CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 135 • NUMBER 022 • 1st SESSION • 36th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, October 28, 1997

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 28, 1997

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1005)

[*English*]

CANADA HEALTH ACT

Mr. Jim Gouk (West Kootenay—Okanagan, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-267, an act to amend the Canada Health Act (conditions for contributions).

He said: Mr. Speaker, my bill is actually a notification protocol for emergency response workers who come in contact with infectious diseases. These people put their lives on the line for us when attending accidents. If they come into contact with an infectious disease, no protocol allows them to be notified because of a concern for the patient's confidentiality.

My bill is designed to provide that protocol while still providing the confidentiality necessary. It uses the vehicle of the Canada Health Act to initiate the program. Once initiated it would not require further pressure, as it were, from the Canada Health Act.

This bill was previously introduced by the NDP in a previous Parliament as well as by myself in the last Parliament. It was supported obviously by us and by them, and by the Liberal government when it sat as the official opposition prior to 1993. I hope all members will co-operate in the swift passage of this bill as it is critical for those who are defending our needs.

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

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The bill just introduced by the member for West Kootenay—Okanagan is critically urgent for emergency response workers. They put their lives on the line to protect Canadian citizens. They happen to be meeting in Ottawa this week.

As the member mentioned, his bill was previously introduced by the NDP. It was supported by the Liberals when they were in opposition. Therefore I request that you seek the unanimous consent of the House that his bill be adopted at second reading and sent to the Standing Committee on Health.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the proposal of the hon. member?

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: There is not unanimous consent.

* * *

PETITIONS

FAMILY LAW

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to introduce to the House a petition presented by some 500 petitioners that request Parliament to amend the law to require courts not to be biased against fathers when granting custody, to give equal access to both parents and to give access to grandparents.

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present. These petitions call for a public inquiry of Ipperwash.

The petitioners request of the House of Commons of Canada that a full public inquiry be held into the events surrounding the fatal shooting of Dudley George on September 6, 1995 to eliminate all misconceptions held by and about governments, the OPP and the Stony Point people.

* * *

● (1010)

[*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*]

CANADA-YUKON OIL AND GAS ACCORD IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Hon. David Kilgour (for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) moved that Bill C-8, an act respecting an accord between the Governments of Canada and the Yukon Territory relating to the administration and control of and legislative jurisdiction in respect of oil and gas, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Bernard Patry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the House on Bill C-8, the Canada-Yukon oil and gas accord implementation act.

I am extremely pleased to be introducing to the House yet another bill which reflects the changing political circumstances in Yukon. I know that my hon. colleagues will want to join me in supporting and applauding the territorial government's ambition to take a new provincial-type responsibility at this time.

These are exciting times in Yukon, which is in the midst of a number of historic developments. The 35th Parliament dealt with land claims and self-government legislation for Yukon's First Nations. We also addressed the establishment, through separate legislation, of the Yukon Surface Rights Board.

Today I am asking hon. members to support the transfer to the Yukon government of the administration and controls of onshore oil and gas resources. I am also proposing through Bill C-8 that the territorial government be granted the authority to legislate in regard to these resources. In other words, I am seeking the support of the House to move the devolution process forward another step in Yukon.

[*Translation*]

The first steps of this transfer to the Yukon Territory were taken in the 1980s. The present government made a commitment to continue implementation in a planned and orderly manner and without delay.

Prime Minister Chrétien confirmed this course of action and the government's desire to promote political development in the North in his speech to the Northwest Territories legislative assembly in November 1993.

The people of the Yukon including the Yukon's First Nations fully support the transfer of responsibilities and the passing of the bill.

The transfer process does not mean that the federal government is trying to abdicate its responsibilities. Instead it is the expression of the real and justified desire of the northern people to take greater control of their lives. It is a matter therefore of transferring responsibilities to the appropriate authorities and of ensuring that decisions are made locally in the best interest of those concerned.

For the people of the Yukon, the transfer of responsibility for natural resources is vital to their political development. They are convinced that resource development will provide the basis for a strong and healthy economy in the territories through to the 21st century.

The Yukon's gas and oil resources are for the most part as yet undeveloped, although not for lack of interest. Uncertainty as to land and resource ownership has slowed the development of the Yukon for over 20 years. With the passing of the Yukon land claims legislation in 1994, negotiations currently under way with the Yukon First Nations and the settlement of pending territorial claims in the near future will get oil and gas exploration activities going once again.

[*English*]

Bill C-8 is being brought forward under the terms of the Canada-Yukon oil and gas accord which was signed in May 1993. Under this accord the federal government agreed to introduce legislation to give the territorial government the additional legislative powers necessary to manage and administer onshore oil and gas resources. This will be accomplished through amendments to the Yukon Act as set out in Bill C-8.

On the date of transfer the federal government will also pay to Yukon the moneys it collected in petroleum revenues from onshore sources in Yukon. Once the transfer is completed Yukon will receive an annual revenue of approximately $1.5 million from the Kotaneelee project.

• (1015)

I assure hon. members that no new federal money will be required to support this transfer process. Once the transfer of responsibilities and funding is completed, the federal government will no longer be directly involved in managing onshore oil and gas resources in Yukon. It will be done at the territorial level.

However, the offshore areas will continue to be under the jurisdiction of the federal government and the federal regime will continue to apply.

Territorial legislation will be passed which will establish a new regime for managing and regulating oil and gas activities. The legislation will address exploration, development, conservation, environmental and safety issues, as well as the collection of resource revenues. The replacement of federal legislation by territorial legislation will take place simultaneously with the transfer of administration of oil and gas.

I also assure hon. members that the transfer of these legislative powers to Yukon will not affect the ability of the Government of Canada to fulfil its mandate in any area of federal responsibility. It will not diminish our authority with respect to international affairs, national security, the environment, the resolution and implementation of land claims, or the creation of national parks.

[*Translation*]

It is also important to keep in mind that the Government of Canada will also have the power to resume responsibility for the administration and monitoring of gas and oil operations on all of the lands, with a view to settling aboriginal land claims. This clause will therefore guarantee Yukon First Nations the possibility of selecting underground lands.

In addition, the supplementary rights assigned to the territories will not in any way reduce the authority of the National Energy Board over pipelines.

Subsequent to the transfer of legislative powers to the Yukon, Yukon First Nations subject to settlements already in effect will receive a portion of the royalties collected by the Government of the Yukon Territory, as set out in the land claims agreements.

Bill C-8 will allow the Government of the Yukon Territory to exercise its jurisdiction over onshore gas and oil. The territorial government will not obtain greater powers than are given to the provinces under section 92(*a*) of the British North America Act of 1867.

In addition, no party to this agreement or this legislation shall modify aboriginal rights or rights arising out of existing treaties protected under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

This is of major importance to the Yukon First Nations. These provisions ensure that Bill C-8 cannot and will not undermine the advantages the Yukon First Nations have obtained through agreements on land claims and self-government.

In fact, since the bill was presented during the 35th Parliament, further consultations have been held with the First Nations concerned. The Yukon Council of First Nations has indicated its support of the bill.

[*English*]

The Yukon government will be expected to manage oil and gas in a manner that serves the interests of all Yukoners including aboriginal people. I note that the Yukon government is also working closely with the first nations on the matter.

Hon. members should also be aware that Bill C-8 has strong support from the oil and gas industry.

This transfer is clearly in the best interests of the governments of Canada and Yukon as well as individual Yukoners. It is fully consistent with the devolution initiatives taken by previous governments.

With that in mind I urge my hon. colleagues to support Bill C-8 so that the devolution process can move forward and Yukon can continue to evolve politically and administratively.

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is kind of a rush, catch-up type of day. I am sure the Speaker knows all about that.

• (1020)

It is a pleasure to be here this morning to speak to Bill C-8. Bill C-8 has been kicking around basically off and on for quite a while. It is an act respecting the Canada-Yukon Oil and Gas Accord Implementation Act. The bill reflects the government's recognition of the important role of oil and gas exploration in the northern territories.

The territories are the site of approximately a quarter of Canada's remaining discovered petroleum and approximately a half of Canada's estimated potential.

Oil and gas exploration and development is an important key to the future economic well-being of the territories. We are already seeing a wide range of possible benefits from such mineral discoveries as the BHP Diamond Mines. I have no doubt that as settlement in the north increases and infrastructure expands we will see an ever increasing benefit to the north from natural resource developments of all sorts.

While the legislation before us today is important to the economic future of Yukon, it is also in accordance with the Reform Party position on two very important issues. First, the Reform Party of Canada strongly supports transferring control of natural resources to the provinces. The legislation calls for the devolution of provincial-like powers to the Yukon territory by transferring the administrative and legislative control over oil and gas to the Yukon government.

The federal government is demonstrating its commitment to political devolution to the Yukon territory. Reform supports increased provincial or territorial control of natural resources and decreased federal control over natural resources including control over the oil and gas industry.

Second, the bill concurs with Reform's belief in the equality of all provinces. While Reform supports decreased powers on the federal level it also supports increased powers for the Yukon government. The powers held by the territory should not exceed those held by any of the provinces. The bill does not transfer greater powers than those held by the provinces under section 92,

92(a) and 95 of the Constitution Act, 1867. As was stated in the unity debate, equality between provinces is absolutely essential to the equal treatment of all Canadians.

