industry.

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the lists of advantages that are offered by other shipbuilding countries to their manufacturers very often include very generous and substantial subsidies. Canada continues to participate in the group concerning shipbuilding at the OECD trying to put an end to these unfair subsidies.

If her question is whether I will advocate that our government enter into a subsidy bidding war with these other countries, the answer is no.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the solicitor general a question but I think I have to ask it of the government House leader.

Could he tell the House the business of the House for the remainder of this week and for the week following.

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, the opposition House leader is correct that I am not the solicitor general.

The business for the following days is as follows. Tomorrow the House will consider the customs tariff bill introduced earlier this day. On Monday we will consider a motion to establish a special joint committee to consider the amendment to the Constitution of Canada proposed by the Newfoundland House of Assembly. On Tuesday and Wednesday we will complete any business left from Friday and Monday, followed by Bill C-8, the Yukon bill, Bill C-6, the Mackenzie Valley bill, Bill C-7, the Saguenay Park bill, Bill C-3, the DNA bill, time permitting. Next Thursday shall be an allotted day.

The Speaker: I will now deal with the points of order. The first one is from solicitor general.

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POINTS OF ORDER

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the course of question period a question was put with regard to safety of guards in the correctional system. I inadvertently referred to inmates rather than guards. I would like to correct that.

The Speaker: The record will show that.

Another point of order is from the member for Nanaimo—Alberni.

TABLING DOCUMENTS

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Nanaimo—Alberni, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, during question period the Minister of the Environment quoted from an insurance document. Under standing orders, I would ask that she table that document in the House.

● (1505)

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are endeavouring to verify

Tributes

the point. If in fact the minister quoted from any kind of document other than from her own briefing notes, we will table it at the earliest opportunity, possibly later this day.

The Speaker: That will be taken care of as soon as we find out.

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order with respect to comments by the minister of fisheries.

In response to a question posed by the leader of the Conservative Party, he referenced the fact that the member may not be aware of a motion that was brought forward. He also referenced the fact that the member was not present in the House.

The Speaker: You are right. I believe I heard that and I should have responded quickly. All hon. members know that we do not refer to whether a member is here or not. These things happen. I hope they do not happen too often because I should be on top of that. The point is well taken. Orders of the day.

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We had been led to believe that there would be tributes made prior to commencing orders of the day.

The Speaker: Of course. Forgive me, I did not have the note up here.

Yes, we are going to have tributes to two of our members who passed away. The first is for Mr. Fred McCain, with whom many of us in this House served.

* * *

THE LATE FRED MCCAIN

Mr. Greg Thompson (Charlotte, PC): Mr. Speaker, as you mentioned, Fred McCain served in this House many years. Mr. Speaker, you served with him, as did the leader of our party.

I want to pay tribute today to Fred McCain. Fred served the people of New Brunswick and Canada for 34 years, 18 years as a member of the provincial legislature and 16 years as a member of the House of Commons.

Fred was a great orator, a tremendous speaker who spoke always from his heart with deep rooted convictions, convictions he held and defended to his last breath. He loved his country and certainly dedicated his life to that end.

In what I consider one of the most prophetic speeches ever made in this House, Fred McCain rose in his place on October 21, 1980 during the Constitution debate to say:

—this is indeed an historic debate and one in which, in a way, I find no great pleasure in participating. I think it implies that we either recognize the concept on which this nation was founded or we may be laying the foundation of its destruction. This is a debate on a resolution that has the potential to alter the face of this country like no other before it. I believe that if this resolution is accepted in its present form it will

Tributes

change the shape of federalism as it has existed historically and that it may not be accepted as a favourable change.

I think it would be valuable to spend time examining the force of federalism over the last century, because if this is to be called an historic debate, then, I say, history should play a part in the determination of its climax.

The precedents set by the wise men of the past, and the examination of these precedents, should not be overlooked—.

The good of the proposed nation as a whole was the primary objective of those who gave this nation their earliest consideration. Although these men had differences, they put those differences behind them and proposed a union that would be mutually beneficial to all parties concerned.

On October 24, 1986, again he rose in support of a united Canada with these strong and eloquent words:

Let us not divide the voters of this nation. Let us not put culture against culture, region against region, man against woman, women against everybody and man against all concerned for the political purposes and for the gain of votes.

• (1510)

During the very contentious debate on the issue of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, with his quick wit and memory for quotes, he chose to say this in response to a challenging colleague's retort: "The hon. member is never lucky in the coincidence of his facts with the truth". Fred went on to quote Sir Winston Churchill: "I think it hardly possible to state the opposite of the truth with more precision".

Always the gentleman, Fred was always the gentle man.

How familiar to New Brunswickers are Fred's phrases, quotes, humour and kindness, and that genuine ability to listen to people and truly hear them. These attributes exemplified Fred McCain.

Fred leaves behind a wonderful family: his wife Frances, his one sister Deanne, two sons, Fred and David, two daughters, Susan and Patricia, two step-children, Susan and Richard, and 10 grandchildren.

His first wife, Marjorie, as many of us know, passed away in 1988 while Fred was still a member of this House.

In closing, I offer to this House these thoughts. Fred was my mentor. He was a great Canadian with a great capacity to listen and understand people. He had a remarkable record which was a tribute to his natural affinity for people. He worked hard and was eager to help others regardless of their political stripe.

He will be greatly missed by his family, friends and all of us who believe that politics is an honourable profession.

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to rise today to pay tribute to Fred McCain. I welcome the opportunity to do that following the fine words of the hon. member for Charlotte. I know they were heartfelt. I know the people of his constituency would see many

similarities between the good representation provided by Mr. McCain and the present member.

I never met Mr. McCain, but he served in the New Brunswick legislature as the representative for Carleton county for 18 years before he moved to federal politics as the member of Parliament for Carleton—Charlotte in 1972. He served as the MP for what became known as the fish and chip riding until his retirement in 1988.

Mr. McCain was a classic example of a gentle rural politician who moved easily from the potato farmers of Carleton county to the weir fishermen of Charlotte county, always willing to work for his people and listen to their concerns.

New Brunswick and Canada have lost one of their longest serving and distinguished politicians.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, to Fred's wife, Frances Manning Crompton, to his four children, two step-children, 10 grandchildren and to his sister we extend our deepest sympathies.

Mr. McCain, a father, a grandfather and a brother, was a man who held service to the public in high esteem and, in turn, was greatly admired and respected by the public. We all benefit as politicians from the esteem which he brought to the job.

May Mr. McCain rest in peace and be an example to all of those who follow in his footsteps.

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I also rise to pay tribute to the memory of Fred McCain and to pay my respects to his family.

Although I never had the pleasure of meeting Mr. McCain, his reputation as a strong grassroots politician is well known. As others have mentioned, he served in this House from 1972 to 1988.

Mr. McCain was a politician with a hands-on approach to matters relating to his constituency. He had a genuine concern for his constituents.

As I read over the material about Mr. McCain, it struck me that, in particular, in his first year as a member of Parliament he logged over 50,000 miles travelling to each of the communities in his riding.

In the final years of his life his constituents would approach him and offer their thanks for the fine work he had done as their member of Parliament and in the legislative assembly.

Mr. McCain promised to do what he could for his constituents. He did what he promised. This was evident as he remained in politics, in elected life, for 34 years. I think all of us in this place can learn a thing or two from Mr. Fred McCain. He placed his

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constituents first and worked hard every day of those 34 years for his constituents.

• (1515)

Our best wishes go out to his wife Frances and to the entire McCain family. May Fred McCain rest in peace.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Bloc Québécois to extend our deepest condolences to the family of Fred McCain, who passed away recently.

For 34 years, Fred McCain took up the difficult challenge of representing part of the population of New Brunswick both in the New Brunswick legislature in Fredericton and here in the House of Commons. He had decided to devote the best part of his career to serving his fellow citizens. His only promise, he said, was to do his very best to serve those who voted for him. This vision of political accountability does him credit.

As parliamentarians, we know how demanding political life is, requiring both commitment and generosity. That is why we want to recognize the outstanding professionalism of Fred McCain in his political career. His family and relatives have every reason to be proud of him and of what he achieved for his fellow citizens.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I did have the pleasure of knowing Fred McCain and I did have the honour of serving with him in this House for nine years. Although he preceded me in this place by seven years, I did have the opportunity to serve with him for nine years between 1979 and 1988. I have very fond memories of Mr. McCain as a gentleman and a gentle man, as was said earlier by his Conservative colleague, who loved debate and who loved this House of Commons.

I think I tangled horns with him on a couple of occasions, but he was always the gentleman in debate and always the kind of person with whom you could discuss the issue afterwards. He was the kind of person who, when I first arrived here as a rookie, as a senior member at that time, would be willing to talk to newer members and give them the benefit of his experience.

I recall seeing him in the last year or so. I do not know if he was here for a meeting of the Canadian Association of Former Members of Parliament or what brought him to Ottawa but I remember bumping into him in the hallway, just before the last election. We had occasion to renew our acquaintance and talk about Canadian politics.

I want to say to his wife and family that his memory will always be honoured among those of us who had the opportunity to serve

with him. I extend our condolences to them on behalf of the NDP caucus.

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac, PC): Mr. Speaker, on October 12 Canada lost a man who dedicated over 34 years to serving the people of his community, province and country. Canada lost a statesman held in the highest regard by all those whose lives he touched in so many ways.

On October 12 the people of western New Brunswick and Canada as a whole lost a friend. Fred McCain died two Sundays ago and left behind a family and a province who loved him dearly.

Fred was a man who became the yardstick by which all other politicians are judged. Throughout both his public and private life, Fred always acted with a genuine concern for those around him. Fred was a man who did not see himself to be above those he represented but rather would take the time to walk through a potato field to check on the year's harvest and chat with the local farmers.

One of the last times I had the opportunity to see Fred was during the recent election campaign. The leader of the Conservative Party had taken the time out of a busy campaign tour through Atlantic Canada in order to stop by and say hi to an old friend. The look on Fred's face as the Charest tour bus pulled up and Jean stepped out is something I will never forget.

Even in his last months, Fred took the time to grant an interview to local newspapers. He took the opportunity to stress to the people of Carleton county the importance of a return to a Progressive Conservative government was in the best interests of our country.

Fred's commitment to the Progressive Conservative Party and to the people of this nation will never be forgotten. I consider it a privilege to have known Fred and to represent the portion of the riding he so proudly worked for just a few years ago. It is an honour for me to pay tribute to him in this House.

* * *

• (1520)

[*Translation*]

THE LATE RODRIGUE BOURDAGES

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of those who did not know Rodrigue Bourdages, or who did not have the pleasure of meeting him, let me say that Mr. Bourdages was a major builder of the City of Laval, in addition to having been a Progressive Conservative member of Parliament under the leadership of John Diefenbaker. Mr. Bourdages was elected for the first time in 1958. Unfortunately, he passed away last weekend, at the still young age of 73.

Tributes

Today, I want to begin by offering my most sincere condolences to Mr. Bourdages' family, his wife, children and grandchildren, and his party colleagues. I also want to pay him a well deserved tribute.

While it is not usual for us to do so, I wish to mention that some members of his family are here in the gallery. Johanne and Raymond Bourdages, as well as Rodrigue's sister, Thérèse, are here to relive fond memories of a father and brother who served in this House.

Mr. Bourdages, who was of Acadian descent, was born in Halifax, in 1924. As I said earlier, he became known in part for his central role in the building of Quebec's second largest city, Laval. At the time, Laval was made up of a number of cities and villages that were experiencing spectacular growth and needed someone who could bring them together, so they could be in a position to provide modern services. Rodrigue Bourdages was the one who rose to the occasion and provided his leadership for this extraordinary effort. He was indeed at the centre of one of the greatest achievements at the municipal level.

In addition, he decided as well to run as a candidate in the 1958 election. Pierre Sévigny, who was the organizer for the Conservative Party in Quebec at the time, recounts a rather funny story that well illustrates Mr. Bourdages' character. When he contacted this person he did not know, Mr. Sévigny had a candidate in mind for the riding, but Mr. Bourdages said that he would be the candidate and the next member of Parliament. And in fact Mr. Bourdages did run in the election and became the next member of Parliament.

He served in the House of Commons until 1962. Subsequently he continued his political activities serving as an organizer for our party in Quebec. After that he was, of course, very active at the municipal level.

Some of his achievements in the House still give food for thought. He accomplished things that are noteworthy today, because they are relevant to the debate on our future.

He was, for example, the first French Canadian to respond in French to the Speech from the Throne in January 19, 1962. That is not so long ago. I should remind those in this House and elsewhere in the country who feel that French is taking up too much room that 1962—the first time a member rose to respond in French in the House of Commons—is not so long ago.

He instituted simultaneous interpretation and bilingual government cheques. It was a real revolution at the time: bilingual federal government cheques, when francophones had founded Canada and lived there. He got Mr. Diefenbaker to agree to the idea of Expo 67, which was being considered at the time, thus enabling Montreal to become an international city a few years later.

As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Bourdages then became an organizer for our party. And he was an exceptional one. He later worked as a property administrator for the Quebec department of public works.

Mr. Bourdages has left us something, fortunately, an autobiography. Written in 1988 with great sincerity and warmth, it describes a past that is not so distant and pays tribute to all those who, like him, wanted to do things, to build things, to make a contribution.

I have an indelible memory of Mr. Bourdages from election time. You will pardon a little partisanship. The year was 1988. He was on the podium. In 1995, during the referendum, he was there to give us a hand and in 1997 as well. I even proposed to Mr. Bourdages that he run again, but he cited his family. He said: "You know, Jean, I don't think my wife would agree to it. I have done my bit". Rodrigue Bourdages, in fact did a whole lot.

• (1525)

Today, on behalf of us all, I thank him and his family.