While Reformers support the legislation we also have some concerns. In recognition of the unique situation in the north the legislation respects aboriginal land claims and settlement rights. The legislation does not diminish aboriginal treaty rights under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. It is consistent with the legislation concerning wildlife, the environment and land management regimes under this section.

The legislation also states that any inconsistencies will be resolved in favour of legislation implementing the treaties. All these provisions are important to the acceptability of the legislation to aboriginals in the Yukon territory.

The concerns I speak of are with regard to the federal government's retention of the right to reclaim control of land to settle aboriginal land claims. This provision is intended to protect the rights of first nations still in negotiations with the government. However investors may be slow to undertake exploration development projects until land claims are resolved.

This is not to suggest that the provision should be removed, but the government must develop and adhere to a time line for negotiations so that exploration and development are not continually delayed.

● (1025)

It was previously anticipated that negotiations with all Yukon first nations would have concluded by February 1997. The anticipated date was then extended to July 1997. However, as of September 19, 1997 only half of the Yukon first nations had reached agreements while the remaining seven were still in negotiations.

Therefore I urge the government to resolve land claims as quickly as possible so that potential investors can confidently proceed with oil and gas development in the Yukon territory with all the benefits for those who live nearby.

There are also concerns regarding the government's retention of the right to reclaim lands and to take certain actions in the event of a sudden oil supply shortfall. This provision complies with Canada's international obligations as outlined in the International Energy Agency oil sharing agreement. The same international obligations were responsible for the introduction and implementation of the national energy program.

Westerners need not be reminded of the disastrous impact the national energy program had on Alberta's economy during the so-called energy crisis. Because of the very nature of the north with its relatively limited opportunities to obtain income from manufacturing, for example, especially due to difficulties in transportation and lack of infrastructure to support the kinds of development taken for granted in the southern part of Canada, Yukon is extremely dependent on natural resource jobs and revenues. It will therefore suffer even greater hardship than Alberta did should the federal government deem it necessary to implement controls like those used during the last energy crisis.

There must be some commitment by the government to give much more serious consideration to the impact of its actions on the Yukon territory, on the Yukon economy and on the social and economic well-being of the Yukon people should there be an oil supply shortfall or energy crisis.

In short, Ottawa must learn by its errors with Alberta and not treat any part of Canada ever again with such cruel indifference.

The legislation affecting Yukon in this respect should set the precedent for other provinces resulting in amendments to existing legislation that will protect all provinces from economic disasters like that brought upon Alberta under the national energy program.

The power gained by Yukon through the legislation is economic. Not only will the Yukon government have jurisdiction over exploration, development, conservation and management of oil and gas but also over resource revenues. The legislation allows the territory to raise revenues by any mode or system of taxation in respect of oil and gas in the territory. It also gives the territorial government control over the export of gas and oil from the territory.

The bill will reduce the economic dependence of the Yukon territory on the federal government and allow it to develop its own economy as the more successful provinces have already done. Others such as Newfoundland and Labrador are still struggling to get out from under Ottawa's thumb and profit from their own natural resources.

However the legislation keeps the federal government too involved. The federal government will continue to collect resource royalties on annual resource revenues exceeding the first $3 million.

Reform opposes federal collection of resource royalties from resource industries in any province but especially those in the provinces and territories where resource revenues are the foundation of the economy.

Despite those concerns, however, all interested parties have expressed support for the legislation. During the summer of 1996 I had the great opportunity to travel extensively in Yukon with my wife. While I was there I spoke with a broad section of Yukon residents. There were some real concerns over the legislation basically based on being underneath the federal wing for so long and on what would happen when some of the powers were transferred to the people of the Yukon territory.

• (1030)

While these concerns were there and expressed in great detail, there was also great anticipation by people looking for the new opportunities that were to be gained from this piece of legislation, basically for their freedom from the red tape from Ottawa which they have been wrapped up in for so long. I appreciated that and I know where they are coming from. I can see where the opportunity now arises for these people to go further with their endeavours on their own.

The Canadian and Yukon governments have committed also to consult with aboriginal peoples on significant oil and gas decisions affecting traditional lands prior to the completion of land claims negotiations. Otherwise we might have in the Yukon a repeat of the situation at Voisey's Bay in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

There a mining company invested billions of dollars to acquire a site but every imaginable hurdle has been thrown in the path of that development. Hurdles are being thrown by the federal government, especially agreeing to delay development at Voisey's Bay while the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development spends a few more years, nobody knows how many more years, supposedly working to settle land claims which have been under negotiation for a generation.

I have to wonder when I see how the federal government gets itself involved in something like the Voisey's Bay situation. We have the potential of between 3,000 and 5,000 jobs in a section of Canada that desperately needs those jobs. We all know that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador desperately want to go to work, yet the federal government is basically stopping them from doing so. I have to wonder at the power we allow our governments to hold in certain areas such as this one.

We know that Newfoundland and Labrador is supposedly one of the poorer provinces in Canada. Yet it has the chance right now of probably becoming the Alberta of the east with the Voisey's Bay project. And here we sit holding up maybe one of the greatest developments in the world at this point in time. I have to question the wisdom of this government on that issue.

Sometimes it seems there are departments opposing northern development rather than working to assist northern development. In that case I am particularly pleased to see the federal government stepping back and turning oil and gas exploration and development over to the local level of government closest to the situation and best able to deal with it, namely the territorial government.

We all know beyond a shadow of a doubt when we give people sitting 1,600 or 2,000 miles away from any given situation the power to make decisions on things that should be left to the provinces, the territories or the local governments, we seriously jeopardize Canadians' ability to further their lifestyles in this country.

This legislation respects the unique situation north of 60 without compromising the principle of equality. Most important, this act incorporates grassroots concerns and amendments. This legislation is part of a greater process that involves the devolution of control not only over oil and gas but over education, health care and economic development in general.

This transfer of power will give the Yukon people their proper voice in the way their lives are to be governed and greater power over the quality of their lives. Therefore Reform generally supports this legislation and recognizes it for what it is, a most important step in the political evolution of the Yukon territory.

I would like this House to study the concerns that we have in regard to this piece of legislation and to fully understand maybe finally that more power is not necessarily more beneficial when it is controlled in Ottawa as we are doing today in this House.

• (1035)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this being my maiden speech and in keeping with the practices of this House, I do not think it will come as a surprise to anybody if I start by thanking the constituents of my riding of Saint-Jean for putting their confidence in me once again. Although this was not an easy election for the Bloc Quebecois, I am buoyed by the fact I was elected with a 9,000-vote majority in Saint-Jean. So I want to take the opportunity, at the beginning of my first speech in this new Parliament, to thank the voters.

I now move on to the other end of the continent, more precisely the Yukon. We have before us today a bill respecting an accord between the governments of Canada and the Yukon Territory relating to the administration and control of and legislative jurisdiction in respect of oil and gas. This is indeed a bill to amend certain acts, including the Yukon Act, and conferring new legislative powers to the Yukon.

Speaking of ''conferring'', let us look at all the powers that will be devolved to the Yukon. Jurisdiction over all oil and gas operations will be transferred to the Government of the Yukon Territory, which will, among other things, administer and control the development of oil and gas resources. We realize that this region presumably has enormous potential. Some fields are already producing, but there are probably many more. In keeping with the agreement signed with the Yukon Territory, the federal government is now transferring this jurisdiction.

Regarding exploration, as I just said, this region of Canada is very likely to be immensely rich in oil and gas. So all responsibili-

ties with respect to exploration will also be transferred to the Government of the Yukon Territory.

As far as resource development, production and conservation are concerned, problems relating to economic development and the environment often crop up. I will come back to this later, because I had an opportunity to witness such problems during one of my trips to the Yukon in 1994. The Yukon government cannot take over the responsibility of managing and controlling oil and gas without also having power over the environmental preservation issue.

The responsibilities relating to management, exports, safety, revenue collection and the environment are all being transferred to the Yukon government which, in turn, will have to table legislation patterned on the laws that are in effect elsewhere.

Up to a point, one can understand Ottawa's attitude, which is always the same, namely that a policy must apply from coast to coast, in much the same way. The Yukon government was asked to draft legislation that will be patterned on what is being done elsewhere and that will not give powers exceeding those granted elsewhere. It is somewhat unfortunate. Such is this federal government's centralizing attitude. It is incapable of completely decentralizing and telling the other levels of government to do as they please; instead, it tells them it will decentralize but under certain conditions.

It is also important to look at the Yukon from a geographical perspective. Unlike the Reform member, I feel that those primarily concerned are the 14 aboriginal communities in the Yukon. I will describe them during my remarks and I will also talk about the status of negotiations, but it is important to look at the geographical location of the aboriginal communities in the Yukon, to find out who their neighbours are, to see whether agreements are also in the making over there, and so on.

The Inuvialuit forms the Yukon's northern border. People are always saying it is a big word, but it is in fact an Inuit word. As you know, there are four major Inuit regions in Canada. The Inuvialuit was the first region to be recognized in the self-government agreement. We then come to the Nunavut, which is its immediate neighbour, and to northern Quebec, where the Nunavik is located, before finally reaching another large Inuit region of Canada, northern Labrador. Self-government agreements are being negotiated for these regions.

The Inuvialuit agreement was signed in 1993. The Nunavut agreement was also signed, and an autonomous government will take over in that region on April 1, 1999. Negotiations are also under way in the Nunavik region. Unfortunately, in the case of Labrador, things are a bit stalled at the moment. I urge the government to speed up the process because they have some catching up to do.

• (1040)

In the northern part of the Yukon, in Inuvialuit, the Inuit have already signed self-government agreements. Further west, there is the border with the United States. Yukon borders on Alaska in the west. I wish to point out also that there are many Inuit in Alaska and that there is a circumpolar forum, which, by the way, I would like to acknowledge, and which includes not only the Inuit of Canada but also those of Russia, Siberia and Alaska.

To the east are the Northwest Territories. The Nunavut will begin a bit even further east, but right next to the Yukon, there are the Northwest Territories with great first nations who are in fact covered by another bill that will be considered this afternoon, Bill C-6, dealing with the Mackenzie Valley. The nations involved here are the Gwich'in, the Dene, the Metis, the Dogrib and the Deh Cho. These are the great first nations right next door to the Yukon.

To the south, of course, lies British Columbia. That province starts below the 60th parallel, and we are all aware of its great rich and diverse native cultures, spread out overmore than 200 native communities.

I feel it is important to properly describe the Yukon, because that territory is surrounded by great wealth that not only includes oil and gas but also native cultures that are extraordinarily vibrant. This is what concerned us at the outset. It is not really a case of whether the federal government is well advised to decentralize a particular aspect of the oil issue, or whatever. We also considered the impact this would have on native peoples because, and I will come back to this later, in Canada's history the native peoples got short shrift and this is still the case today.

I was listening to my colleague in the Reform Party speaking earlier about Voisey's Bay. Voisey's Bay, in Labrador, is generating billions of dollars already, and there is a native community, Davis Inlet, that wants to move. The government had in fact undertaken to move it. Now we learn that the move will not take place for another five or six years. In the meantime, Voisey's Bay is on land to which claim has been laid by the native people in the area and they are still being ignored. So that is the historical fact, and unfortunately history has a tendency to repeat itself.

We in Quebec have always paid attention to native communities, although attempts have been made to suggest otherwise. Having travelled throughout Canada, I have to say that Quebec has no apologies to make with respect to its First Nations. Quebec is in the vanguard and intends to stay there. That is why, in our discourse, you will always notice us first directing our attention to native issues on bills involving anything north of the 60th parallel, because unfortunately, that is the way things are. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is also responsible for

all economic development north of the 60th parallel. We are keeping an eye out for the interests of the First Nations.

Now, speaking of the Yukon, I must tell you how much I enjoyed a trip I made there in 1994. We arrived in Whitehorse and met with the First Nations. The Council for Yukon Indians was there. There are 14 native communities in the Yukon and these people explained to us where they were, at the time, in their negotiations for self-government. There are 14 native communities, but they have not all reached the same stage of autonomy. Some of them have signed final agreements, others are still working toward that stage. As I told you, I will shortly give an overview of what stage they have reached.

The trip to Whitehorse was really something. As I said, we met the Council for Yukon Indians, who briefed us on the progress that had been made. Then, at their own expense, they flew my daughter and me to Dawson City, the site of the old Klondike. This ties in with the bill before us today. Many years ago, there was a gold rush in the Klondike, leaving the land completely disfigured in the Dawson City area. There are piles of rocks everywhere, evidence of the complete disregard for the impact on the environment when the gold rush took place.

• (1045)

The only thing that mattered was finding gold. Dawson City is a great place but flying in is not much fun. I must confess that personally I was not too brave during the two-hour flight on a DC-3. My daughter travelled with me and she found it rough too. When the plane is taking off, one wonders if it will ever get airborne. There is this terribly loud noise and everything is shaking inside the plane.

I did some checking and I am told the DC-3 is the plane with the best safety record in the past 50 years in Canada. My daughter was almost in despair when we asked the travel agent what plane would be taking us from Whitehorse to Dawson City, a two-hour flight, and the agent, while pointing at the picture of an old DC-3, told my daughter, who was 12 at the time: ''You will be flying on this plane''. My daughter came up to me and said: ''Dad, they want us to go on an old DC-3, that cannot be right''. My answer was: ''Of course not. It must be a joke''.

But when we got to the airfield, we realized that, unfortunately, it was no joke. It is somewhat sad that the people in that region are serviced by equipment that is so out of date. It certainly was an experience and one I am not about to forget. It was a thrill of a sort. The plane does not fly very high; it is kind of scary at first, but all was fine in the end.

We made it to Dawson City. By the way, Heritage Canada owns half the town. It is an interesting looking town, with its dirt roads and wooden walkways. The buildings have all been declared heritage buildings and they reflect the old days. It is almost like finding ourselves in the Far West. I take this opportunity to salute my aboriginal friends out there.

One time, we went for a drink in a bar, a saloon like the ones they had in the West in the old days, with swing doors and all. We had a drink and watched a French cancan show. It was quite special.

An hon. member: With your daughter?

Mr. Claude Bachand: No, my 12-year old daughter did not join us, she was not allowed on the premises. I had her baby-sat with other aboriginal children and this was an interesting experience for her.

Mr. Gérard Asselin: Are you still in your DC-3?

Mr. Claude Bachand: No. I have arrived. I got off the DC-3 and I walked around Dawson City.

The first nations welcomed me with open arms and took me on a long tour. The high point was probably fishing on the Yukon River, which is an extraordinary crystalline blue green, because the water comes from glaciers. I was told the water contains many minerals, which account for its colour.

It was really extraordinary. We caught a 20 lb salmon. I have pictures to prove it, because people say fishers exaggerate the size of their catch. I can tell you personally that we caught a 20 lb fish. The native people had killed a moose, and we were given a wonderful welcome to native festivities in Dawson City. It was unfortunate though that my daughter does not like game.

I was involved in an unfortunate incident. I got caught with a bag from McDonald's after the official supper. I had to explain to the grand chief hosting us that the contents were for my daughter and not me, of course, because I had eaten my fill of this wonderful meal.

I would also like to recall the social contract at the time. We told these people as we did others elsewhere in Canada that we were taking their land because we needed the natural resources: the forests, mines and oil. And then we told them that we would send them to communities on little parcels of land and would look after their survival, their education, their health, their economic development and so on.

Today, people tend to forget that. People tend to say ''The Indian affairs budget is huge. We are paying for these people and we are tired of paying for them''. However, we forget the social contract of the time, and I have made it my duty to refer to it in each debate. We have to realize that we took 95% of the land on this continent and plunked these people down on 5% of it. We did the same thing in the Yukon too.

We also made grand laws at the time, or what we thought were grand laws. We systematically regulated the lives of the native peoples. That was the Indian Act. We—and I think this includes the federal government—are beginning to realize that not only is this legislation outmoded, but there is barely any explanation for its still being applied today. People do not even own their homes. When someone dies, a decision has to be made about whom it will

go to next. There are no rights of succession. The act contains some provisions that are hard to apply in today's reality. The sole solution is self-government, and the aboriginal nations of the Yukon, like those elsewhere, understand this.

• (1050)

I remember very clearly that, when we were voting on this act, when we were discussing the bill on the Yukon, representatives of the 14 aboriginal nations were up there in the gallery, awaiting the historic moment. At that time, they had been actively involved for 21 years in working toward an agreement with the federal government. Finally, in November or December of 1994, an agreement was reached and people were very pleased with it.

Now, I would like to give you an overview of the progress in negotiations. As I have said, and have just referred to again a few minutes ago, there are 14 aboriginal communities in the Yukon. It is important for me to refer to the document, because not only is it rather complex, but also the names themselves are often complicated. People are wondering what we said. And it not easy for me either. At this point in my speech, I must take a more formal look at the legislation. I also wish to salute these communities, because they are all friends of mine.

The Little Salmon-Carmacks and Selkirk first nations both signed self-government agreements on July 21.

About the December 1994 agreements I referred to earlier, I should point out that six of the 14 aboriginal communities had signed their final agreements. People thought that the issues of self-government and territorial claims had been settled. Since then, we have continued to make progress. The agreements involving the two communities I just mentioned came into effect on October 1, 1997. These communities joined those that had already signed agreements.

The federal government and the Tr'on dek Hwech'in first nation, from the wonderful, historic city of Dawson, which I just described when relating my perilous experiences, concluded negotiations on self-government on May 24. It is expected that agreements will be concluded by the end of the year, and that they will be ratified in early 1998.

Negotiations with the Dena Council of Ross River are in the preliminary stages. I remember that, at the time, there was a particular issue. The Kaska Dena community was very close to the B.C. border and people were wondering whether most of the reserve was located in British Columbia instead of the Yukon. These people had a lot of reservations about how things were conducted. They were the minority among aboriginals in the Yukon. They were not very inclined to get fully involved in negotiations on self-government. I notice today that at least they have gone beyond the preliminary stage.

It was expected that the council would submit shortly a 120% selection of lands. They decided to increase the area covered by the claim to 120%, and the government expects that the lands selected will include large areas with a high mineral potential. So there is this high potential, and as I was saying also, the Yukon is rich in oil and gas.

Perhaps the first nations in the Yukon have found a way to give real meaning to self-government by having a land claim base that is large enough to ensure their self-sufficiency.