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like the hon. member for Sherbrooke, I too wish to pay tribute to Rodrigue Bourdages, who died on October 12.

On March 31, 1958, Mr. Bourdages was elected to the House of Commons in the 24th Parliament as the representative for Montreal—Laval. He was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and graduated from the Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf in Montreal. He married Évelyne Arseneault, a native of Saskatchewan, and they had three children.

Unfortunately, I did not have the pleasure of knowing Mr. Bourdages, who played a major role in the building of Laval and was very involved in the community. He was also a Knight of Columbus. He was viewed by many residents of Laval as a successful entrepreneur, and he was an excellent manager at the Société immobilière du Québec.

He was also vice-president of the Corporation d'investissements de Laval, director of the Dicana corporation and vice-president of Rapidco. As a contractor, he was responsible for the construction of several schools and churches, which are now part of Laval's rich heritage.

Mr. Bourdages was proud to be a Canadian and was an example to all his French speaking compatriots. In 1962, he became the first French Canadian member of Parliament since Confederation in 1867 to give the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne in French. During this address, he expressed a wish that has since come to pass, for Canada now has the distinction of being the world leader in trade missions with its team Canada.

He said, and I quote: "We have reason to hope that other markets will soon be opened for our products and that the efforts of free enterprise ably seconded by the officials of the trade and commerce department will be successful".

In this same address, Mr. Bourdages expressed his deep love for Canada, and I quote: "Canada is strong because it is united, because we have the feeling that its unity will develop into a closer and more efficient association—Canada is a great and grand

country. Certainly in its geography, but even more so in its citizens”.

In 1989, out of a desire to give wider expression to his love for Canada, Mr. Bourdages published his memoirs.

I am honoured to pay tribute to him today, because it is through the pride of builders like Rodrigue Bourdages that Canada’s francophones, whatever their province of origin, can proudly proclaim that they are part of our great country.

On behalf of the Government of Canada and the people of the riding of Laval West, I extend deepest condolences to Mrs. Bourdages, their children and his entire family.

[English]

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Rodrigue Bourdages. It was so warm to hear these kind comments from the other parties. I am glad to see members of the family here.

Mr. Bourdages was a strong community worker and family man who played a leading role in the building industry in Laval and area. As a long time member of the Knights of Columbus, he achieved the fourth degree.

In his desire to help his community he ran as federal member of Parliament in 1957 and again in 1958 when he was elected to represent his constituents from the riding of Ile Jésus.

To his family, who are here, I would like to extend on behalf of the Reform Party and members of Parliament our sincere condolences. I am sure Mr. Bourdages will be sorely missed by all who have had the very distinct privilege of knowing him.

• (1530)

[Translation]

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Madam Speaker, on behalf of my Bloc Québécois colleagues and myself, I would like to extend our condolences to the family of Rodrigue Bourdages, who died on October 12.

Born in Halifax, Rodrigue Bourdages settled in Quebec and first got actively involved in the development of Laval-des-Rapides, one of the 16 municipalities on l’Île Jésus, and later, after 1965, in the development of the city of Laval.

As a building contractor in the 1950s, he pioneered the development of the city on the basis of urban planning standards and helped set up the Laval-des-Rapides police department, later to become the Laval police department as we know it.

Between 1958 and 1962, he served his fellow citizens as the federal member of Parliament for l’Île Jésus, then became the administrator of the Montreal courthouse and the manager of the

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Société immobilière du Québec. The man who passed away last week was more than a former parliamentarian, he was also one of the builders of Laval, the second largest city in Quebec.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, in my capacity as MP for Laval Centre, I want to acknowledge his contribution to the development of the Laval community. He served his fellow citizens with conviction and sincerity. He will always be a symbol of pride for his family, his relatives and every member of the Laval community.

Ms. Angela Vautour (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, NDP): Madam Speaker, first I would like to salute Mr. Bourdages’ family. As an Acadian, it is an honour for me to pay tribute to their father’s memory.

I take this moment to ask the House to remember Rodrigue Bourdages, who passed away on October 12, 1997 at the age of 73. Mr. Bourdages was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia on October 22, 1923. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Adolphe Bourdages.

He studied at Brébeuf school and then became a general contractor in Montreal. As president of Bourdages Construction Ltd., vice-president of Laval Investments, director of Dicana, and vice-president of Rapidco, he excelled as a building contractor and as a manager for the Société immobilière du Québec.

Mr. Bourdages was a third and fourth degree member of the Knights of Columbus, a member of the international order of the Alhambra, and a member of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

He was elected to the House of Commons on March 31, 1958, under the Progressive Conservative Party banner, and he represented his constituents well during his four years of tenure, until his defeat in 1962.

Mr. Bourdages is mourned by his wife, Évelyne Arsenault, his two children Raymond and Diane, his sisters Fernande, Armande, Thérèse and Micheline, his grandchildren Sébastien, Normand, Ève-Lyne and André-Julien, and by many relatives and friends.

At this time, I would like, as an Acadian, to offer my condolences and those of my colleagues to the family and friends of Mr. Bourdages.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—CANADIAN FISHING INDUSTRY

The House resumed consideration of the motion and the amendment.

Supply

Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wish to speak on habitat management in British Columbia. B.C. enjoys salmon resources which are valued at hundreds of millions of dollars each year.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans pointed out that his priority for the department is conservation. DFO's effort to protect the habitat has three principal goals: fish habitat conservation, fish habitat restoration and fish habitat creation. Those goals are met through several strategies which combine enforcement of the Fisheries Act, scientific research and activities with the co-operation of local communities. With respect to habitat conservation, DFO staff work closely with developers to ensure that development proposals such as mining, power generation, urban development and forestry do not have a negative impact on the fishery. Habitat biologists make sure that there will be no damage to the fishery. They advise developers to avoid harming fish when they are spawning or are at other critical stages of their development.

• (1535)

DFO spends approximately \$6 million and has about 75 people dedicated to the conservation and protection of fish habitat in B.C. In addition, \$2 million and 20 people work every day to restore fish habitat in B.C. A further \$25 million and 180 people are involved in stewardship and salmon enhancement activities.

In all, \$33 million are spent each year by DFO in managing the habitat and enhancing the salmon stocks in B.C. The large habitat management program in B.C. reflects a strong commitment to that region, a recognition of the importance of the salmon to the people of B.C.

Last January the minister of DFO announced that the federal government would contribute \$15 million over three years to habitat restoration and salmon enhancement. Furthermore, the minister challenged the province of B.C. to match those funds. Today B.C. has not yet come up with the funds.

The goals of the program are to restore habitat, rebuild weak salmon stocks and to promote resources and watershed stewardship.

I can go on and on. We have initiated many programs. The T'Sou-Ke First Nation, the South Island Streams/Community Fisheries Development Centre and the Island Stream and Salmon Enhancement Association are making vital contributions to the conservation of the resources and this government is proud to support those efforts.

On October 15 the minister of DFO announced a further \$2.7 million for habitat conservation projects in Vancouver Island communities of Port Alberni, Port Hardy, Port McNeill and Courtenay. On the Fraser River, which accounts for 60% of the B.C. total salmon catch, the minister of DFO recently announced

more than \$2 million for habitat restoration and salmon enhancement.

As a part of this funding, the Langley Environmental Partners Society and unemployed fishermen are working to protect habitat in the Salmon, Nicomekl, Yorkson and Bertrand river systems threatened by urbanization and farming.

The Community Fishery Development Centre in Vancouver will receive \$150,000 to co-ordinate a coast-wide habitat data management system and in doing so, will train displaced fishermen in the collection of habitat data.

The development centre in Langley is being funded to clean up wood waste and other materials.

• (1540)

Further up the Fraser River the Salmon River Watershed Round Table, a community watershed group that includes land owners, First Nations, government agencies, industry and the citizens around Salmon Arm will use \$100,000 to help rebuild the coho stocks.

The Shuswap Nation Fishery Commission will, with \$160,000, collect data on juvenile coho and adult abundance in the various streams in the North Thompson system.

Community and environmental groups are also working closely with DFO to protect and to restore salmon and the habitat in several streams near Prince George. The Baker Creek Enhancement Society and a local landowner have rebuilt a side channel for young chinook and rainbow trout.

I could go on and on and recite many projects in which the government has been involved. I would like to also mention a special project that is currently under way in Campbell River, known as the Discovery Coast Wetlands Restoration Project. In this case the regional district of Campbell River is serving as the umbrella organization and the overall administration for a variety of community groups which have joined together to submit a comprehensive plan to improve the habitat for chinook, coho and steelhead in the Campbell River area.

The Partnering Organization is an almost \$500,000 project which includes hake, brown, kingfisher. The Creek Society, the district of Campbell River, the Steelhead Society of B.C. and the local developers, Campbell River Elementary School, Campbell River Guides Association and stream keepers, among many others, have been working together.

My point is that many groups and the people of B.C., with the support of the government, are joined together to conserve the important natural resources, especially the salmon resources of the west coast. In all the government is supporting over \$7 million worth of projects this year alone and will be supporting over \$7

million for habitat restoration and salmon enhancement work next year. This is a commitment to the resources.

I submit that this is responsible action by the government to protect the important fishery resources of B.C.

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am delighted to hear the member for Vancouver Kingsway speak so well of my community of Campbell River, British Columbia. I recognize some of the very good work that is being done in that community.

As a matter of fact, the transition moneys that have been dedicated to Campbell River and North Island fisheries initiatives are probably some of the best spent moneys when it comes to training displaced workers than is spent anywhere in Canada right now.

The main program, out of a through put of 336 people, had a placement rate of 102 people, which is a virtually unheard of figure. It works out to something like a 30% success rate. That compares with a success rate for the northern cod adjustment recovery program of 5%.

• (1545)

The best numbers that I have been able to come up with for the TAGS retraining component are closer to 1%. I recognize direct comparisons like that cannot be made. Nevertheless, the program in Campbell River is being looked at by many as one that should be emulated in many regards.

Certainly I am a proponent of that. I think when the federal government decides that it is going to allocate money, we want full accountability, a demonstrated set of measurable standards to which we will operate and to try, in one way or another, get a return on our investment.

All of this, of course, has a very human dimension to it. One of the things that continue to concern me is that the government continues to make announcements of a nature that it has no plan or no commitment to meet later.

For example, we had an announcement of a \$7.7 million retirement program for fishers on the coast. That announcement was made in January. We have some older fishermen who were very much interested in that. Their expectations were raised and now we see no commitment from the government to follow through on that.

Does the hon. member have any knowledge that there will be follow through from the federal government on that issue?

Ms. Sophia Leung: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to hear my colleague from B.C. make a very positive comment about our work in Campbell River.

Supply

We are working on that for the retirement funding and I can assure him that we will not overlook the people in B.C.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Madam Speaker, it is encouraging to hear both hon. members from the west coast speaking on this issue. Certainly it is an issue that spans the entire country and touches on the Arctic Ocean as well.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has clearly stated that, based on recent program reviews, conservation is a key and core role of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and a responsibility.

With respect to that responsibility, I would suggest that the government has not lived up to that. I am asking this member, specifically to the conservation of salmon in the rivers in British Columbia, whether she can inform us what her government intends to do with respect to continued support for the preservation for both Atlantic and Pacific salmon hatcheries.

Ms. Sophia Leung: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question. We are definitely sticking to our principle of conservation. The priority of DFO is conservation.

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise following discussions among all the parties. I believe you will find consent for the following motion:

That the present debate on the opposition motion continue until 5.30 p.m., and at the conclusion of the debate all questions necessary to dispose of this motion be deemed put and a recorded division be deemed requested and deferred until Tuesday, October 28, 1997 at the expiry of the time provided for government orders.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Does the hon. government whip have unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

• (1550)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok, BQ): Madam Speaker, I see we have an audience of the faithful here this afternoon. We will take advantage of the opportunity to teach the adult class of hon. members seated across the way a thing or two, because they certainly need it.

I am pleased to speak today on a subject as crucial as the future of the fisheries. I note that the Conservative Party has made it an opposition day topic. That is a step in the right direction, but I would like, if I may, to clarify where I stand on it.

Supply

I agree that the fishery should be discussed every day. I see the Conservatives calling in the preamble to their motion for the House to recognize the urgent need for action to address the serious problems in fisheries. Well yes, there are serious problems in fisheries. And hooray for them, the Conservatives have woken up and realized it. I must also point out they were part of the problem.

Where they go off the track, however, is that their motion identifies the problem but is way off on the solution. The Conservative motion asks the government to establish a national policy. I will explain why they are on the wrong track.

In this motion, the Conservative Party forgets that British Columbia called for an agreement on co-operative management, which it obtained in part, and their premier, Mr. Clarke, whom I congratulate warmly on it, wants more because it is his perception, along with all the BC fishers, that the federal government is negotiating from a grovelling position with the United States.

The Conservatives also forget that the Government of Quebec has called for repatriation of part of the management of the Quebec fisheries, particularly the non-migratory species, and for a co-operative management agreement for the migratory species. If a party wants to regain power, it needs to treat the east the same as the west.

This motion speaks of resource conservation, that the government must assume leadership. I must remind you that the Conservatives and the Liberals were in power over the last ten years, and that the problem originates with those two parties.

I listened this morning to the speech and the response to a question asked after the speech by the Conservative Party critic. He was replying to a question by the Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries who asked him "What would you have as a national policy?" His reply: "More research. More research". Studies we've got. Both the Conservatives and the Liberals have their studies, but they are commissioning more. They accept the ones that suit them.

The problem is that they are both judge and accused. They look at the biomass, for instance, determine the total allowable catch, and then when that figure is not high enough to suit their little buddies, they just cook the figures and raise the TAC.

I think that it was an NDP colleague who called this morning for an investigation. We are in favour of one as well.

We are not in agreement with the motion, and I will explain a little more. We are not in agreement with a policy that is styled as national and overall, but we are still less in agreement with the amendment proposed by the Liberal government, to continue with the policy already in place. That is a free translation of what was said: continue the implementation of.

How could I possibly give my blessing to a government that has been the downfall of the fisheries. The auditor general's report is still fresh in everybody's mind. The auditor general was not exactly kind to the Liberals. He told them point-blank "You created a strategy to rationalize the industry and allow it to survive". What mark does he give them? Let me tell you: 0% because, in their obsession to reduce the deficit, cuts were made in manpower training, in licence buy-backs, in early retirement programs.

• (1555)

Hearings started this morning in fishing communities. Witnesses from Newfoundland, the Gaspé, the Magdalen Islands and Nova Scotia were heard. People are saying that they still need the Atlantic groundfish strategy because they have not yet started to diversify. In some cases, it is almost out of the question. The program is still needed.

Better still, however, people are coming with ideas on improving things. They are looking to the future, something the government opposite is not, obviously. The government should keep a close eye on the work of the standing committee. I think the coastal communities will show us the route to take.

I will not dwell on the policy of the Conservatives, because I learned nothing new this morning. However, I was surprised that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans actually spoke on the subject. I consider him brave for setting out four principles this morning.

He spoke of what, in his view, could guide a national policy. He spoke of trying to establish a relationship between sustainability of the stocks and the advisability of issuing quotas. That is all very well, but I heard nothing in the minister's speech of his course of action.

He also spoke of trying to strike a balance between catch size and fish stock renewal capacities. Here again, the minister indicated no course of action. He provided no specifics, only principles. I recognize that principles is what we are dealing with, here.

The minister's third principle was about ensuring self-sufficiency for fisheries in the future. He wants to try to make coastal communities and fishing associations self-sufficient. He talked of his way—and here a way is offered to achieving independence—he spoke of co-operative, or joint management.

Every time I have heard the Liberals opposite talking of joint management it always translated as: "Well, ladies and gentlemen, we are going to manage jointly, that is, we are going to share the bill with you". And it is true, fishing licence fees have gone up, and, as we saw in the previous bill, under the system of joint management, the government was preparing to unload part of the bill for biological and management costs. I still have not seen the benefit of this. The fishing community, whether coastal or mid-shore, has yet to see its share of benefits.

The fourth principle stated by the minister, and the last speaker boasted about this quite a bit, is conservation, the ultimate goal. For that I must commend the minister. No one can argue with that, not even a sovereignist Bloc member like me. We are all for conserving our fish stocks. But let us wait and see how this will be done.

To continue with this adult education class for the members across the way, with your permission, I could table before this House a document I released last February. We had a different fisheries minister at the time; it was long before an election was called. This goes to show that the we in the Bloc Quebecois do not wait for an election to be called to put proposals forward.

In this document, I set four prerequisites to a reopening of fisheries; indeed, last spring, the minister was toying with the idea of perhaps starting to reopen fisheries. But there was not much consultation with fishers. The biomass threshold at which fisheries could reopen was not determined.

There were no discussions with fishers either to let them know how this would be done, because it has to take place gradually. We expected a reopening but with small quotas.

• (1600)

Nothing was done to identify fishers and on what basis. Nothing was done in terms of identifying the nucleus of fishers who will make up tomorrow's fisheries. This is a serious problem. Everyone in the industry agrees that there are too many people active in the fisheries. Some will argue the harvesting capacity is too big. We will see within the prerequisites I will identify how a balance can be struck between the harvesting capacity and the number of individuals who will be able to earn a living fishing.

Let us start by looking at my four prerequisites. First, the downsizing, or reduction of the harvesting capacity. Second, we must have some idea of what we will do with fishers once they start fishing again. This refers to versatility, to the possibility of catching various species. The third point critical to any reopening, to any negotiation and to the future of fisheries is provincial quotas. I will elaborate on this in a moment. The fourth point is the delegation of powers to the provinces, as I briefly mentioned earlier.

How will we achieve this streamlining and why do we have to do it? Under its Atlantic groundfish strategy, or TAGS, the Liberal government promised to streamline operations. This was the ultimate goal. In return for this upcoming streamlining, the government was to provide income support. Everyone waited. People thought if they were not designated as surplus fishers or workers, it would mean that, some day, they would be able to work in the fisheries again. However, the Liberals fooled us, because not long after the first year of implementing the TAGS program, everything

Supply

was stopped as regards buying back permits and offering preretirement programs.

The objective behind the streamlining was to match the harvesting capacity with the available biomass, once the moratoriums were over. So, when the minister says he wants to try match this with his second principle, I have suggestions for ways of doing it. An assessment of the situation must be done.

The worst as regards streamlining, and I will say it again, is the definition of the core group of fishers. Those who said this morning that the harvesting capacity must be reduced are on the right track. They recognize that it might be necessary to reduce it by 50%. This is a laudable objective. Some will suggest using more ecological fishing gear. I know there are several schools of thought on the issue. Some will say that only longlines should be used. For those who have never heard of them, these are lines with nothing but baited hooks. It takes a fish of a certain size to be able to take the hook and the bait. That is one approach.

I myself am of another school of thought that says that the various types of gear used nowadays are aimed at different year classes. In the category of mobile gear, longlines and gill nets each catch different year classes. Each of these year classes has a mortality rate. I think that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans could examine the mortality of each, and of course, if we wanted to catch more slightly older fish, we could perhaps reduce the catch of those who are taking a bit more. But we shall see. I am indicating an approach, and I am open to other suggestions.

Why is variety so necessary? Everyone began talking about variety when the moratoriums were being introduced. People said that when they began to fish again, they would like to be able to count on fishing from one freeze-up to the next, because everyone knows that, when winter comes in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, there is the problem of ice and it is very difficult to go fishing. Or, as our NDP colleague said the other day, it is not easy to pick strawberries in January and blueberries in February. Our activities depend on the seasons.

• (1605)

Why am I talking about variety? Regardless of the gear fishermen have, there is always a risk that they will catch a species other than the one they were looking for or the one on their permit. People should therefore be allowed an incidental catch that is a bit larger than present limits. And there should be monitoring of all catches landed as to size and variety.

When I say variety, I am not talking about someone who sets out to catch herring but who sets his nets for salmon—even when he no longer has a commercial fishing permit for salmon. That is not what I mean by variety.

Supply

When fishers are after groundfish, they can end up with species other than cod—monkfish and rake, for example—which would add to the value of catches. These are species we are not much used to catching at present, and particularly unused to selling. But it is important that we go in that direction.

That will also enable us, while avoiding waste, to return to the sea certain of the species classified as non-commercial. That would also allow us, since we are entering new markets, to say that the small fish taken accidentally—even though no one wants to take the small ones—can also be sold. When they are deep fishing, any fish that is brought up must be expected to die, because when they are brought up fast through several atmospheres, their guts will burst.

What I see in multi-species licensing is that everyone can have access to various fisheries. We often hear people calling for crab quotas, and they are not traditional crab fishers. Some call for shrimp quotas, and they are not traditional shrimp fishers.

If we took the time to properly rationalize by type of commercial fishery, identified by name at present, the time to do the exercise so that each of these fisheries would be in a position to support the number of fishers and others working in it—first of all there would have to be a fishery-by-fishery exercise. What I am then proposing is that, when it can be identified that such and such a fishery is capable of supporting such and such a number of persons, the type classifications should be removed. The main problem is that the principal lucrative types of fisheries we have are highly specialized and, in many cases, operated only by single-licence fishers. They do not, therefore, have access to diversifying their catches.

What I would propose is that a mechanism be put in place that could be called something like an individual transferable quota. It already exists in areas such as shrimp fishing in the St. Lawrence River or midshore cod fishing, but it should be expanded to other groups.

Why suggest an individual transferable quota? Because, with individual quotas, it is possible to control the fishing effort of any given catching vessel. I would like this quota to be transferable so that, some day, groups of midshore cod fishers can trade quotas—against cod of course—with shrimpers using essentially the same type of gear, that is to say mobile gear. We could take similar measures regarding so-called offshore crab fishers whose gear is called fixed.

Through these mechanisms, we could establish a relationship between the various fishery stakeholders. The cornerstone of this whole downsizing process is, of course, the provincial quota—and in this respect the minister will have to come to terms with what went wrong with the TAGS program the first time around: insufficient involvement on the part of the provinces. Why did the provinces not want to get involved? Precisely because they had no guarantee that provincial quotas would be protected.

• (1610)

How could a fisheries minister, say in Newfoundland, agree to reduce the number of existing plants without any guarantee that his quotas will be protected? It goes without saying that, in order to resolve the deficit problem and effect downsizing, powers will have to be transferred to the appropriate provinces.

It is very important that the minister be made aware of these four prerequisites and I think these four principles give him something to work on. I am now prepared to entertain questions and comments from my hon. colleagues.

[English]

Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed the remarks from the member for Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok.

The hon. member opposite makes suggestions very different from what I heard from the Reform Party, especially the allegations from the member in the back row that really what we should be giving people in fishing communities when they have had disasters is tax breaks.

I will tell the Reform Party that tax breaks do not work when there is no resource for the people to fish. We want to change that. That was the allegation from the member in the back row. That is the kind of stuff we hear from the Reform Party all the time, as if they do not care about Atlantic Canada.

It was very good to hear some of the hon. member's remarks. There are some suggestions that make a lot of sense. I am particularly interested in his comments on transferable quotas.

Having come from a strong farming background, I certainly favour a supply managed industry and quotas which will manage the supply according to demand. One of the problems with the quota system in the past has been that over time it concentrates the ownership in fewer and fewer hands.

One of the concerns on ITQs put forward by fishers and fishing communities is that if they went to a transferable quota system, the quotas might be concentrated into corporate hands and therefore not meet what the real objective is which is to ensure long term viability for the fishing community.

How in terms of the transferable quota system does the hon. member foresee preventing transferable quotas from becoming concentrated in fewer and fewer hands?

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Bernier: Madam Speaker, I am happy to see that the government party is interested in my proposals. I will continue to provide those opposite with a little adult education.

Transferable individual quotas are arranged by and for the people who work in the fishing community. Before I get into politics, I would point out that I have worked for a fishing association in Gaspé. We developed one of the individual quota systems, and as we did so for and by the fishers, we knew who it was for and so could set a certain limit within the rules. I will explain.

This has to be anticipated because at some point it becomes difficult when quotas are held by only two or three. No association is possible. The maximum share of the total eligible catches that can be taken by the various parties must be anticipated. It is possible to go even further. It is possible to establish a dollar value by mutual agreement.

If you take the time to meet with the fishers, they will tell you that they want an opportunity to get out. They want to be equipped to be able to work. In many cases this is not possible. I do not need to be a dyed-in-the-wool sovereignist to come up with that. I am happy to see my colleague opposite, who does not share my political philosophy, take interest.

I will go even a bit further in the context of multiparty management of catches and of individual quotas.

• (1615)

A provincial partnership is necessary and there has to be a provincial quota so that the provinces can say: "Okay, with such a small percentage, we will streamline our processing industry". If a province had this type of undertaking, with Ottawa if necessary, individual quotas could be established. In other words, the available resources would be put on the table and we would look at how many fishers could live off them.

And here I will go a little further. Things could be organized not only by province but also by coastal region. If I take the example of Quebec—I will leave it up to the parliamentary secretary from Prince Edward Island to speak for his region—it is because we in Quebec have four main pillars. There is the north shore of Quebec, the north part of the Gaspé, the south side of the Gaspé, that is, the baie des Chaleurs and the Magdalen Islands. I would not want fishers in the northern Gaspé to be drawing on the quotas of the people of the Magdalen Islands and vice versa. If we protect each other in our communities, the provinces should also protect one another.

It is the fishers who are fishing at moment. Some licences are for processing plants. Some have a grandfather clause. Perhaps we could look with them at ways to manage things, except that the plants need resources to process. There is always some give-and-take in negotiations. However, the government must show from the outset a will to provide provincial protection, to allow a system of individual quotas, and to put in place a structure that will prevent any concentration. We want fishers to have access to that process

Supply

themselves. It may be decided that the permit holder will be the operator of the boat. All this can be included in the system of transferable individual quotas.

It goes without saying that this implies something in return, as fishers must go through the controls at the docks. Some things must be included in the package. When we talk about partnership and co-management, if fishers are designated and told which group they can join, if they know where the minister is going and at what negotiation table they will be invited to sit, in return, they will say "Okay, we know the number of players involved, now we can talk".

I had this discussion with many associations. Sure, I still have to establish some contacts. However, I want hon. members to realize that the issue of protection through provincial quotas is extremely important. If I were a provincial fisheries minister, I would never agree to reduce the number of processing plants without a guarantee that my percentage would remain the same. We must always be prepared. This is why we have everything to gain by examining the process.

While I still have the floor, I would like to say that I thought the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans would provide an answer. But it is his right to leave the floor to his parliamentary secretary. I would have liked to talk to him in more detail about the Atlantic groundfish strategy and how he intends to go about identifying the core group of fishers.

I would also have liked the minister to be here, because there are rumours concerning the closing of a coast guard radio station in the Magdalen Islands. Based on the discussions I had with the minister at lunch time, this station is not slated for closure. The minister even confirmed he was prepared to look at the most recent arguments in favour of keeping the radio station in operation. Therefore, allow me to question the government's will to establish a partnership, given the marks it received from the auditor general and its attitude regarding management in other areas.

I am still prepared to answer questions from the parliamentary secretary.

[*English*]

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed listening to my colleague from the Bloc. He obviously knows a lot about the subject and I believe in the last Parliament was also involved in this committee.