Negotiations with the Liard first nation are under way and deal with the selection of rural lands with a high oil, gas and forestry potential. The bill we are considering today has a certain impact on every native land claim. We will have to be careful with this.

Negotiations with the Liard first nation are almost concluded and will cover what are called mining and community lands. I know that the federal government wishes to conclude the negotiations by March.

• (1055)

As for the first nation of Carcross-Tagish, meetings are now under way. Right now, negotiations are focussing on rural lands. Agreements have been signed on a certain number of claims. The first nation should soon be submitting claims regarding specific sites. It is anticipated that negotiations with respect to self-government should be over by year's end. The final agreement should be signed by March 1998.

Negotiations for the final agreement regarding land claims and the agreement with respect to self-government for the first nation of White River have almost been concluded. It is expected that negotiations will be wrapped up in December 1998.

The first nation of Kluane submitted land claims slightly in excess of the allowable area. The final agreement, including the land claims aspect, is 62% complete, and the agreement with respect to self-government has been 85% worked out. This means that a few details remain to be wrapped up before the final agreement is signed.

Negotiations on the Ta'an Kwach'an council's final land claims agreement and agreement with respect to self-government have to all intents and purposes been concluded. They cannot be finalized, however, until the problem of the band's separation from the first nation of Kwanlin Dun is resolved. There is a dispute over this. What they want is to divide the reserve in two, or to take steps to provide land for the second community other than the lands it currently shares with the other aboriginal nation.

As for the Kwanlin Dun first nation, there have been no negotiations since June 1996. Last June, the first nation submitted a proposal that falls outside the frame of reference established by the definitive umbrella agreement. There was a definitive umbrella agreement intended to cover all of the question of negotiation, the parameters and the guidelines, but they did not want to fit into it. Negotiations are, therefore, still under way.

The aboriginal communities which have not yet signed agreements are the first nations of Champagne and Aishihik, Nacho Nyak Dun, the Tlingit of the Teslin area, and the first nation of the Gwitch'in Vuntut. We still have some work to do with them.

I felt it was important to give a progress report on each negotiation process, because we have certain misgivings. We are certainly in agreement with any bill that encourages decentralization. When the government decides to turn all of the matter of gas and oil over to the Yukon Territory, we are in agreement.

I would remind you that we are among those who decry the encroachment of the federal government onto areas of territorial and provincial jurisdiction. Unfortunately, and I do not want to bring the Quebec situation into this, we are becoming aware that the throne speech and the position this government is taking show that there is encroachment, particularly in Quebec.

The Bloc Quebecois will, of course, support any bill encouraging decentralization. We are the only sovereignist group in this House, and anything that smacks of decentralization fits in very well with our philosophy. Likewise, any kind of centralization does not fit in with our philosophy.

I was telling you that we had concerns, and they are the following. The people who have already signed agreements are pretty much the masters of their lands, including use of the lands themselves and their surface and subsurface resources, forests, etc. But for those who have not yet signed, there may be a little problem.

The native peoples, in their great wisdom, once again, have decided that they will not resort to blackmail by saying: ''We want to block the bill''. They are saying that they are in agreement. There has also been a change in government. There is today an NDP government in the Yukon, which is much more open to native issues. Apparently, the native peoples have a very good relationship with the Yukon government. That government promised it would not allow operating permits on lands claimed by native peoples, because of all the responsibilities that will be transferred.

I was telling you that we had a concern, and it is the fact that the bill does not deal with this issue. The federal government has a fiduciary relationship with native peoples, and permits to extract oil and gas on lands claimed by native peoples cannot be allowed before there is a final agreement on native self-government and land claims.

• (1100)

So it is unfortunate that there is no provision for this in the bill. We will, however, vote for the bill, even in the absence of this provision. We will be decide whether we should move amendments in the standing committee.

After discussions were held with the Yukon government, and especially with the governments and potential governments of the Yukon first nations, they all told us that they were in agreement with the bill and that they hoped that the Yukon government would keep its word. You know that these are people who have heard a lot of promises over the centuries and that these promises have often been broken.

I therefore urge the Yukon government to respect its undertaking not to issue mining licences to companies on lands included in native claims.

For my part, I urge the federal government—I see the parliamentary secretary is here—to finalize the agreements with the people in the Yukon. As soon as the land bases for all the Yukon first nations have been worked out and responsibility for self-government turned over to the 14 Yukon nations, attention can then be given to how mining licences are issued. We hope that the Yukon first nations will finally be able to benefit from the subsoil and surface wealth of the land they are now occupying or have occupied from time immemorial. I therefore urge the federal government to step up negotiations and the Yukon government to keep its promise and not to issue licences.

The Bloc Quebecois will support Bill C-8, perhaps with certain amendments—we will see on the standing committee—and I wish a long and prosperous life to the Yukon first nations.

[*English*]

Ms. Louise Hardy (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be speaking for the first time in the House. I would like to thank the people of Yukon for bringing me here. I feel I can hardly add further to the comments of my hon. colleague from Quebec on the north. I would like to say that what he found strange and wondrous is indeed very normal for people in the north.

Bill C-8 is an act to implement an accord between the Government of Canada and the Yukon Territory. It relates to the administration, control and legislative jurisdiction with respect to oil and gas. It is an important act for the people of Yukon as it will transfer additional legislative powers necessary to undertake through Yukon legislation all aspects of the management and administration of onshore oil and gas.

This legislation will give the Yukon government provincial like powers to administer our own business and to do it in the public interest.

This is very important considering that for the last 100 years Yukon has not been able to do that in its own interest and has in fact been penalized. Any resources or any income that we have brought to ourselves has been directly deducted from our budget, so this is very important for northern people.

This process of devolution of provincial like powers will not affect any settlement of aboriginal land claims because the federal government will retain the capacity of regaining that authority and it will do so if it is necessary to settle a Yukon land claim.

Bill C-8 is the necessary legislation to transfer the authority of oil and gas to the Yukon government. It is very significant. It confirms Canada's commitment as set out in the northern oil and gas accord signed in 1993 to transfer to Yukon province like powers to regulate and manage Yukon's oil and gas resources.

It must be viewed as a commitment from Canada to Yukon for the political evolution of Yukon and to the concept of devolution and should be linked to an orderly transition of the transfers of other remaining resources like forestry and mining to the people of Yukon.

We expect that the federal government will complete the devolution of all these powers to the Yukon government by 1998. That may be very optimistic but we believe it can be accomplished.

Devolution is a transfer process in which the federal government will transfer all northern affairs programs of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to the Yukon government.

● (1105)

In 1898 a separate Yukon territory was created. In 1902 our first small civil service was established. In 1948 the Yukon Territory suspended its rights to income tax collection in exchange for annual federal funding transfers. In 1979 the federal government effectively signed over decision making powers for many programs to elected territorial representatives.

In 1993 the umbrella final accord agreement for land claims was signed after a 30 year series of negotiations. Being someone who lives in Yukon, my whole life evolved around land claims. It was always discussed and it still is. It affects every single person who lives in Yukon.

In 1996 consultations on the transfer of northern affairs programs began. In 1997 we are dealing with the transfer of the administration and control of legislative jurisdiction in respect to oil and gas and, as I said, 1998 is the target set for this to be completed.

Devolution is an issue of fundamental importance for the Yukon people. It will signal the end of a quasi-colonial attitude to the north and a beginning of a process to gain greater economic self-reliance. It will reinforce participatory democracy because it will give northerners a meaningful democratic role in the development of our own region, communities and a more efficient use of resources needed to provide services to the northern people.

Devolution is an essential part of aboriginal self-government and self-determination. With the continuing settlement of Yukon land claims and self-government agreements Yukoners, on the basis of a relationship based on partnerships, can look to the future as citizens of Canada and not as possessions of the crown.

People in Yukon are looking forward to obtaining the responsibilities of managing their land and resources. Devolution is good governance and it will create employment and economic opportunities. It will also increase the stewardship of our environment.

Federal devolution is part of a parallel process within the Yukon government. The Yukon government must develop the necessary legislation and regulations to fill the federal void when it comes to the oil and gas regime.

The Yukon government has been actively working with first nations in the development of such a regime. The working group began and has been actively engaged since January 1997 in the development of Yukon oil and gas regulations.

This has been a very positive experience which has resulted in the development of an oil and gas regime that is acceptable to the Yukon first nations governments, of which there are 14, the territorial government and the federal government.

The federal and territorial legislation dealing with the transfer of province like powers to Yukon and the development of the oil and gas act regulations is a demonstration of a successful working relationship with the first nations and the beginning of a new era in the relationships between people of the north and the central Government of Canada.

It opens opportunities of economic development for Yukoners. After completion of the transfers, the Yukon people, through their own legislation, will manage and regulate oil and gas activities including exploration, development, production and conservation, environmental and safety regulations and the determination and collection of resource revenues.

The Yukon government is committed to table the Yukon oil and gas act this fall and to have an open consultative process with Yukoners on the regulations.

The Yukon Act has been amended to transfer to northerners new responsibilities and new legislative powers in relation to exploration of oil and gas; the development, conservation and management of oil and gas, including the rate of primary production; oil and gas pipelines; the raising of money in respect to oil and gas in the territory for the benefit of the people in the north; and the export of oil and gas.

The amendments will include provisions to allow the federal government to continue to exercise its other responsibilities including taking back the administration on any lands in Yukon in order to settle or implement aboriginal land claims.