• (1620)

It is important that we tell all of the story when we talk about transition. Leaving more money in people's hands, no matter what they are doing, is very important. A focus on retraining and a focus on fewer boats fishing is also crucial. All of the transition strategy cannot be based on income support.

Supply

People leaving Newfoundland, for example, is very sad indeed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Bernier: Madam Speaker, I hope we will have a chance to talk again with the Reform Party member.

If I understood the first part of what he said clearly, he is saying that he would rather leave more money in taxpayers' hands and that that is why they are calling for a halt, if I understood correctly, to extending TAGS. I am not in agreement. If they do not want these amounts to keep coming up every year, the right action has to be taken.

If members take the time to read the four conditions I am proposing, they will find solutions that will cost the government nothing later on.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques—employment insurance; the hon. member for Scarborough East—human rights.

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Secretary of State (Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the motion tabled by the leader of the fifth party. I would like to tell the House right now that I will be dividing my time with my colleague, the hon. member for Gander—Grand Falls.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Martin Cauchon: You see how enthusiastic the members opposite are.

I will give a report on the famous Fonds Québec Côtier. The results are so good that the members opposite are already excited.

The motion tabled by the leader of the fifth party raises an important issue in that it addresses the problem of the fisheries, particularly the Atlantic fishery. In this sense, I must say that the motion has some merit.

However, where the government differs fundamentally with the motion by the leader of the fifth party is when the latter mentions that the government has done nothing to help, that it is indifferent to the fate of fishermen and their families.

This is to largely ignore the measures put in place by this government, by my colleague, the Minister of Human Resources Development, beginning in May 1994. Furthermore, it will be recalled that the measures had several components. They were seen in part as emergency measures because, obviously, economic issues were involved, as well as more humanitarian ones. It was necessary to act immediately, on an urgent basis, to help these families.

In May 1994 my colleague introduced a multi-faceted program. Obviously, there were income support measures, which were transitory, but there were also economic and community measures. In the Province of Quebec, these measures were assigned to the Federal Office of Regional Development, which I have the pleasure to head up, and we implemented the Programme Québec Côtier. I recently had an opportunity with others to look at the situation in the Gaspé last October 14.

• (1625)

The aim of the program was to ensure that we could intervene in the regions and communities affected by the groundfish crisis, to help not only the fishers affected but also all of the communities, so that the Canadian government together with all the people involved in economic development can rebuild an economic safety net by repositioning the fishing industry and developing new sectors.

At the start of my speech, I heard members of the Bloc shouting and enjoying the fact that I was rising to speak. I can understand that, because they have had little opportunity to become familiar with my report. I must say it is rather an eloquent one. It exists because of the government's intervention and because people in the regions affected were particularly dynamic. They knew how to roll up their sleeves and work together.

In this report, which covers the period from March 30, 1996 to September 30, 1997, in the context of the Québec Côtier program, 229 requests for financial assistance were submitted to the department. Of this number, 121 received offers worth a total of \$5.3 million. A total of 380 jobs were created or maintained as a result of these joint ventures. These figures clearly attest to the quality of the Canadian government's commitment.

As the member for Sherbrooke, the leader of the fifth party, pointed out in his motion, these figures testify to the seriousness of our commitment, the quality of our leadership in this matter and our sensitivity to the problems of the families and people affected by the groundfish crisis.

Now if we look a little closer at this intervention by Québec Côtier, and break it down into sub-regions, in the Gaspé region, 70 projects worth a total of \$2.8 million were implemented and 200 jobs maintained or created.

On the subject of partnership, the community futures development corporations, which are prime movers in the area of rural and local development, were brought on board. They were stakeholders in the program. They helped deliver the front line services of the Québec Côtier program.

As my colleague from Abitibi pointed out, these corporations are without equal in regional development. The quality of assistance and expertise that they offer is remarkable. When we talk of accurately targeting interventions, we are, obviously, talking about

intervening in technological sectors, in cutting-edge sectors but also in areas that are a bit more traditional.

As I indicated, results are encouraging, and the results are encouraging because we in the Government of Canada were concerned and because the interventions were true to our philosophy of working in partnership and in tune with regional realities. This is why we joined up with a policy committee, and I would like to thank the members of this committee, and especially its chair, for having helped develop and implement the program. All of the objectives for this program for economic intervention were met.

As you know, my colleague has indicated that income support measures would end in May 1998. He also announced that he would set up a committee, an individual to determine the impact of the end of these income support measures. Of course the government will pay close attention to all of this study's recommendations.

• (1630)

I would like to point out to the House that, when the time comes to examine future courses of action, if the government deems it appropriate, and particularly if my colleague deems it appropriate in light of the studies' findings, I must say that the model of the Québec Côtier program is one that had considerable success and, although it was an interim measure like all those announced, might prove to be a formula we could continue.

In closing, since I am getting the sign that my time is up—ten minutes is always too short, unfortunately—I would like to sincerely thank the people who worked on the implementation of this program, the members of the advisory committee, and all of the public, because this was obviously not an easy undertaking. Families were affected, but with all of the people helping, we have been able to take a certain number of steps that, without a shadow of a doubt, may make it possible for the regions affected to, essentially, cast their economic nets in different waters and to build quality businesses and, as a consequence, to develop quality lasting jobs, so that not only the major centres but all of the regions will be able to move on into the 21st century.

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Madam Speaker, as the Bloc Québécois critic for regional development, I am pleased to be here for the first speech of the Secretary of State responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development for Quebec. I listened carefully and noticed right away that the minister is very self-congratulatory. We have a self-congratulatory secretary of State. It is quite remarkable.

He mentioned projects, indicating that some 70 projects, totaling \$2.8 million, created 200 jobs. But the hon. member for Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok tells me that

Supply

4,000 jobs were needed. So, to congratulate oneself for creating 200 jobs is all fine and well, but 200 jobs are a far cry from the 4,000 that were needed.

In this context—I listened carefully and did not miss a word of what he said—he congratulated the president. That is but one person. If he claims to have consulted the Gaspé by congratulating one person, the president of the steering committee, he is off the mark. He must do more than that.

He mentioned local community futures development committees. That is fine but there are regional development structures in place in Quebec. He did not say a word about these structures, which have been recognized by the Quebec government, and not a word either about co-operation, consultation, collaboration—these are all good words—with the Quebec fishery minister, who is also the agriculture minister. He did not say a word about that.

I am giving him an opportunity to tell us how well he works with the regional officials within structures under the jurisdiction of Quebec and I would like the Minister of Agriculture, or else the Secretary of State responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development for Quebec, to explain how he intends to proceed.

Hon. Martin Cauchon: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to hear the first comments of the official Bloc Québécois critic on regional development.

Based on his comments, and given the information provided by the government, there seems to be a lack of experience or understanding on the part of Bloc members regarding regional development, including the number of interventions, the spirit of co-operation and the drive that are required not only from governments but from people in every region to succeed in creating jobs.

• (1635)

In this respect, I want to point out that, in my main speech, I first thanked the members of the steering committee and the residents of the communities affected, because these people displayed an incredible drive. It was unfortunate on the part of the critic on regional development to say that a mere 300 or 400 jobs were created.

An hon. member: Two hundred jobs.

Hon. Martin Cauchon: Two hundred jobs. For them, 200 jobs is nothing. We should have created 4,000.

Such a disconcerting attitude shows to what extent Bloc members can be disconnected from regional reality. I am pleased that the government, in co-operation and in partnership with all those affected by this crisis, managed in a short period of time to create or maintain such a high number of quality jobs.

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I stand by what I said earlier, namely that the role played by the Québec Côtier program was appropriate and meshed with other measures taken by the Canadian government on regional development, including investment funds for community future development corporations and for youth, and also the programming of the Federal Office of Regional Development, through the EEDI-EMP, and the strategic regional initiatives.

Since our government took office in 1993, we have managed to establish good relations with the regions—in Quebec and across Canada—and we will continue to do so to ensure our expertise can be of help to the regions in their development, so that they can enter the new millennium with a strong momentum.

[*English*]

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls, Lib.): Madam Speaker, after listening to the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party introduce this motion in the House and listening to what he said were the disaster points in the Canadian fishing industry, I only wish he had listened to the member for Sackville—Eastern Shore this morning or the MP from Îles-de-la-Madeleine yesterday before the committee because he might have learned something.

Let us set the record straight on one thing. The major mistakes in the destruction of the northern cod were made when the Government of Canada decided to destroy the food of the cod. The first action it took was in 1990 off the coast of the hon. member's riding, Sackville—Eastern Shore.

The squid caught on the Quebec coast and the coast of Nova Scotia and the coast of New Brunswick and the Gaspé coast and the coast of Newfoundland are actually born in Florida. They travel up the coast of the United States in a thin black line. The fishermen call it the trans-Canada highway of the squid. They go up the coast of Nova Scotia and into the gulf and around Quebec and P.E.I. and up around the coast of Newfoundland.

In 1990, the federal government approved five foreign nations using factory freezer trawlers to put down nets with one-half inch mesh—

An hon. member: One-half inch?

Mr. George S. Baker: Yes, the fishermen used to call it the panty hose zone. The fish plant workers called it the hair net zone. The federal government called it the small mesh gear zone at that time. Five foreign nations with licences to fish inside Canada's 200-mile zone interrupted the run of the squid.

I ask the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party who introduced this motion, were the Liberals in power in 1990 when this was done?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. George S. Baker: No, Madam Speaker. Who was in power in 1990 when this was done?

An hon. member: Brian Mulroney.

Mr. George S. Baker: It was the Tory Party of Canada.

• (1640)

The second biggest error that was made was for the other major food of the codfish. If you want to catch a codfish using bait, you first of all try squid. You would then go to a fish called capelin. The great capelin capture in Canada took place in 1991 when the Soviet Union was given a quota of 100,000 tonnes of capelin in Canadian waters, which is more than any recorded catch of capelin in Canadian history.

In 1991 was it the Liberals who were the Government of Canada? No. It was the Tory party of Canada.

The third greatest mistake that was made by the Government of Canada involved mackerel. The greatest spawning area for mackerel in the world is the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The mackerel enter the Gulf of St. Lawrence from the Atlantic Ocean at the end of May. Prior to 1957 when the causeway was built to Cape Breton Island they would come in between Cape Breton Island and Nova Scotia. Now they go up the coast of Cape Breton Island and in through Sydney Bight.

In 1990 three foreign nations were given what were called experimental quotas to catch mackerel in Sydney Bight. In 1991 five foreign nations were given so-called developmental quotas to catch mackerel as they entered Sydney Bight.

Was it the Liberals who were the Government of Canada in 1990 and 1991 when this was done? Who was the Government of Canada? The Tory party was the Government of Canada in 1990 and 1991.

What was the greatest error ever made as far as the spawning grounds for codfish are concerned? It just so happens that in 1990 an internationally recognized spawning ground for cod, commonly referred to as the Flemish Cap, had had international protection for 10 years. This great Canadian government in Ottawa went to international meetings and sat down with the international community under NAFO and decided to lift the moratorium on codfish on the Flemish Cap, on an internationally recognized spawning ground where a moratorium was in existence. That was the Canadian government in January 1991.

Was it the Liberals who were in power in 1991? No. The leader of the PC party forgets it was the Tories who were in power at that time.

An hon. member: A selective memory.

Mr. George S. Baker: Yes, the Tory leader has a selective memory.

That is four or five disasters. Let's go to another one. It is what we commonly refer to on the east coast as the Greenland halibut disaster.

Supply

When the codfish were disappearing the Government of Canada came into this chamber and announced the great find of the century. It was called an underutilized species. It was identified as a Greenland halibut. The government announced that there was so much of this Greenland halibut that it was going to allow foreigners to catch it.

The fishermen in the maritimes and Quebec were wondering what the Greenland halibut was until they saw a picture of it. The picture showed a flat fish called Greenland halibut, commonly referred to as blue halibut in Britain, black halibut in Germany, and a hellefisk in Denmark. Here it was with one of the eyes up this way and the other eye halfway around looking like a Cyclops and the fishermen said "Ah, that is a Newfoundland turbot".

• (1645)

That turbot that was classified in 1991 by the very government of the leader of the Tory party became the catch-all for foreign nations. That fish was, it just so happens, the mainstay of the fishermen of eastern Canada.

In the early spring all of our fishermen would go out in the trap boat fishery for cod and then in the summer they would switch to turbot. And the great Canadian government here in Ottawa made the decision that there was so much of this species that now foreign nations could catch it. That was the year 1991.

Was it the Liberals who were in power in 1991? Who was in power in 1991? The Tories were in power, the very party that has moved this motion before the House of Commons today. The mistakes continued until the year 1992. It is a great thing that in 1993 the Liberal Party was elected so that we could try to clean up the mess.

Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC): Madam Speaker, I was very interested in the comments made by the hon. member. I know that he is an individual who is deeply concerned for the welfare of all Atlantic Canadians.

As a fellow Atlantic Canadian I also understand the tragedies that the families in Atlantic Canada and in British Columbia for that matter have actually undergone over the collapse of the fishery, particularly with respect to groundfish.

I do not even live in a riding that actually has groundfish to speak of. However it does not take very long for us to realize and contact some of our friends and our families who have actually ended up leaving Atlantic Canada for other places.

I think it is important for us to recognize the real issue here. It is not necessarily a matter of which government was in power at this point. It is not a matter of which government was in power before us. I know the hon. member understands this is an issue that has to

be addressed today. The solutions that we need are solutions that we need today for the future of all Atlantic Canadians. I know the hon. member respects that comment. The motion before us today is to discuss constructive solutions about the future of Atlantic Canadians.