The Canada-Yukon oil and gas accord is fully consistent with the legislation implementing aboriginal or treaty rights under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, including legislation establishing wildlife land management and environmental regimes.

The accord does not diminish Canada's capacity to settle or implement land claims and both levels of government are committed to consult with aboriginal people on significant oil and gas decisions affecting lands within their traditional territory prior to the conclusion of land claim settlements.

● (1110)

The bill includes significant financial provisions to support the Government of Yukon in the implementation of its new responsibilities.

It needs to be recognized that this piece of legislation is the result of extensive consultations and close co-operation between the officials of the Yukon Territory and federal government officials.

In addition, the Yukon government has actively involved First Nations in the process, including the development of the oil and gas legislation and management process.

The Council for Yukon First Nations gave support for the present legislation and to the devolution process in March 1997, support ratified by letter from Grand Chief Shirley Adamson on August 1, 1997.

The working relationship and close co-operation of the three parties, the federal government, the Yukon government and Yukon First Nations, has been very successful. The three parties are now committed to completing the remaining land claims and self-government agreements by the fall of 1998.

Yukoners elected a territorial government with an agenda focused on completing land claims and devolution, creating employment and economic opportunities, fostering healthy northern communities, respecting our environment and building trust in government.

This bill is facilitating the implementation of the working agenda of the territorial government. On the basis of a respectful government to government relationship with First Nations of Yukon and negotiating in an open way implementation of agreements like the oil and gas accord, we are creating a positive relationship among all levels of government, an example I think well set for the rest of Canada to follow.

Devolution is not by any means downloading of responsibilities by the federal government. The devolution process is and should include the necessary funding from the federal government to deliver the services included in the devolution agreement.

Devolution is about partnership and the assumption of new responsibilities and obligations. Yukon First Nation governments established a working partnership on devolution and signed a number of accords.

In addition, the Yukon government and Yukon First Nation governments have made arrangements concerning their working relationship during implementation of specific devolution transfers, particularly arrangements concerning the transfer of oil and gas responsibilities.

The devolution of the Yukon northern affairs program is a major step in the evolution of responsible government. There is a lot of goodwill to maintain a co-operative process for the devolution of the northern affairs program to the Yukon government. This co-operation is a very positive way to transfer in an orderly manner the new decision making capabilities to Yukoners and the territorial government.

Devolution is good government. It will give the Yukon government, a local government with locally elected representatives and locally accountable, appointed officials, the effective control over land and resource management responsibilities. The territorial government will be in a better position to integrate decisions over resources and will be able to serve more effectively the Yukon people.

This transfer of federal resources to the territorial government, financial, capital and human resources, must be at the level that guarantees the provisions of adequate services and present levels of funding. We are all aware that in the last few years the northern affairs program has been subjected to federal cutbacks and there must be assurances that the resources transferred are enough to provide for the delivery of the mandated responsibilities of the transferred programs. We are expecting that the federal government will not withdraw any funding from the programs considered for the transfer to the territorial government.

This negotiated agreement is a historical component for Yukon and the Yukon government, the First Nations of Yukon as well as for Canada. It fully protects the interests of the First Nations of Yukon and we are confident in its compliance with the land claims and self-government agreements.

The agreement bodes well for the future of Yukon and all Yukoners and in maintaining the spirit of co-operation among the federal, territorial and First Nations government.

I urge the House to proceed quickly with this bill. Its Successful passage and proclamation will implement a significant step in the devolution of powers from the federal government to the territorial level and will show a great deal of respect for the First Nations and the people of the north who live a life that is very remote from

Ottawa and very disconnected. Yet we have been very dependent on the decision made in this House.

Once again I urge a speedy passage to show respect for the work that was put into this bill.

● (1115)

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-8, the Canada-Yukon oil and gas accord implementation act. I will share my time with the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester.

The administration and management of oil and gas is an important and highly visible province-like function which will allow the Yukon government and Yukon First Nations with land claim agreements to share oil and gas revenues. These revenues are currently valued at $2 million per year.

Platitudes of self-government are wasted if the government does not back those platitudes with some type of a management process, with some type of a source of income, making self-government affordable and therefore making self-government possible.

The bill transfers authority to the Yukon territorial government, providing and giving control over the exploration, development, conservation and management of onshore gas resources, oil and gas pipelines, the raising of money in respect of oil and gas resources in the territory and the export of oil and gas.

Onshore oil and gas resources apply to all of Yukon landward of the Beaufort Sea mean low water mark, including the two bays of Shoalwater and Phillips Bay.

It is important to understand that this bill allows the federal government to take back administration and control of oil and gas in Yukon lands in order to settle or implement aboriginal land claims.

There are a number of areas of concern in this bill. The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, which represents signatories to the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, a land claim agreement brought into force by legislation in 1984, objected to several aspects of the proposed legislation when it was Bill C-50 in the last Parliament.

This opposition relates to the transfer of management over the Yukon offshore, defined as the adjoining area in the bill, to the Yukon territorial government and the protection of those areas. The Inuvialuit argue the adjoining area defined in the legislation is part of the Yukon north slope which falls within a special conservation regime established under their final agreement. The Inuvialuit consider Phillips Bay, an area specifically included in the transfer, to be part of their national park, while Shoalwater Bay is a highly significant area of Inuvialuit traditional use.

Under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, lands of the Yukon north slope are to be protected until a wildlife and conservation management plan is adopted. While such a plan has been developed, it has not been adopted. The Inuvialuit have argued the transfer of jurisdiction over the north slope is inconsistent with the obligations in their agreement.

Bill C-8 has been changed slightly from the former Bill C-50 of the 35th Parliament to address some of these concerns. Clauses 6 and 8 would amend the Yukon Act to permit the Government of Canada to protect certain areas of land and future land claim settlements or the implementation of a land claim.

The addition of the word implementation recognizes that out of the 14 bands that are signatories to the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, only six have made their land claim selections. This would allow the federal government to designate lands traditionally used by the bands that have not finalized their land claim selections as those where no oil and gas activity could occur.

That is a great concern to those First Nations groups that have not yet selected their land under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement. Clause 8 allows the federal government to take back the administration and control of oil and gas in any lands in Yukon to settle or implement land claims. It can be questioned whether or not the federal government will require the land to be returned to its original state by the oil and gas developers if such land is required for land claim settlement or implementation.

● (1120)

There are some questions to be asked but every individual in the House should understand that the bill is about jurisdiction, that the bill is about the transfer of power and that the bill is about giving the tools to a territory, to a region in Canada to become independent and self-sufficient.

The Conservative Party agrees and supports a greater devolution of political and especially economic power to the territories. Part of that transfer is regulatory power. It is time to move forward on this legislation which has been on the agenda since 1987.

We support the legislation. We think it is important. We think it is legislation that is perhaps a little too late but at least it is on the agenda. We agree that we should move forward with it.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, I wish to add a few comments to those of my associate from South Shore regarding the accord between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Yukon Territory which divests power and authority from the federal government to the Yukon Territory.

To me it seems like a natural evolution: a political transfer of power to the Yukon Territory. It is certainly appropriate and it is similar to the powers the provinces have had for years and decades.

The Progressive Conservative Party supports the legislation, basically because it evolved from Progressive Conservative legislation that began in 1987 through 1988, starting with the northern accord.

Like so many of the Conservative policies, like the GST which the Liberals picked up, embraced and enhanced, free trade and low inflation that worked so well for the economy of Canada, hopefully this policy will also work out well as the powers are devolved to the Yukon Territory.

Most community groups and organizations support this legislation in the Yukon area. The Council of Yukon First Nations supports it on the condition that those First Nations that have not had their land claims addressed still have access to the land claims. Clauses 6 and 8 of the new bill address those issues. I feel that their issues are at least addressed temporarily and hopefully there is a process to address future problems that they have in so far as land claims go.

The Yukon territorial government has supported it strongly and urges the quick passage of it. It requests that it proceed expeditiously. The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers of Canada certainly supports it and urges it to go ahead. It is prepared to work with the First Nations groups.

The Yukon Chamber of Commerce says that it is the key to economic stability in Yukon. Certainly we support that and we support them.

It is timely for the Yukon people because it offers new opportunities for them for employment and for economic development. At this time in Canada there is more oil and gas exploration than at any time in the history of our country. There is no reason that the Yukon should be left out of that economic surge. It has the technology in the industry with three dimensional size technology, horizontal drilling which maximizes exploration and reduces the number of failures and also maximizes productivity.

It is certainly an appropriate time to have the gas and oil jurisdiction turned over from the federal government to the territorial government and have it totally control the situation and benefit from it.

In closing, I support Bill C-8, as does our party, as long as the First Nations concerns are addressed. I believe they are addressed. There is a dispute settlement mechanism built into Bill C-8 which will address any future concerns they have. It is a welcome transfer of power and it will help the Yukon Territory establish economic self-sufficiency for now and long into the future.

● (1125)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague for supporting Bill C-8. He mentioned a concern I share, and perhaps we can come up with some solution in discussing it on the floor of the House. I raised it in my speech as well.

First of all, some native communities have not completed arrangements to set up their own government or their territorial claims. Second, the federal government has a fiduciary link with the native peoples. Third, the law provides specifically that the government cannot issue prospecting licences for land that is under claim.