I know the hon. member was sincere in terms of not making this a partisan issue. He has spoken often with respect to the fishery in Newfoundland. I know he is a very respected member in Newfoundland. This is an issue in which we are trying by this motion to ensure that we can find solutions in terms of helping these families who are desperately in need. That is the issue.

I will point to my colleagues on this side of the House as well. I know it is in everybody's interest from time to time to make political hay in terms of who was in government. But the issue in play is that we need to find solutions for the families who are hurting.

Mr. George S. Baker: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's comments but I simply brought forth these examples because the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party during his speech had laid blame.

• (1650)

Even today we are left in Canada with the decisions that governments made years ago. Today a blue fin tuna would get you about \$30,000 yet we entered into agreements years ago during the period of time I was talking about in which another nation has five times the quota of the hon. member's riding for blue fin tuna inside the Canadian zone.

We have a ridiculous situation which again is a leftover from the early nineties. We have to slowly try to get out of these agreements because it is difficult to break them immediately. There were 11 Cuban trawlers off the hon. member's riding in Nova Scotia a couple of weeks ago. One of them had a national quota inside Canada's zone. The other 10 were hired by Canadian companies while our fishermen sit ashore with nothing to do.

The bottom line is that we have to try to correct the mistakes of the past. That is exactly what the Government of Canada is trying to do and what we are trying to do as a standing committee with members from each side of the Chamber. I think everybody is operating in unison to try to find the solutions just as the Government of Canada is trying to do.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The hon. member for Vancouver East on debate.

Ms. Libby Davies: Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time.

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

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I would like to once again return to this whole question of the amendment that has been put forward by the Liberals on this opposition motion. I would like to refer to section 566 of Beauchesne's.

I think these amendments should be posed in such a way that they are more acceptable to the House of Commons. How can that be when the very amendment that has been put forward by the Liberal government which talks about calling upon the government changes "establish" to "continue the implementation of a comprehensive national fisheries policy that demonstrates real commitment to resource conservation".

My point is that just last week the auditor general in his report said very clearly that the department has stated that its mandate is conservation of this fishery resource base and that is implied in current legislation. Nevertheless we found—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The motion has already been accepted by the Chair. At this time it is too late to go into debate any longer so we will resume.

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

My colleague is attempting to make a point on the relevance of an amendment in this House. I would like to refer you to parliamentary rules on amendments, Beauchesne's citations 567 and 568. The point my colleague is making is that there is a substantive change in the motion that was put forward by the Conservatives, and the fact that the Conservative motion is attempting to establish—

An hon. member: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Randy White: Madam Speaker, I have the floor.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The hon. member for Malpeque.

Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the point of order of the member opposite is out of order. The Speaker has already ruled. It is as simple as that.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): You are quite correct so please carry on.

Mr. Randy White: Madam Speaker, I will now attempt to make my point. Citation 567 of Beauchesne's says this with regard to amendments:

The object of an amendment may be either to modify a question in such a way as to increase its acceptability or to present to the House a different proposition as an alternative to the original question.

• (1655)

Citation 568 states: "It is an imperative rule that every amendment must be relevant to the question on which the amendment is proposed".

The fact of the matter is the amendment that the government put forward on the Conservative motion changes that motion substantially. The Conservatives are attempting to establish and the Liberal government is insinuating that there is an established process and it wants it to be continued. That is substantially different.

Mr. Wayne Easter: Madam Speaker, the member opposite is trying to debate an issue that was decided on long ago by the Speaker. It is a judgment call and we maintain on this side that the amendment is in order. The Speaker has ruled that way and I believe that you should stand by that ruling.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Madam Speaker, I commend my friend for bringing this to the floor of the House. This is new information. He has made a specific reference to Beauchesne. I would encourage the Chair to take this under consideration. It is not a revisitation of the same point of order. I would encourage the Chair to render the decision according to the new information which has been provided by the hon. House leader.

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is a longstanding tradition in this House that when the Chair makes a ruling, there is no appeal to that ruling. In the best parliamentary tradition notwithstanding the interests of the parties opposite to, I would simply say, expand the negative on the amendment by using the word, and I believe the word was "implement", but that is secondary. The principle that has to be maintained, defended and upheld is that of the Chair making a ruling and having the final decision. There is no appeal to that ruling.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The time for making that objection has passed. The Chair has already ruled on this and it is time to resume debate.

The hon. member for Vancouver East.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst.

• (1700)

It was very interesting to hear the history lesson by the government member from Gander, Newfoundland. However, it is very curious that his history only went up until 1993. What we are concerned about today is what is happening in terms of our fisheries on the east coast and the west coast.

Pacific salmon stocks have been depleted to crisis proportions. The impact that this depletion has had on the environment and on the lives of west coast fishers and their families and on coastal communities has been devastating.

Not only has the federal government refused to support B.C. fishers against the tide of American commercial exploitation of the fisheries, but it has taken action that has devastated coastal communities and small and independent fishers and their families.

In my constituency of Vancouver East, many of my constituents are reeling from the government's utter lack of commitment to the Pacific fishery. There are 10,000 commercial fishers and 6,400 shore workers in B.C. who depend on salmon for their livelihoods. The average annual wholesale value of the salmon harvest in B.C. is approximately \$500 million. The Americans are overfishing the Canadian salmon and the cost to all Canadians is \$60 million a year. That means that four million fish are being illegally harvested by the Americans.

The basic problem is that the U.S. is ignoring the terms of the Pacific salmon treaty originally signed in 1985 and under renegotiation since 1995. Instead of respecting the principle that salmon belong to the country of origin, Alaskan fishers are stealing Canadian sockeye salmon returning to spawn in Canadian waters where they were born. As they pass through Alaskan waters American fishers are taking four or five times more sockeye than they are entitled to under the terms of the treaty.

Even more recently, the U.S. has been aggressively overfishing the early run of salmon heading up the Fraser River in the south.

Despite the devastating effect of this overfishing on the west coast and the blatant disregard that the Americans have shown Canadian sovereignty, the federal government has done little to change this situation. In fact, the plan that the federal government has put in place is woefully inadequate.

If anything it does more to hurt the majority of B.C. fishers than help them, indeed the Mifflin plan named after the former Liberal fisheries minister actually punishes Canadians because it forces B.C. fishers to choose one specific zone to fish and allows licence staffing.

The Mifflin plan has been an ecological and sociological disaster. Internationally it has been proven that fisheries work when they are community based. However, what is the federal government doing? The federal government has undercut the community in favour of mega-companies that care more for the bottom line than for the preservation of our environment and our coastal communities. It edges out the fishers who live and work and raise their families in these communities and who have a real vested interest in the preservation of salmon stocks.

Simply put, the Mifflin plan has been a disaster in Atlantic Canada. It has been a disaster in western Canada and it has been a disaster for all of Canada. Even the promises that have been made about transitional funds have been a disaster.

Supply

The federal government had promised \$30 million to the transitional funds for community fisheries development program. In a meeting with the president of the fishers union in B.C., Mr. John Radosevic, I was told that the people involved in that transitional plan are still waiting to have an answer from the federal government as to whether there will be multi-year funding.

My colleague, the member for Burnaby—Douglas, who is the critic for the west coast fisheries for our party, raised this in the House on October 1. What did the minister say? He said be patient.

The fishers of the west coast and the east coast have been more than patient. They have been waiting to see if this government will put an action plan into place to ensure there is preservation.

The only real leadership that we have seen in dealing with the west coast fisheries crisis has come from the premier of British Columbia and from many other people in my home province who clearly recognize that the time has come to take a stand. Premier Clark has been making tough decisions and what has the response of the federal government been? When the premier of B.C. moved to cancel the sea bed lease at Nanoose, did the federal government move to support B.C. efforts? No. The federal government is now suing the B.C. government and claiming that B.C. does not have the power to cancel the sea bed lease.

• (1705)

I can tell the House that the federal NDP has long held the position that Nanoose should be closed as a sea bed testing range for U.S. submarines. Why? It is a relic of the cold war and an environmental hazard. My colleague, the member for Burnaby—Douglas, tabled a motion on this precise issue in the House on September 23.

Second, when Mr. Clark initiated legal action against Alaska and Washington to enforce the terms of the treaty, the federal government refused to support the action and went even further and undermined the B.C. position by releasing legal opinions.

In a more recent development, when the U.S. Congress recently held congressional hearings on the issue, the federal government refused to send government representatives. So Canada's position was not at those hearings.

The leader of the NDP raised this issue in the House on September 25. Now there is real concern that the U.S. may walk away from the treaty altogether. Clearly the federal government has to do everything in its power to prevent this from happening because chaos will ensue.

The present fisheries minister, a British Columbian who we had hoped would take tough action, has done little to ease the burden of

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west coast fishers. By contrast, the minister did not even meet with B.C. fishermen until they had been driven out of frustration and need to take desperate measures in blocking the passage of an American passenger ferry. Even then, I am sure that the minister was persuaded more by American reaction than he was by Canadian desperation.

A recent provincial public opinion polls shows that the majority of British Columbians support the strong actions taken by our provincial government to achieve a fair and workable Pacific salmon treaty. Why will the federal government not do the same?

The Liberals say that they want to address westerners' feelings of alienation, but when push comes to shove they continue to ignore western concerns.

It is not good enough for the finance minister to attend a meeting on the west coast as he did last week and say "we are addressing your concerns". Instead of spending his time publicly bashing the premier of B.C. as he did in the House of Commons, the minister of fisheries should be trying to emulate the tough stand that our premier has taken on behalf of B.C. fishers and coastal communities. The only real action that the federal Liberals have taken is to appoint someone to monitor the situation.

New Democrats have stood up in the House and will continue to stand up in the House to fight for the survival of coastal communities and sustainable jobs and a healthy fishery. We believe this must be the primary goal of the federal fisheries policy. The most important step toward achieving this goal is to genuinely share the control of the fishery with the women and men in the coastal communities that catch the fish.

Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I stand in amazement at what I have just heard.

The member said we are not doing enough to achieve a fair and workable fisheries treaty. That is in fact what we are doing. This debate is about trying to make suggestions and all we heard from this member was some political rhetoric and an attack on the minister of fisheries.

To set the member straight I will outline it again, as I have done many times. Nothing can be learned in the House if members do not listen. Obviously members of the NDP are less interested in listening and more interested in trying to protect the premier of British Columbia in terms of some of the errors he has made in terms of our trying to achieve a fair and equitable treaty with the U.S.

An hon. member: Protect Canadians.

Mr. Wayne Easter: We are. Maybe the member was not present earlier today when the minister spoke in response to a question.

• (1710)

He clearly said that he has worked as strongly in Canada's interest in establishing the fishery treaty. The fact of the matter is that a task force was called to explore possible measures on July 19. The minister met with Premier Clark, as well as Minister Eggleton in Vancouver. Minister Anderson met with those in the blockade to try and remove that problem. The task force reported to the minister. Minister Anderson met with the senators of Alaska, Oregon and Washington State.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I urge the parliamentary secretary to refer to ministers by their title and not by name.

Mr. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, my mistake. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans met, as I said, with the senators of Alaska, Oregon and Washington state, with Secretary Daly and senior state departmental officials in Washington, with fisheries and environmental organizations, with Governor Knowles of Alaska, and the list goes on and on.

As we already know, this strong pressure from Canada goes right up to the prime minister. We have appointed special representatives who will report to the prime minister and to the president on this issue. The minister and the government have been fully engaged in efforts to resolve the Pacific salmon treaty dispute, doing everything we can within our power while the members opposite want to talk about political rhetoric. It amazes me.

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments and I agree that it is important to listen.

I invite the member to British Columbia so he can hear firsthand and listen to the concerns of fishers in coastal communities who feel they have been abandoned by the federal government. When the member says that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has been fully engaged, fully engaged in what? Certainly not in defending the interests of fishers in B.C. and supporting the Government of British Columbia which has been standing up for the fishers.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has been engaged in soft peddling this issue. Yes, it is important to listen. It is important to listen to the people who are directly affected by the lack of a national fisheries program. That is what this issue is about.

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member, her party, which is the governing party in British Columbia, has chosen to take some actions against the Americans. We all agree that there is need of action, a real concern on this issue.

When Al Gore and Bill Clinton wanted a park created up in Tatshenshini, Mr. Harcourt said "I'll bend over and give you anything you want". He did. What was the prime reason for

creating the Tatshenshini? It was the unreal concern of the Alaskan fisherman over the downstream impacts on the Alaskan fishery.

Why does the member not go back to her friend, the premier of British Columbia, and ask him to reverse that decision on the Tatshenshini and put 2,000 British Columbians to work? That would really get the attention of Al Gore and Bill Clinton. They have been sitting there watching this whole drama unfold without taking it seriously.

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, I think the member is confusing the issues. We are here debating a motion about our fisheries on the east and west coasts.

The Government of British Columbia when it made the decision, a historic decision, to establish the Tatshenshini park, it was a decision that was for the environment and for our future generations. It shows the commitment of the British Columbia government to live up to its responsibility to ensure that these unique areas of our province are preserved for future generations.

• (1715)

I am proud to say the present Premier of British Columbia is willing to stand up and take on the U.S. government over this treaty. If the federal minister of fisheries would do his work with the same amount of commitment and dedication, maybe we would not be in the mess we are in today over the situation with the treaty.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, through you I indicate my support for the motion with respect to the fisheries put forward by my Conservative colleagues. The motion asks the House to recognize the urgent need for action to address the serious problems in the fisheries.

This is an extremely important issue for me because it has a direct impact on the people in my riding. The fishery is a very important industry for us. Entire villages are dependent on the viability of this industry. We depend on a great number of resources to put bread on the table of families who survive by fishing. We fish for crab, shrimp, lobster, herring and some plaice. But I am going to dwell a bit more on a species we no longer fish, cod, and on the reduction in crab, herring and lobster quotas.

As for the moratorium on cod, each time there are incidental catches of cod when people are fishing for plaice, plaice fishing gets shut down too. To all intents and purposes plaice fishing is shut down for 50% of the season.

Although I congratulate the Conservative Party for drawing attention to this very important issue, I find it somewhat ironic that

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they are asking the Liberal government to take action when it is they who are partly responsible for the crisis in the fisheries.

We all know that the disappearance of the cod stock is due to poor management of the fisheries. And who is responsible? Our Liberal friends, yes, but also our friends in the Conservative Party. It was the Conservatives who were irresponsible in their management of the fisheries throughout Canada from 1984 to 1993. And what was the result? A crisis in the cod sector that became critical and that has remained so to this day.

The Conservatives can now say that they are concerned about the difficult situation facing fishermen, but it is too little and too late. They should have been concerned by these issues when they were in power.

I do not know which is worse: Conservatives who mismanaged the fisheries for ten years, or Liberals who are indifferent to the difficulties caused by the crisis. The Liberals are like ostriches who stick their heads in the sand and are surprised when they pull them out to see boats landing empty at the docks.

The Liberals are refusing to do something about the suffering of people by proposing immediate solutions. The Liberals are refusing to recognize that some people have nothing to eat. As a result of the changes they brought in to employment insurance, fishers and plant workers have no incomes for a certain period of the year.

What is still more unforgivable, however, is the refusal to address the structural problems related to fishing. We are debating this issue today because of a crisis that is happening now, and will continue, and yet this government remains passive. The government even says there is no fishery crisis. It ought to visit the Atlantic provinces, not just the hotels of Moncton, but where the fishing is really taking place.

This government does not always react, and when it does, it reacts badly. We need a proactive government that formulates short term strategies to deal with people's suffering but also, and primarily, we need long term strategies to diversify the economy of the communities hardest hit by these difficulties.

We need to put into place a forum that will bring together all of the stakeholders affected by this issue. This means that the federal and provincial governments must give up a bit of their power and must listen to the communities directly affected, and accept their proposals. This means that everyone needs to be represented, people in industry and the various levels of government.

This undertaking needs to be guided by certain basic principles. Initially, we must ensure that resources are conserved. It is very simple. If we do not take care to manage the stocks, there will be no more fish and no more industry. Communities like ours will then disappear. A long term preventive approach must therefore be the primary objective of the forum.

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• (1720)

This forum must address the sharing of resources. We must ensure that every member of the community shares in the success of lucrative fisheries. If we want to get out of this difficult situation, we must all be prepared to put in an equal effort to ensure that the community as a whole benefits. This problem will not be resolved by going it alone.

Finally, we must ensure that funding is available for processing. Why should we send our fish abroad for processing when we have the skill to do it at home? This would necessitate collaboration between the various levels of government as well as a commitment from industry stakeholders.

Fishers and plant workers are looking for work. Here is a long term strategy that could help ease the pinch these groups are feeling. In addition, this kind of initiative will promote a degree of diversification in our local economies. There is no quick fix, but there are better solutions than those put forward by the Liberals.

People in the fishing industry want their government to be concerned with the difficulties they are facing. They do not want the government to penalize them, like the Liberals did, on account of the depletion of fish stocks. They want a proactive government capable of developing short term and long term solutions. The Liberals did not meet that challenge. When will they wake up and protect the interests of fishers and plant workers?

Also, the government should in the industry to support second and third level processing in addition to rationalizing fisheries and plants, buy a few vessels, as used to be done, and give a pension to the people over 50 in the fishing industry who had never benefited from the fruits of this industry up until a few years ago, to help improve the situation of the fishery industry.

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst for his speech. I also congratulate him for defeating the former Minister of Human Resources Development who contributed to causing a great deal of damage in that region with the employment insurance program. Today, however, we are debating the issue of fisheries. In a way, there is a connection between the two, because the Liberal government made hundreds of fishers lose their jobs, many of them in the Acadian peninsula, where the hon. member comes from, and many more in New Brunswick and throughout the maritimes.

I have a question for the hon. member. Everyone knows the Liberals have all but disappeared in the maritimes. Does the hon. member think it is primarily because of the cuts to employment insurance, or because of the government's inaction on the fisheries?

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, I would say it is both. Maybe they both had something to do with ousting the Liberal member

from the Acadian peninsula, with throwing him out and replacing him with an NDP member. Sometimes, I refer to myself as the new NDP member in New Brunswick, because our party is a novelty in that province, at the federal level.

The Liberals were ousted from the riding of Acadie—Bathurst, and in fact right across the Atlantic region. Earlier our friend from Gander—Grand Falls talked about the situation up until 1993, but he did not keep going because his party came to office that year. The reason the Liberals were ousted is that after the mess left by the Conservatives, they too left us a mess, after making promises to Canadians when they formed the opposition. They said they would save employment insurance, which would be a disaster for the Atlantic provinces. That is what the Liberals said. When they came into power, they did the same as the Conservatives. They even went further.

With the changes to employment insurance, they went even further than that. Now people can no longer connect two fishing seasons, because of the problems with the fisheries. What they call that now, down home, is “the black hole”.

• (1725)

I will tell you how July's changes to employment insurance work, in case you did not know. I will educate you a little, if my predecessor has not.

In May and June, we catch crab. In July and August, there is nothing to fish for, where we are. Then the herring fishery starts around August 28, or after the fête des Acadiens on August 15. So our people suffer. They have no employment insurance in July and August, because they have not had the chance to accumulate enough weeks with the crab fishing to be able to get employment insurance.

The Liberal government is ignoring this problem completely, washing its hands of the whole problem, letting our people suffer, and this is totally unacceptable. That is why the people of Acadie—Bathurst showed Doug Young the door on June 2.

[English]

Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the member mentioned New Democrat I thought he really meant new. What we heard from the member for Acadie—Bathurst was similar to what we heard earlier from the member from B.C. It was rhetoric about the minister not going into the area.

I will have to establish those facts because the minister travelled extensively in the member's riding, meeting with fishermen, the Sea Coast Advisory Board, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans for New Brunswick, the Maritime Fishermen's Union, the P.E.I. Fishermen's Association and the Nova Scotia fishing groups. He was down to the joint meetings on fisheries.

I would wager a guess that if the member does not know the minister was in the area maybe the minister has spent more time in Atlantic Canada trying to resolve the problems than the member has spent in his own riding, from the sound of things.

He talks about New Democrats. I would like to see them come up with new ideas and give us some proposals we could consider rather than the rhetoric they are throwing at us.

We moved on the EI issue to try to protect fishermen and the fishing communities, and we in fact have.

With regard to the motion today we on this side of the House have begun to bring forward a comprehensive national fisheries policy that demonstrates a real commitment to resource allocation and conservation. We have shown leadership on resource sharing with foreign interests. The turbot question is a prime example.

We are showing sensitivity to the individuals, families and communities that are affected. TAGS was an example. There were some problems but we were there when we were needed and we will continue to be there when we are needed in the future.

What new solution will the member propose rather than misrepresenting the real facts?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, I will reply to my colleague and I will use the same words he used earlier. When he is in the House, he should perhaps listen and stop preparing a second question without listening to what is being said.

What I said in my speech was that I invited the Liberal government to visit our community. First, I will set the record straight: I never said that the minister never came to New Brunswick. Second, what I said was that I invited the federal government to organize a forum in our community, to get the people in the industry together, and I made a suggestion to the effect that I want to get to the root of the problem and find a solution.

We will come back to the fact that they say they wanted to solve our problems. I will tell you something. People in my riding tried to escape the cycle of poverty because they could no longer work in the fish plants for a living. All they were told, according to the government's recommendations, was: "Go and work somewhere else. Go and make some wreaths or in other sectors".

Do you know what the Liberal government did three years ago? It turned around and did a poor job. The Minister of Human Resources Development began checking into those who had received employment insurance. What did he do? He investigated 150 people. Now he is telling them: "Sorry, we made a mistake; now you owe us \$20,000, now you owe us \$25,000, because our

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department made a mistake and gave you employment insurance. We are sorry, but you poor folks who can hardly put bread on the table owe us Liberals \$25,000. We want you poor people to give us \$40,000". That is what the Liberals have done.

• (1730)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. It being 5.30 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings.

Pursuant to order adopted earlier today, the question is deemed to have been put and a recorded division is deemed to have been demanded.

[*English*]

The vote stands deferred until Tuesday, October 28, 1997 at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

(Division deemed demanded and deferred)

An hon. member: Excellent idea.

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry, the vote will be held at the end of government orders for that day.

Before we begin the first private members' business hour of the 36th Parliament, the Chair would like to take a few moments to review with the House the rules governing the length of speeches during this segment of business.

[*Translation*]

As members know, on Friday, October 10, the House passed new Standing Order 95. This is the Standing Order that governs the length of speeches during the hour reserved for the consideration of private members' business.

[*English*]

The adoption of this new standing order results in the following: for votable items, the old rule remains unchanged from the last Parliament, that is, the member moving the item has up to 20 minutes and all other members up to 10 minutes.

For non-votable items, as is the case today for the motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, a different regime now applies. The member moving the item has up to 15 minutes and all other members up to 10 minutes.

After all members who wish to speak have spoken and provided there is still time remaining, the member moving the item may speak for up to five additional minutes. Copies of the revised Standing Order 95 are available at the table.

The House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[Translation]***CANADA HEALTH ACT**

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): moved that Bill C-202, an act to amend the Canada health Act (nutrition services) be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-202, an act to amend the Canada Health Act. The bill is intended to amend the Canada Health Act by inserting the words "nutrition services".

The Canada Health Act lists insured services, and nutrition services are not insured. We all know that dietitians and nutritionists are specialists in nutrition.

They promote the distribution and application of nutritional principles, advise on food choices and help prevent or treat the consequences of inadequate nutrition in people of all ages and groups from all communities.

They perform a professional function, whose aim is to promote health through healthy food choices. Their services are used in hospitals, sports centres, food markets, government and international agencies, medical clinics and educational institutions, to name but a few.

[English]

The public hears and reads a great deal about nutrition. The industry is constantly putting new products on the market or promoting particular ways of eating. Because of the difficulty to understand and interpret this information, people often turn to the dietitian nutritionist, someone who understands nutrition because of his or her university training in this science.

● (1735)

Dietitians and nutritionists in their concern to protect the public are worried about the quality of information disseminated about food and nutrition and want to warn people not to believe everything they read and hear.

Dietitians and nutritionists are experts in nutrition. All that is medically and nutritionally required falls within their field of specialization.

The reform of the health care system, the shift to ambulatory care and the subsequent redeployment of professionals increase the number of situations where the protection of the public and appropriate health care need to be improved and prioritized despite the economic climate.

[Translation]

Dietitians and nutritionists are in a good position to help people suffering from hunger. By linking their knowledge of foods with respect for others, they come up with creative ways of appeasing the hunger of thousands of people.

One of the places that comes to mind is the Dispensaire diététique de Montréal, which was established over 50 years ago and which has helped some 2,600 pregnant women in difficulty, a third of which were disadvantaged, and which established a model for effective dietary counselling in order to be able to answer society's greatest need: child poverty.

When children suffer from malnutrition, the first thing that springs to mind are health problems: anemia, underweight babies, delays in growth, deficiencies in nutritional elements such as calcium, iron, zinc and vitamins A and D, to name the main ones.

In addition, low birth weight is a risk factor in perinatal mortality and in physical and mental handicaps. It can also affect performance at school, reduced attention, fatigue and mood changes.

School programs also try to help young people from disadvantaged communities eat better. For example, milk has been provided in certain schools for over 20 years. Programs offering snacks, soup, low cost meals, food banks providing non-perishable items and nutritional education have been set up to help young people eat properly.

In another area, assessing needs, determining quantities and measuring effects on the organism are factors that must be taken into consideration in planning an expedition or athletic training.

For example, polar exploration requires very specific nutritional logistics. Everything has to be calculated. To ensure full nutritional value is obtained from prepared food and beverages, various factors must be taken into account: the explorer has to fight cold and wind, he will have long distances to travel, he will be carrying weight and the expedition may last a number of days, if not weeks.

This knowledge enables the dietitian or the nutritionist to be an invaluable partner in organizing such an adventure.

[English]

As mentioned earlier, dietitians and nutritionists are specialists in nutrition. They work to disseminate and apply nutritional principles, guide dietary choices and help prevent or treat the consequences of inadequate nutrition in groups of various milieu and individuals of all ages.

The dietitian's professional goal is to promote good health through proper nutrition. An ever-increasing number of individuals, businesses and organizations are utilizing the services of a dietitian. As members certainly know, the Canadian government

recognizes them as a key resource in drawing up health policies such as Canada's food guide which provides guidelines for a healthy diet.

Historically the first nutrition programs were offered by the University of Toronto in 1902 and Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children was the first hospital to hire a professional dietitian in 1908.

In Canada there are two professional orders of dietitians: one in Ontario and one in Quebec. All the other provinces and territories have associations recognized by their respective provinces and territories. We must therefore conclude that the profession of these persons is recognized by their province but not by their country.

• (1740)

[*Translation*]

We will remember that, in 1992, at the international conference on nutrition in Rome, the participating countries, including Canada, supported a world declaration on nutrition and made a commitment to develop national nutrition strategies.

Health Canada set up a steering committee to prepare a national strategy on nutrition, and the committee presented its report providing strategies on nutrition for new directions in health in the spring of 1996.

The document on the subject of nutrition as a source of savings for the health and social services network issued in June 1997 by the Ordre professionnel des diététistes du Québec indicates that good nutrition is very cost effective and that it rapidly improves the health of those who are sick, cuts medication and the risk of complication, shortens the length of hospital stays and reduces the rate of return to hospitals and transfers to chronic care centres.