I would like to know from my colleague whether he foresees the possibility of amendments perhaps during study in committee or at third reading. Perhaps he could give us some clues as to how to resolve this question, which is a delicate one for certain native communities.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Casey: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member's comments that the native community has faith in the federal government but sometimes has less faith in provincial and territorial governments. However, I believe that clauses 6 and 8 address his concerns. If native communities have future land claim problems, clauses 6 and 8 allow the federal government to take back control of certain territories if it is in the interests of the natives and if the natives have claims on that territory.

I believe that amendments can be made to the bill. It is not perfect. No bill is. However, we will be working with the native communities to come up with appropriate amendments to address their concerns.

Probably one of the basic issues is the fact that the native community does have faith in the federal government far more than it does in provincial governments.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

* * *

MACKENZIE VALLEY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT

Hon. David Kilgour (for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) moved that Bill C-6, an act to provide for an integrated system of land and water management in the Mackenzie Valley, to establish certain boards for that purpose and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Bernard Patry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the House on Bill C-6, the Mackenzie Valley resource management act.

I am extremely pleased to be sponsoring this bill which will build on two other legislative initiatives that are already redrawing the political, social and economic face of the Mackenzie Valley in the Northwest Territories.

In December 1992 legislation was enacted to implement the comprehensive land claim agreement of the Gwich'in of the Mackenzie Valley. In 1994 the Sahtu Dene and Metis comprehensive land claim agreement was also given effect by legislation passed by this House. We are also continuing to negotiate agreements with the other claimant groups in the Mackenzie Valley. These are historic agreements for the beneficiaries, for the residents of the Northwest Territories and for all Canadians.

● (1130)

The aboriginal beneficiaries now have the land base and the financial resources that will enable them to more fully manage their own affairs. Residents of these areas in the territories as well as the territorial government and industry have the certainty of land ownership and resources rights that come with settlement agreements.

I am pleased to inform hon. members that many provisions of these land claim agreements are already being implemented. After many years of difficult negotiation, the Gwich'in and Sahtu Dene and Metis are finally beginning to enjoy the benefits of land ownership and financial security.

[*Translation*]

However, the government has a number of important issues to resolve on these agreements.

Chapter 24 of the Gwich'in agreement and chapter 25 of the Sahtu Dene and Metis agreement provide for the establishment of a system for co-management of resource use in the regions covered by the agreements.

More specifically, two agencies will be set up for each region covered by the agreements: a land use planning board and a water and land board.

Moreover, an environmental impact review board will be established for the Mackenzie Valley, which includes the whole western part of the Northwest Territories, with the exception of the region inhabited by the Inuvialuit.

Bill C-6 will establish these bodies. Also, in order to ensure responsible management of the environment and to strengthen the government in western Arctic, Bill C-6 will create a land and water board for the whole Mackenzie Valley.

The board will ensure a co-ordinated and consistent process to regulate the use of land and water throughout the Mackenzie Valley. This is very important to the residents of that region, since activities taking place upstream can have a major impact on communities living downstream.

[*English*]

I would like to take a few minutes to expand on the provisions of Bill C-6 so that hon. members can appreciate why it is a good bill for the Northwest Territories and for Canada.

Bill C-6 provides a co-ordinated system of regulating land and water use throughout the Mackenzie Valley. In so doing it ensures regulatory consistency between the settlement areas and adjacent lands within the Mackenzie Valley. Bill C-6 also meets the government's commitment to give aboriginal people a greater role in determining resource use as provided for in the two land claim agreements.

Within each claimant area the representatives of aboriginal people will make nominations for half of the members on each of these new boards. This will ensure that the traditional activities and lifestyles of the different aboriginal groups in the Mackenzie Valley will be considered in the making of resource management decisions.

It is expected that this type of resource co-management will allow traditional aboriginal activities and lifestyles to successfully coexist with other forms of economic development. This is resource co-management in the truest sense of the term and in the form of co-management that the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples fully endorsed.

In addition to guaranteeing a voice for aboriginal people, the new land and water regulatory regime will provide more opportunities for the public to participate in decision making. People from the Mackenzie Valley will sit on these boards and there will be an opportunity for input from private citizens and interest groups through public hearings.

[*Translation*]

Bill C-6 defines how the new system will work and the interaction between the various bodies. However, I should point out that the bill does not deal with surface rights. A surface rights board designed to settle any dispute relating to private land access in the Mackenzie Valley will be established under another bill. In the meantime, land claims agreements include provisions for the settling of such disputes.

● (1135)

The bodies established under Bill C-6 are government boards whose mandate is to look after the public's interests. Members will be appointed by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, to whom they will be accountable.

Each body will have to consult the public, more specifically aboriginal groups, government organizations and industries, before making decisions or recommendations.

This new system is patterned on the Northwest Territories' resources regulating system which puts, as it should, the decision making process in the hands of local people.

The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is currently responsible for managing and regulating crown lands in the Mackenzie Valley, while the Northwest Territories' water board monitors the use of water.

Under Bill C-6, each region that will be governed by an agreement will have its own regional land and water board.

Outside the areas covered by the agreements, and with respect to transregional activities, the Mackenzie Valley land and water board will be responsible for making regulations. In other words, the land and water boards of each region covered by the agreements will become a standing committee of the main Mackenzie Valley land and water organization, which replaced the Northwest Territories water board.

Bill C-6 also provides for the establishment, in each of the regions covered by the agreements, of a land use planning board responsible for developing a land use plan, whose approval it will recommend to the government. These boards will develop land use plans for all land in the regions covered by the agreements.

[*English*]

An important purpose of land use planning is to protect and promote the social, cultural and economic well-being of the residents of the settlement area by setting goals and priorities for governments and industry. While the interests of all Canadians must be taken into account, special attention will be given to the rights and well-being of any affected aboriginal group.

Bill C-6 will also create a new environmental assessment regime for the Mackenzie Valley. The environmental impact review board will be established as the main instrument for environmental assessment and will carry out the duties currently performed by the northern affairs program of the department under the CEAA, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

While this new assessment regime has adopted many of the features of the CEAA, including extensive consultation requirements and the same assessment criteria, it goes beyond the CEAA in that it applies not only to the federal crown lands and projects but to settlement and commissioner's lands as well.

This means that virtually all lands in the Mackenzie Valley will be subject to the same rigorous assessment process. Industry will welcome the certainty, consistency and efficiency of the new regime. Great effort has been put into ensuring that duplication is avoided and all will receive equal treatment.

Additionally Bill C-6 undertakes the creation of a cumulative impact monitoring program. This program will carry out periodic environmental audits and will pull together the data which will help track the cumulative impacts of development activity throughout the Mackenzie Valley.

I want to assure the House that the Government of the Northwest Territories and First Nations were thoroughly consulted on this proposed legislation.

[*Translation*]

These past few years, federal officials met on a number of occasions with their Northwest Territories counterparts and with representatives of the Gwich'in and the Sahtu Dene and Metis to develop an approach to the establishment of these organizations that would be acceptable to all parties.

We also conducted extensive consultations about the legislation per se. Drafts of Bill C-6 were distributed to various interest groups to get their input and feedback. In addition, a background document on the proposed resource management scheme was released to the public.

After this information was distributed, Indian affairs officials went on a public consultation tour in the Mackenzie Valley. These consultations have proven highly productive. Government employees have prepared information kits on the bill and the regulations for the public to provide the private sector and the aboriginal and non-aboriginal residents of the Mackenzie Valley with a clear understanding of the entire process leading up to the resource management clauses in the bill.

• (1140)

I am pleased to announce to the House that there was a great deal of support for our bill. A number of the aboriginal groups in the Mackenzie Valley, however, have not yet settled their land claims, and therefore feel that the establishment of regulatory bodies for the entire Mackenzie Valley is premature.

Although the government acknowledges their concerns and is dealing with them, we feel that it is important to move ahead with the establishment of these bodies so as to avoid confusion later. These aboriginal groups will be entitled to appoint members to these bodies without jeopardizing their ability to negotiate their land claims.

I firmly believe that the new resource management regime offers these groups better representation than they currently have within the decision making process.

The establishment of a new regulatory mechanism for the Mackenzie Valley cannot be done piecemeal. The hon. members will readily understand that we cannot end up with more than one regulatory mechanism for the same territory.

A cohesive regulatory process for land and water use will be to the advantage of the entire Mackenzie Valley. It will provide the private sector with the transparency and certitude required to enhance the attractiveness of investing in the area.

[*English*]

From an environmental review perspective, it is also important to have a valley-wide regime. More and more we are looking at environmental problems in total. Rivers and streams cannot be arbitrarily separated by artificial boundaries. We must deal with entire ecosystems and adapt to a new way of managing environmental regions.

I want to assure the House that the proposal to establish valley-wide boards for the regulation of land and water use and environmental impact review is fully consistent with the Gwich'in and Sahtu agreements and has their support. These are examples of good planning and good public government.

First Nations that have not yet settled their claims will have the opportunity to be represented on these new boards. For all residents of the Northwest Territories the new regime will mean more immediacy in decision making.

This bill also is fully consistent with the devolution of provincial type responsibilities to the territories and with, as I mentioned, the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples which endorsed this unique type of resource co-management for the north.