A look at the particular needs of the most vulnerable groups, including pregnant women and elderly persons, indicates that nutrition is indeed a source of significant saving for the health and social services network.

People aged 65 years and over have twice as many chronic health programs as those in all other groups in the population as a whole.

Chronic illness and physical disability combined with a reduced appetite seriously affect seniors' nutritional balance. The result, among others, is a greater risk of infection, dehydration and osteoporosis.

The effectiveness and efficiency of health care could be significantly improved through early nutritional examination of people at risk, through special nutritional intervention and a joint action by all decision-makers and interveners.

We should remember that the population aged 65 years and over has almost doubled in the past 30 years, and the proportion continues to grow.

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Persons aged 65 years and over on the average have twice as many chronic health problems as the population as a whole. Reduced mobility often leads to difficulties in obtaining and preparing meals. A number of social factors also effect seniors' health, including loss of a spouse, retirement, isolation and insufficient income.

Because they eat less, seniors have a hard time meeting nutritional requirements for vitamins and minerals.

It is acknowledged that during chemotherapy and radiation treatments for cancer, multiple alimentary distresses can affect the individual's appetite and quality of life.

This is why good nutrition is essential to keeping the immunity system healthy. Malnutrition, even low level, may upset this immunity balance.

Of the people displaying malnutrition on leaving the hospital, 29% are rehospitalized unexpectedly within the three months of their leaving.

Appropriate nutritional action provides the most appropriate treatment of protein-caloric malnutrition in seniors preventing their return to hospital in the short term.

An American experiment, in which elderly persons were fed nutritional meals at home, shows that it is possible to reduce the number and the length of infections as well as the number of hospital stays and medical complications. It should be noted that the annual cost of this service amounted to the cost of a single day's hospitalization.

In another area, everyone has heard of osteoporosis, the deterioration of bone which may result in very severe fractures.

• (1745)

Osteoporosis patients must pay continued attention to the way they eat. Dietary intake of calcium and vitamin D is a decisive factor in prevention and treatment.

One can conclude that all of these physical difficulties, linked to a loss of appetite, can significantly affect the balanced diet of seniors, who can then become weaker and weaker. They become more vulnerable to infection, do not have the reserves to heal fast and therefore they need more health care services.

It is obvious, as many studies have indicated, that well adapted and timely nutrition services can help to limit the costs of health services, by reducing the number of days spent in hospital, prescriptions and medical examinations and by delaying or even avoiding admission to an institution.

Now, let us talk briefly about cardiovascular diseases, the main cause of death in Quebec. These insidious diseases develop throughout a period of at least 20 years and are linked to our lifestyles.

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Risk factors on which we can have some kind of influence are hypercholesterolemia, high blood pressure, smoking and an inactive lifestyle. A single one of these factors doubles the risk of disease, two of these factors quadruple it and three multiply it by eight.

Strokes are the main causes of brain damage among adults. This alarming trend can be altered.

In 1995, the Massachusetts dietetic association released a study that showed that nutrition is the most effective and least expensive initial approach to the treatment of patients with low or moderate hypercholesterolemia.

According to another American study carried out in 1987 among patients with high blood pressure who were taking hypotensive drugs, in 50% to 69% of all cases, nutrition can replace hypotensive drugs during the first year of treatment.

[English]

In conclusion, my purpose today is not to convince members of the great value of the services provided by this group of professionals. We are all convinced of that value. In practice, however, this group whose national association has over 5,000 members, over 90% of them women, is not recognized by the Canada Health Act.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Wanuskewin, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the way in which the bill underscores the importance of nutrition services for Canadians. Studies have shown beyond any shadow of doubt that a proper diet is very crucial to the healing process. It also provides a needed preventive measure against illness.

Reformers and I are definitely in support of preventive and holistic measures. I endorse the way in which the bill constitutes a vote of confidence in Canada's dietitians who are skilled professionals and who serve the Canadian public well.

However I cannot support the bill for a few reasons. First, it is because I am not convinced and have not been convinced by the member's speech that it merely extends gracious recognition to dietitians. Rather it seems to put dietitians on a par with physicians as far as their ability to invoice the government directly is concerned.

It would appear that the bill will have the effect of creating a massive increase in expenditures due to the inclusion of nutrition services in the Canada Health Act. The summary of the bill shows us that the bill's purpose is to include nutrition services in the definition of insured health services. In fact they are already covered when a physician refers a patient to a dietitian.

It occurs to me that there has to be something more about the bill that I am not fully aware of to this point. If this is only about affirming health care providers, why not include physiotherapy, optometry, chiropractic services and all dentistry and not just surgical-dental services as the Canada Health Act now provides?

• (1750)

Given my concern I cannot support the bill because it fails to reckon with the economic forces at play in our country right now in relation to the budget. We have had a \$7 billion shortfall from the Liberal government during the course of the last term in health and education. It fails to reckon with what is going on with medicare in our country at this time.

The Reform Party strongly supports the public funding of medicare as an essential, comprehensive, universally accessible national health service publicly funded and portable across the country.

Reformers also know that supporting such a program requires a great deal of funding. In order for that to happen across the country, the funding needs to be there. As I said before, funding of late has been insufficient to meet the needs of Canadians because of some of the cuts that have occurred over the course of the last number of years, expressly to the tune of some \$7 billion for health and education.

We must be sober and acknowledge that the context of our debate today is a widely acknowledged crisis in health care funding. It is in this context that we need to ask a question. Can we afford to pay the additional costs that would be associated with adding nutritional services to the Canada Health Act? I would say that the answer at this point is no.

I also cannot support the bill because it further complicates an already existing strained, tense relationship at times between federal and provincial governments justifiably upset with being short-changed in respect to provincial health dollars.

Provincial health ministers are not waiting with bated breath for decrees from the House requiring additional expenditures. The provinces will simply not ask how high when Ottawa issues the command to jump. Nor will they ask how many when Ottawa issues the command to make bricks out of straw.

National standards will be meaningful and well received by the provinces only if they are backed by the funds needed to meet those standards, which is not currently the case.

A few quick phone calls I made this afternoon divulged to me another concern of mine, that there has not been a consultation process across the country. There has been no consultation with deputy ministers, health ministers and other key stakeholders.

It would be presumptuous for us in Ottawa to tell the provinces what their priorities in spending should be. There is no justification for fast tracking this through and giving it precedence over other health care services that are also interested in having more money to work with.

In some of the health districts in Saskatoon their concerns revolve around MRIs and keeping beds open since 70 beds will be closed in the Regina District Health for two weeks over Christmas-

time. Those people are more concerned about the shortfall of funding in those areas.

We have big concerns in other areas. Why would we add another area when there are big concerns and shortfalls in other areas that need to be shored up?

I recall a story from my province within the last couple of weeks of a 79 year old woman from Coronach, Saskatchewan, who had to wait six days to have a hip pinned. Her life was endangered because of the policies of the government in terms of shortfall in funding. I am sure that she and her general practitioner would tell us that there is need for extra funding in other areas before we add more areas, which is the implication of the bill.

For these and other reasons that we do not have time to get into I oppose the bill as it stands. I would be open to further discussion in the future with the member opposite about the intent of the bill.

[Translation]

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to say a few words in support of Bill C-202, introduced by my colleague who is a physician and the hon. member for Pierrefonds—Dollard, and seconded by the hon. member for Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, whose riding is just beside mine.

The Bloc Québécois has always been in favour of measures aimed at improving the health of the population. However, we always insisted on respecting the jurisdiction of Quebec and other Canadian provinces in the area of health.

Nutrition services can be of great help to Quebeckers and Canadians. Whether they work at the community level, in food services management, in education or in clinical practice, nutrition professionals help the population to better balance their food intake, hence their health in general.

• (1755)

In the present context of tremendous pressure due to budget cuts imposed by the Liberals since they came to power, it is clear that any measure aimed at improving the health of Quebeckers and Canadians can only be welcomed. When people are in better health—something good eating habits can only promote—they are less likely to become frequent users of health services; and this relieves pressure on the system and reduce costs in general.

That having been said, Bill C-202 is not without raising a few questions. The Canada Health Act, which would be amended by Bill C-202, sets out the conditions for the payment of the amounts provided under the 1977 Established Programs Financing Act, now

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part of the notorious Canada social transfer, for insured health services and related services.

As you know, the Bloc Québécois has always taken a very firm and very clear position on health: the administration of health care is a provincial matter. It is necessary to be vigilant and ensure that a province that does not wish to comply with this measure or that wishes to introduce a similar service is compensated.

We must therefore be clear. Nutrition services cannot help but have a positive impact on the health of the general public. And if this is done with respect for the respective jurisdictions of each level of government, a point that has yet to be thrashed out, broadening access to nutrition services will help thousands of Quebeckers and Canadians to achieve a better lifestyle, better nutrition and, therefore, better health.

[English]

Ms. Angela Vautour (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, NDP): Madam Speaker, Canada's New Democratic Party supports the concept and believes the idea could be implemented with political will but without opening up the Canada Health Act.

Health care is about much more than hospitals and doctors. That is why the NDP has been standing in the House talking about issues like jobs, poverty, education for our young people and the social safety net.

About 1.4 million children live in poverty in Canada. Over 50% of aboriginal children both on and off reserve are living in poverty. The National Forum on Health says people who have been unemployed for any significant amount of time tend to die prematurely. That is why we continue to raise in the House daily the issues of employment and employment support programs like EI.

Canada's NDP has been a long time advocate for expanding medicare. We have been advocating for a national pharmacare program to include coverage of prescription drugs under the public insurance system. Liberal cuts to federal transfers for health have led many provinces to de-list drugs and impose increased user fees. These cuts hit poor Canadians and seniors hardest. A national pharmacare program would reverse this trend.

Unfortunately the Liberal promise on pharmacare rings hollow. We have had no assurances that Liberals intend to follow through on their election rhetoric.

Canada's NDP has also advocated change in the area of home care. A national home care program would encourage innovation in the area of health care and help provinces deal with the changing roles of hospitals and doctors. The huge burden placed on women in the home, the ones who are primarily left to care for patients, would be reduced.

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Canada's NDP will continue to fight for better health care. We will fight to stop the \$1.2 billion cut in federal Liberal health transfers this year. We will fight for programs to relieve poverty and for jobs.

• (1800)

We appreciate the spirit of this motion. This House can rest assured that Canada's NDP will be there fighting for better health care for Canadians, for pharmacare and for home care.

[Translation]

I think it is important to take a look at what is happening in health care. Our situation in New Brunswick is very critical, and I think it is very important to talk about it, because every day New Brunswick's newspapers carry articles about our seniors in nursing homes. Because of the Liberals' cuts to the provinces, these are no place for our seniors.

My mother would not go into one of these homes, that is for sure. There are some frightening stories in New Brunswick today; there are a number of investigations taking place into health care in the province. Why? There are two reasons: health care cuts, and cuts in provincial transfer payments. In addition, our provincial Liberal government would rather put money elsewhere than in health care.

I was also very surprised at the comments by the Liberal member when he said he was concerned about health care for women. I would like to see him just as concerned about the problem of pay equity for women

[English]

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on this private member's Bill C-202, an act to amend the Canada Health Act. I compliment my colleagues for the initiative.

However, I want to address today the difficulty of reconciling the proposed amendment with the fundamental purpose and the intent of the Canada Health Act.

Let me say at the outset that I, and I think all other members of my party, are sympathetic to the concerns raised in the bill. Although the promotion of better nutrition is important, unfortunately the Canada Health Act, in my opinion, is the wrong instrument to achieve this objective. I hope to illustrate that over the course of this intervention.

The Canada Health Act sets out the broad principles under which provincial plans are expected to operate. The act establishes certain criteria that provincial plans must meet in order to qualify for their full share of the federal health care transfer payments. Federal transfer payments may be reduced or withheld if a province does not meet the criteria and the conditions of the act.

[Translation]

These criteria are the cornerstones of Canada's health care system. They are: reasonable access to medically required services, unimpeded by charges at point of service or other barriers; second, comprehensive coverage for medically required services; third, universality of insured coverage for all provincial residents on equal terms and conditions; fourth, portability of benefits within Canada and abroad; and finally, public administration of the health insurance plan on a non-profit basis.

[English]

In addition to the above criteria, the conditions of the act require that the provinces provide information as required by the federal minister and that they also give appropriate recognition to federal contributions toward health care services in order to qualify for federal cash contributions.

The act also discourages the application of extra billing or user charges through the automatic dollar for dollar reductions or withholding of federal cash contributions to a province or territory which permits such direct charges to patients. In fact, the threat that user charges and extra billing would erode accessibility to needed medical care was a major impetus in the development of the act.

The Canada Health Act was enacted to protect the fundamental principles of our publicly financed, comprehensive, portable, universally accessible health insurance system. I think everybody in this House would agree that these are laudable objectives.

[Translation]

Our system of national health insurance, or medicare, as it is popularly known, is close to the hearts of Canadians and something too precious to tamper with for no valid reason.

Canadians support the five principles and feel that medicare is a defining feature of Canada. Time and time again, polls demonstrate high public support for medicare.

[English]

The amendments presented by my hon. colleague and friend, if adopted, would affect the definition of insured services under the act.

• (1805)

In short, this means that if Bill C-202 is passed by this House the provinces and territories would be required to provide on an insured basis to all of their residents nutrition services. This is not the purpose of the Canada Health Act.

The purpose of the Canada Health Act is to ensure that Canadians have access to medically necessary hospital and physician services without financial or other impediments. Moreover, Canada

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Health Act principles deal with the organization and delivery of health care services on the level of provincial and territorial plans.

The addition of nutrition services to section 2 of the act would be intrusive and interfere with the provincial-territorial responsibility for health services management.