The Government of the Northwest Territories will over time assume the federal role of responsibilities in each of these areas. The territorial government strongly supports the concept of public valley-wide boards.

As hon. members can appreciate, Bill C-6 will accomplish three important goals.

[*Translation*]

First, it will meet the requirements of the agreements with the Gwich'in and the Sahtu Dene and Metis on regulating the use of land and water. Bill C-6 therefore represents a major step toward meeting our obligations under territorial claims and will form the basis of new partnerships with aboriginal peoples and other residents of northern regions.

Second, Bill C-6 will provide a new system for managing the Mackenzie Valley, which will be more user friendly, more transparent and easier to understand.

It will ensure that all residents will be involved in decisions on issues involving them. It will also ensure a fair assessment of proposals by allowing all residents of the region to give their opinion when positions are taken.

These improvements will encourage investment and economic development in the regions covered by the agreements and throughout the Mackenzie Valley. The people in the north, like all Canadians, will reap the rewards of this economic activity.

Third, Bill C-6 will also establish a system that complies with standards of prudent environmental management. In keeping with our national goal of protecting and preserving the environment for generations to come, the bill will guarantee that environmental assessments will be standardized and thorough.

● (1145)

[*English*]

I will now ask my hon. colleagues to support Bill C-6 so that the government's obligations under these regional land claim agreements can be fulfilled and that the evolution of strong, local public government can continue in the Mackenzie Valley.

Mr. Derrek Konrad (Prince Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, as this is my first opportunity to speak in the House, I would like to congratulate you and your colleagues on your election. I am from that part of Canada lying between the Pacific salmon dispute and the Atlantic groundfish strategy called Saskatchewan. Since this is my first opportunity to speak in the House, I do want to thank the people of Prince Albert for the trust they have placed in me.

Prince Albert has been called Canada's most illustrious constituency. This is because of its history of having elected three of Canada's previous prime ministers. I contend, however, that Prince Albert remains Canada's most illustrious constituency for more reasons than that.

The Saskatchewan River runs through my constituency. Historically it was a major trade route for the fur trade. Today it provides hydro-electric generation and recreation areas enjoyed by people from across Canada and around the world.

The constituency has a progressive and innovative farming community which, by the way, has a strong interest in the Canadian Wheat Board legislation which passed quickly before this House.

We have forestry. We have diamond exploration. We have small towns and the city of Prince Albert. We have pioneers and visionary business people. We have it all. We are Canada's most illustrious constituency and I am proud to represent it.

One other thing I would like to mention this morning is that I am proud to wear the red poppy that commemorates the sacrifice by so many Canadians in defending our nation, its democracy and its freedoms. I trust that we will be worthy of their sacrifices which were supreme.

Having said that I will now turn to the business at hand which is the consideration of Bill C-6, the Mackenzie Valley resource management act.

The stated purpose of the bill is to provide for an integrated system of land and water management in the Mackenzie Valley and to establish certain boards for that purpose. The bill is enabling legislation which implements obligations between the federal government and the Gwich'in, the Sahtu Dene and Metis.

Those agreements, proclaimed September 22, 1992 and June 23, 1994, called for an integrated system of land and water management to apply to the Mackenzie Valley through the creation of certain boards.

The Gwich'in claim was negotiated, debated and proclaimed during the 34th Parliament by the Tory administration. The Sahtu Dene and Metis land claim, Bill C-16, was debated in the spring of 1994 and was opposed by the Reform Party due to the excessive size of the land claim agreement. Its provisions called for a settlement area of about 108,200 square miles or about 280,200 square kilometres which comprised roughly 27% of the entire Mackenzie Valley.

To put this in perspective, the land area alone included in the agreement was roughly five times the area of the entire province of Nova Scotia. It was for the benefit of only 1,755 persons, of whom only 982 are adults. Taken on a per person basis, the claims average about 61 square miles each and the economic cost of the agreements was in the order of $130 million.

The Reform Party opposed Bill C-16 because there was no legal rationale for this fee simple conveyance. A new bureaucracy was created and, furthermore, the commitment to self-government made really no sense given the small and highly dispersed population.

The Reform Party's position respecting land settlement claims is clear. It supports honouring treaties according to their original intent and according to court decisions. The agreements made in that legislation and those which this legislation enables were negotiated rather than subjected to court decisions.

In addition to the foregoing, the Reform Party's policy further states that settlement of land claims will be negotiated publicly and all settlements will outline specific terms, be final and conclude within a specific timeframe and be affordable to Canada and the provinces. I believe that the agreements on which this bill rests fail the test of finality and affordability and as such have serious consequences for Bill C-6, which is currently under discussion.

• (1150)

Lastly, in setting the background, the Reform Party supports the right of individuals entitled to reside on settlement lands to choose to hold their entitlement privately or in common. Nothing in the agreement gives the people any individual rights over the land in question. All rights are held in common.

This is a context in which the bill is drafted and for our party's consideration of it.

As a new member there is a lot to learn and, like most members, I suppose there is far more teaching than there is learning at times. As this is the first piece of legislation for which I have prepared, I was not sure where to begin. I found out, though, that the office of the minister transmits the pertinent information to the office of the critic who in this instance forwarded it to my office for review in preparation for the debate.

Included in the material is a list of the organizations with whom the minister has consulted in drafting and reviewing the proposed legislation. I found in the material several one page letters. Some congratulated the minister on the initiative and some were non-committal in tone, but they all expressed a hope that the proposed legislation would be useful in pulling together some of the loose threads in the regulatory and approval processes.

I submit that will be a vain hope as we look further through the legislation.

One letter which came to my attention later and did not come through the office of the minister was not so very complimentary. It was submitted by an organization by the name of the Northwest Territories Chamber of Mines which has an interesting motto, especially in the context of the debate over debt, spending and taxes ''digging Canada out of debt''. I would think that any organization or for that matter any person committed to digging this country out of the debt hole in which it finds itself is worthy of serious attention.

I do not believe these people have been consulted in the preparation of the legislation and certainly I feel that is a serious deficiency. They believe ''that the sheer complexity of the new regime will overload the capacity of northerners to deal effectively with resource management issues''.

This House must listen to the concerns of all those outside the land claims process and take immediate steps to review the legacy of a former administration which was out to right every wrong, whether real or perceived. Canadian taxpayers will be burdened for years to come because of their policies. Job creation will suffer and resource development may be slowed down and investors will begin to look elsewhere for investment opportunities as the cost of doing business in Canada's north increases as a result of Bill C-6 and similar legislation.

Legislation of this nature is the reason for many mining development hold-ups such as Voisey's Bay. We know the importance of development in the north due to the unemployment figures in the north.

Resource companies, we know, must conduct their affairs in an environmentally sound manner. There is a necessity for regulatory

regimes and they must ensure compliance with the regulations developed for the common good. Those facts are not in dispute.

What is also not in dispute is the need for rules which are capable of clear interpretation, fair and equal in their application. The standards set by regulators must be high but must also be capable of being achieved. The decisions rendered must be timely and arbitrariness must be minimized. The process should be unified so as to minimize cost and uncertainty for those to whom the system applies.

Finally, it should provide for predictability both in the cost of compliance and in the likelihood of approval being granted after review of the application. The system as it exists today is both complex and cumbersome and achieves none of the goals previously set out.

The express goal of the new legislation is that it would address the flaws in the current system, but instead it delivers the same uncertainties and adds yet another layer of bureaucracy with poorly defined jurisdictions. The net result of the legislation as it stands would be to substantially increase uncertainties and cost to development while failing to deliver benefits to the environment or to the stakeholders identified in the agreements.

Among the many concerns this bill has raised among stakeholders are the potential for interference in the staking of mineral claims, change in the status of leases and land use permits, new powers to boards to suspend permits and leases, poorly defined terms for new rights for compensation, unfair enforcement policy, poorly defined jurisdictions which have the potential for serious delays in even beginning a review of an application to develop a promising area.

• (1155)

The proposed legislation does not address, apart from a numerical formula, how members of the committee are to be selected, although one of the letters supplied to my office mentions beginning the process of training members of the various boards and panels before the proposed legislation was even introduced in the House. That letter was received in the office of the minister in the spring of 1996.

The bill does not specify what criteria will be used in determining who is eligible for appointment to the boards and panels, if any, nor does it specify the process for appointment.

The proposed legislation calls for the creation of separate boards in each settlement region with offices to be maintained in each. There is a mere suggestion in the bill that the boards could share technical facilities but there is no requirement to do so. This arrangement is likely to cause uneveness in the development of regulations and in their application. Developments crossing jurisdictional lines may be subject to several boards with the likelihood of different results from their review process.

The fears of developers as litigation will be required to resolve the disputes arising from lack of clarity in the proposed legislation were not put to rest in departmental briefings. The possibility of litigation is a major concern and need not have arisen had the government held extensive public hearings throughout the process of developing Bill C-6 rather than waiting until it had passed the point of no return.

Given the immense area of land to be administered and the possibility of duplication of technical resources with lower individual budgets and staffing as a result, the boards will be unable to perform adequate evaluation of projects stretching over those vast distances. This is particularly troubling in transitional times when everything must continue without interruption. We know that people's livelihoods depend on these things.

During the debate on Bill C-16, Reformers warned of the potential for the creation of a massive bureaucracy as a result of those agreements. Those fears have now been realized with the proposed boards and panels exercising broad powers over both claim and non-claim territory. Hunting, trapping, resource development, forestry and more will fall within their authority.