Clearly the Canada Health Act is not the proper place to regulate matters such as nutrition services which properly fall under provincial jurisdiction and are better handled at this level. Even if the Canada Health Act were the appropriate place for such a provision it would probably not achieve its objective.

The act places conditions on payments to the provinces and territories and can reduce or withhold transfers if these are not met. It cannot dictate to a province or territory how to run its health care plan much less its institutions.

The federal government recognizes that provinces and territories have the primary responsibility for the organization and delivery of health care services and that they require sufficient flexibility to operate and administer their health care insurance plans in accordance with their specific needs and institutions.

[Translation]

This is why the flexibility inherent in the Canada Health Act has always been one of its strengths. Since the enactment of the Act in 1984, the federal government has always attempted to work with the provinces in order to make the act a viable piece of legislation. It could be dangerous to tamper with the provisions of the Act when they have received such wholehearted support.

If we want medicare to survive, we must be vigilant against blatant threats such as user charges.

[English]

I want to come back to the point that while nutrition is a serious concern the Canada Health Act is not the appropriate place in which to address this issue. As it stands now the Canada Health Act does not require that the services of nutritionists be provided on an insured basis. It does not forbid provinces and territories from providing coverage for these services as well.

For the federal government the decision to provide nutrition services as part of a package of insured health services should be left to the provinces and to the territories. This does not mean that the federal government has no interest in the nutrition issue. Quite the contrary. The federal Department of Health has always been involved in the promotion of good nutrition in Canada.

In 1992 Health Canada released Canada's food guide to healthy eating. The guide provides Canadians with information on establishing healthy eating patterns through the daily selection of foods. To date, and this will be of interest to colleagues in the House, over

21 million copies of the guide materials have been distributed. That means that every man, woman and child capable of reading in this country has a copy in his or her possession potentially.

The food guide then is currently serving as the basis for a wide variety of nutrition initiatives across Canada implemented by a broad range of partners including provincial, territorial and municipal governments as well as non-governmental organizations, consumer groups, the private sector and school boards.

The most recent national population health survey shows that more and more Canadians are taking steps to improve the quality of their nutrition. This is encouraging. I believe that it is important that we continue to support the efforts that promote the importance of good nutrition.

The proposal put forward by my hon. colleague and friend is very commendable.

• (1810)

However, it is in my opinion problematic in that it raises the problems I have outlined. That is why I cannot support the bill, regrettably.

Normally I would speak for much longer, but I see that my colleague wants to address the issue even further. Therefore I will relinquish my position now.

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I also rise to speak on the subject of private member's Bill C-202, an act to amend the Canada Health Act.

Given the respective roles and responsibilities of the federal and provincial territorial governments in the area of health care, I believe that amending the Canada Health Act may not be the best approach to address the concern of our hon. colleague.

[Translation]

As you are already aware, under the Canadian Constitution, the responsibility for health care lies with the provinces and territories. In other words, the provinces and territories are responsible for administering and delivering the health care that is available to Canadians.

[English]

This means that the provinces and the territories act as planners, managers and administrators of their own health care systems. In practical terms, this includes negotiation of budgets with hospitals, approval of capital plans and negotiation of fee agreements with medical associations.

The federal government, for its part by law, is responsible for the promotion and preservation of the health of all Canadians. Health Canada is responsible for bringing together parties on health issues of national and interprovincial concern.

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The federal government also assumes the responsibility for setting national policies and for providing health care services to specific groups such as treaty Indians as well as Inuit. It is appropriate when describing federal responsibilities in health care to note what the federal government cannot do.

It cannot interfere in provincial territorial responsibilities as defined under our Constitution, nor can it be seen to be infringing on these responsibilities.

Bill C-202 attempts to require provinces and territories to provide nutrition service on an insured basis. As it is the provinces and territories that are responsible for matters dealing with the delivery of health services, to require that nutrition services be added to the list of insured health services would be perceived as an unacceptable intrusion on the provincial territorial responsibilities under our Constitution.

The federal government cannot and should not act unilaterally in an area of provincial jurisdiction. Any decision to extend the scope of the Canada Health Act requires extensive consultation and support from the provinces.

In 1984 concerns over hospital user fees and extra billing by physicians led to the passage of the Canada Health Act. This was achieved with all-party support. The federal government's aim in passing the Canada Health Act was to reaffirm its commitment to the original guiding principles expressed in the earlier legislation.

It was also to provide a mechanism to promote the provinces' and territories' compliance with the act's criteria, conditions and extra billing and user charge provisions.

[Translation]

In short, the purpose of the Canada Health Act is to allow Canadians reasonable access to necessary prepaid health services.

[English]

The provinces and territories have retained the responsibility of administering their health insurance plans under the Canada Health Act and for managing their respective systems. The management of health care personnel and related issues, such as the one proposed in Bill C-202, is also their responsibility.

The criteria of the Canada Health Act are known to most Canadians and regarded as the defining principles of medicare. The principles of public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability and accessibility are valued and cherished by Canadians who will not accept changes to them.

Poll after poll indicates great public support for these national principles. Even while discussions of health care reform are taking place, the values which are reflected in each of these principles are not being debated.

• (1815)

Provincial and territorial ministers of health share this support. We know that Canada's health care system needs to be modernized to ensure that all Canadians continue to have access to needed health services. This is of particular importance as delivery methods, as well as venues, change over time. However, governments at all levels have articulated their support for the five principles of the Canada Health Act.

Regardless of the reforms currently taking place, the principles of the Canada Health Act remain the cornerstone of our health care system.

[Translation]

I would like to reiterate that the provinces and territories may, at their discretion, provide insured services other than those covered by the Canada Health Act. Nutrition services may be offered as complementary health services.

[English]

Although the objectives of Bill C-202 have merit, to pass this bill would disrupt the historical distinction and balance between federal and provincial jurisdiction. It would infringe on the long-standing federal and provincial territorial relationship that has facilitated the creation of a health care system that is widely cherished by the Canadian public.

For this reason, although I recognize the value of nutritionists across Canada, this bill cannot be supported by the federal government.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): We have about a dozen minutes left. Does the hon. member for Pontiac—Gatineau—Labbelle wish to take advantage of his five minute prerogative?

Mr. Robert Bertrand: Madam Speaker, it will not take me five minutes.

I thank all of my colleagues for their support and I would like to seek the unanimous consent of the House on the following motion:

I move:

That Bill C-202, an Act to amend the Canada Health Act (nutrition services), be designated as votable.

I present this motion in the interest of all Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The period for Private Members' Business has now expired and the item is dropped from the *Order Paper*.

Adjournment Debate

I would like to seek the unanimous consent of the House to move on to deliberations on the motion to adjourn. Since it is not yet 6.30 p.m., is it agreed to call it 6.30 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the adjournment debate. On October 10, I asked the Minister of Human Resources Development a question concerning the procedure for setting the criteria to determine the amount of the surplus in the employment insurance fund.

• (1820)

The answer the minister gave at the time was somewhat incomplete, and I would like him or his representative to clarify this answer for me.

I would like to remind the hon. members that the auditor general finally came to the same conclusions as the people who rallied against employment insurance reform in my riding, in Rivière-du-Loup, l'Isle-Verte or Saint-Antonin. While the terminology may be different, he said essentially the same thing.

These people asked, and so did the auditor general, how the employment insurance surplus is managed. We finance the EI fund by paying premiums, but we have no control over it. We do not know exactly how this works, what the criteria are and how large the surplus will be allowed to get.

The government is keeping our money in a separate account. The auditor asked the very same question. He suggested that there be a separate employment insurance account so that we will know if the premiums paid by employers and employees to secure an income for themselves between jobs is actually used for that purpose or for some other purpose, such as making up the government's deficit.

We all agree on the need to reduce the deficit, but we must realize that people are putting money into the EI fund not to reduce the deficit but to ensure workers have a decent income while they undergo training for a new job. There is nothing about that in the existing policy, and the auditor general backed this position in his report.

The greatest concern for the public—and the auditor general echoed this concern after realizing in his analysis that this was not being done—is to determine how the reserve fund amount is set. The employment insurance surplus is approximately \$12 billion. We started off with a \$6 billion deficit two years ago and will end up with a \$12 billion or \$13 billion surplus by December 31, 1997. This means that over a two-year period, the government will have taken between \$18 billion and \$19 billion from employers and employees to manage a fund, and we do not even know how the amount of the reserve will be determined.

Will the surplus have to be \$6 billion, \$8 billion, \$10 billion or \$12 billion? Will it be \$20 billion, \$22 billion or \$25 billion in a year? There are no set criteria and this is very surprising, because the immigration board is supposed to do this on the advice of the governor in council. One can see a pattern developing.

On the one hand, the Minister of Finance will, of course, want to reduce the deficit. This means recovering as much money as possible, eventually by reducing the number of weeks during which people can draw benefits, while increasing the number of weeks required to become eligible. On the other hand, the Minister of Human Resources Development must ask himself whether there will be an adequate level of income for those who collect employment insurance benefits.

Will the program provide seasonal workers with a sufficient income by the end of the year? Will there be enough money for training? All these questions remain unanswered for the time being. We do not really know how the amount in the reserve will be determined. We do not know how the government will make rational choices.

Since we are in the pre-budget consultation period, this should be a priority. The government must tell us what will be an acceptable surplus for the coming year.

Mr. Bernard Patry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first I want to remind the hon. member that, as the Minister of Human Resources Development recently pointed out, the last federal budget and the main estimates already contain a great deal of information on the employment insurance fund.

This being said, there is no great mystery about the reserve in the employment insurance fund. A reserve is necessary because it allows us to set more stable contribution rates throughout the economic cycle, so that we do not have to increase these rates should a recession occur. It also helps us ensure there is enough money to pay the benefits when these benefits are most needed.

Let us take a look at what happened during the last recession. Within a period of two years, the employment insurance fund went from a surplus of \$2 billion to a deficit of \$6 billion, and the government had to increase contributions by 30% at a time when it

Adjournment Debate

was already difficult to create jobs. Given these facts, the government believes it is wise to have a reserve in the employment insurance fund.

• (1825)

The reserve itself can vary at any given time. It goes up and down with the payment of benefits. Right now, it is estimated to contain about \$12 billion. However, this amount is going to be reviewed and the government will soon announce its decision in this regard.

Let us remember that the money is held in the account against future expenditures that could be required under the program. As for the interest, it is credited to the employment insurance account. As indicated in the Main Estimates for 1997-98, the interest this year was \$345 million.

The employment insurance premiums paid by workers and employers make it possible to offer income protection, which is very important for those who unexpectedly lose their jobs. But best of all, employment insurance helps the unemployed to obtain stable jobs as quickly as possible. That is why—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. The hon. member for Scarborough East.

[English]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I asked the question in the House of the Minister of Foreign Affairs concerning the legislation passed by the Russian parliament disenfranchising religious minorities. It is an affront to those who believe in religious freedom, democratic values and human rights.

To his credit, the minister raised the issue with representatives of the Russian government and expressed Canada's dismay at the passage of the legislation. Coincidentally, the Prime Minister was in Russia on that very same day trying to get President Yeltsin to sign on for the land mine treaty and to stand up for the legal rights for Canadian investors in Russia.

News reports disclose a potential \$70 million loss on a Canadian investment despite international and Russian judgments in favour of the Canadian investors. News reports also disclose the climate of fear and intimidation to the Canadian employees and investors of that company.

Despite the Prime Minister's intervention, President Yeltsin had the nerve to complain that Canada was not investing enough.

Is there a connection between the abuse of religious minority rights and the abuse of investors' legal rights? I would submit that the two are inextricably linked. Religious minority rights in particular but human rights in general are the canary in the mine shaft.

A country which abuses its religious minority rights will abuse other legal rights as well. Abuse of religious minority rights and abuse of other legal rights go together.

When Canadians contemplate investments in countries which routinely abuse minority rights, they put their investments at risk. It is part of the bottom line and should be part of the government's advice to Canadian companies contemplating investments in countries whose human rights' records are somewhat dismal. It is as important a consideration as dollar fluctuations, interest rates and workforce skills. Losing one's investments is the most significant cost of doing business.

We need to move to the protection of religious and human rights from the fringe agenda to the concerned and make it part of the business agenda. The only language that Russia and other nations that abuse religious minority rights understand is money. If the investment money dries up, there may just be an incentive to provide a legal framework for the protection of those citizens and the international investors which will lead to prosperity and protection for all.

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs said in the House on October 20, we have expressed our concerns about Russia's new religion legislation consistently and at the highest level.

The Prime Minister has just spent five days in Russia. He spoke about the new religion legislation with President Yeltsin, Prime Minister Chernomyrdin, the chairman of the Federation Council and the speaker of the Duma Parliament. He told each one of them that the legislation appears to discriminate against certain religions and that it is sending a negative message internationally about Russia's democratic reform efforts.

He reminded the Russian political leaders of Russia's international obligations as a member of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the OSCE, and of the Council of Europe and of the United Nations. He cited, in particular, the UN Commission on Human Rights' resolution 53 on religious intolerance.

This is not all. The Minister of Foreign Affairs raised the issue with Russian Foreign Minister Primakov during the latter's visit to Ottawa on September 29 and 30. In July we expressed our concern about the proposed legislation at the OSCE meetings. The Canadian Ambassador to Russia took up the issue with the Russian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

• (1830)

In spite of our expressed concerns and those of many other countries the law has been passed. The Kremlin has given assurances that minority confessions will not be adversely affected.

Adjournment Debate

This gives us some margin for further interventions. We have advised the Russians that we will continue to monitor implementation of the law very closely.

Many Canadian citizens and religious organizations in Canada are watching this issue. We will continue to provide updates to the House on appropriate occasions.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.31 p.m.)

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