With a population of only 40,000 people, the western Arctic will be subject to a proliferation of administrative authorities. There is also no limitation of the board's authority within the settled claim areas.

For these reasons the Reform Party respectfully opposes this bill. Opposition to this bill should not be seen as opposition to the settlement of outstanding land claims with Canada's aboriginal people. As has been stated earlier, the Reform Party does support final affordable settlement of all outstanding claims. We believe that wider consultations are the answer to those negotiations.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have before us today a bill that I consider extremely technical. It is difficult to relate to this bill on a personal basis, as can be done with Bill C-8 dealing with the Yukon, because it concerns the establishment of certain boards to manage water, land, etc. For this reason, I will stick rather closely to my text.

When I have the opportunity, and because debate on native issues can often be uninspiring and difficult, I like to stimulate and enhance the debate by relating incidents we may have witnessed during our visits. Unfortunately, I have never been in the Mackenzie Valley. Because of the technical content of this bill, I will perhaps stick more closely to my text.

So I am pleased to speak today to Bill C-6 dealing with the establishment of certain boards to provide for an integrated system of land and water management in the Mackenzie Valley, and with

consequential amendments to other Acts. This wording is found in several pieces of legislation, including Bill C-8 to amend certains acts, which we discussed earlier.

In other words, Bill C-6 sets up a coordinated and integrated system of land and water management in the Mackenzie Valley. In fact, this bill meets a statutory obligation under the comprehensive land claim agreement with the Gwich'in and with the Sahtu Dene and Metis.

• (1200)

The Gwich'in comprehensive land claim agreement was signed April 22, 1992 and the Sahtu Dene and Metis comprehensive land claim agreement was signed September 6, 1993. I have some concern here about the land claim agreement. In the last Parliament, after the October 1993 election, the House resumed sitting in February and it seems to me that this bill was introduced at that time. The agreement was probably signed on September 6, 1993, but the implementing legislation was most likely introduced in February 1994.

These agreements provide for the establishment of an integrated joint management regime for land and waters in the Mackenzie Valley by establishing three boards. My hon. colleague listed them, but I will repeat anyway: the land use planning board, the Mackenzie Valley land and water board and the environmental impact review board.

As in Bill C-8, in developing legislation to implement agreements, an effort was made to ensure as much as possible that the economic development and environmental aspects are taken care of. As we can see, this bill meets its target in this respect.

These boards will be established as government organizations with their own staff and budget, using government approval procedures and funding terms. A land use planning board will be established in each of the Gwich'in and Sahtu Dene and Metis settlement areas. These will be five member boards. The first nations and the federal and territorial governments will each appoint two members, who, in turn, will appoint a chairperson.

The goal is to have a kind of parity committee, given that the boards are funded in part by the government. This type of parity for committees can be found in several bills. We in the Bloc Quebecois are always inclined to say that this parity should be achieved as early as possible in the process. As a general rule, when the designated members meet, they are supposed to select a chairperson, who will often also be a first nations leader. I think this is a laudable effort.

The boards will have the power develop and review plans as well as propose changes to be made to plans concerning the use of all land outside the area assigned to local administrations and within the designated areas for the entire Mackenzie district. As soon as a plan is approved by a first nation and by the government, it will be used to guide the region's development.

The second board, the Land and Water Board, will consist of 17 members. The permanent regional panels will consist of five members located in each of the Gwitch'in and Sahtu Dene and Metis settlement areas. In addition to these 10 individuals, seven members will be appointed by the government and by the first nations of the three settlement areas located outside these areas.

Once again, the goal is native participation. In this regard, it must be admitted that such participation is a given and is commendable.

The board will have authority for issuing land use permits and water licences with respect to development activities outside the Mackenzie Valley settlement area, or affecting more than one of these areas. The area is fairly specific. It is inhabited by Dene exclusively and there are sub-areas often bearing names related to the Dene culture: Gwitch'in, Deh Cho, Dogrib, names you will often hear, which are significant for the bill before us today.

A permanent regional panel will issue licences according to the needs of the settlement area. This new settlement system will make it possible to implement land claim agreements based on the Northwest Territories Water Act. Before these agreements, certain laws had been put forward by the federal Parliament. These laws will be amended by the bill before the House today.

The agreements will be implemented by means of new land use regulations based on the existing regulations, on the Territorial Lands Act, another law that will be amended by the present bill.

Finally, this bill provides for the creation of the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board. You have to picture the area, which the Mackenzie River cuts right through.

• (1205)

So, whenever an economic development project is implemented, it has an impact on the environment. While the purpose of the bill is to ensure some consistency, it also creates problems. I will explain why in my conclusion.

The environmental impact review board is the counterpart of an economic development agency, which assesses projects from an economic development perspective. So, the Mackenzie Valley environmental impact review board is being established and will consist of 11 members, including a chairperson. Again, the aboriginal community and the government will be equally represented. This is a positive development.

All development activities on the lands and waters of the Mackenzie Valley, including those affecting Indian reservations or

lands governed by a settlement with a first nation, will be subject to the environmental impact review and assessment process.

I said earlier that it will create problems, and I will explain why in my conclusion.

Reviews and assessments in the Mackenzie Valley will be conducted primarily through the board and will partly replace measures relating to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. Once again, the bill amends an existing act. That board may recommend to the minister responsible for a development activity that a proposed project be rejected or that the environmental and socio-economic conditions in which that activity can proceed be defined.

So it is more than just the environment. The social and economic impact of a development project on the aboriginal peoples will also be considered. So we must admit that we are pleased with this item because the considerations will include not only the environment for aboriginal peoples, but also their economic development and the impact of the project on the community. It is important to assess these, and the bill provides for this.

These boards, the three boards that I have just mentioned, will replace the land and water regulations applied by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and by the Northwest Territories Water Board.

The bill provides for a procedure to monitor the cumulative effects—and this also is important—of land and water used on the environment in the Mackenzie Valley, and also for regular independent environmental audits that must be made public. It can happen very often that the immediate environmental impact of an economic development project will be examined, but not the cumulative effect.

I mentioned this earlier. At the time of the gold rush in the Klondike, the immediate impact was not the only concern, but we are now stuck with huge hills of dirt and rocks that were extracted and left behind. This definitely has a very adverse impact on the environment. The impact was immediate and cumulative. So this is a bill that deals with these two concepts and we are pleased with it in that respect.

This could be the job of a board or a department. The Gwich'in and the Sahtu Dene and Metis must play an important role in carrying out these functions. So, I think the famous parity for all boards achieves this objective. I would remind you that there are sub-regions that are not necessarily affected, that have no agreement for the moment; these will be covered by the bill, and this will soon become a problem.

I think it important, particularly because I did so earlier for the Yukon, to situate the Mackenzie Valley for you. It is the part of the Northwest Territories not included in Nunavut. As I said earlier, the Yukon is bordered in the north by Inuvialuit, one of the four Inuit regions in Canada.

Therefore the region we are looking at, which is covered by the bill, runs right alongside Nunavut, which, I remind you, will come into its own in terms of self-government and territorial claims on April 1, 1999. I would like to acknowledge the interim commissioner, who is ensuring a smooth transition. He is our former colleague, Jack Anawak, who was appointed to the position and who is in charge of the entire transition process that will lead to self-government and land claims settlement in Nunavut.

● (1210)

The region affected by the bill before us today is the one immediately adjacent to the Nunavut. It is bordered on the west by Inuvialuit—as has already been said—and by the Yukon, by the Nunavut to the east and the 60th parallel to the south. On the shores of the Mackenzie River are towns that have also been the subject of bills, Fort Norman, Fort Franklin, Norman Wells, Fort Wrigley, Fort Simpson, many regions that are particularly rich in oil.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, these places served both the whites and the Indians as trading posts or winter command posts. There was, of course, no oil exploration, or need for it, at the time. These places were needed instead for the fur trade or as command posts.

The renowned Hudson's Bay Company, for instance, had a trading post at Fort Franklin between 1945 and 1950. A Catholic mission also settled there, in a teepee like construction. Only during the sixties did the Dene settle permanently in Fort Franklin, which they called Deline.

Fort Norman, was also founded as a trading post in 1810, with the aboriginal inspired name of Slavey Tulit's, meaning ''mouth of two rivers''. At first, this place was of seasonal importance for the Dene, then became a permanent settlement in 1872. Then, as an undeniable sign of the colonization of the Northwest Territories by westerners, the English in particular, a hewn timber Anglican church was built at Fort Norman. A great tourist attraction, this building is also a sign of the impact of development by the English.

In the 18th century, the Northwest Company, a subsidiary of Imperial Oil Limited, operated there. This company also operated out of Norman Wells on the east bank of the Mackenzie River. It was there that it obtained mining concessions in 1918 and discovered oil in commercial quantities the following year. So it is an area very rich in oil and gas.

The demand for oil from Norman Wells understandably reached its height during World War II. The need for oil was great. Canada and the world were at war. The war machine depended on oil. Their production therefore reached a peak at this time. This was followed, in 1947, by a dramatic drop because the demand was no

longer there. Demand went up dramatically later and Imperial and Canada mined these deposits jointly.

Norman Wells is the easternmost point of the Canol pipeline. This pipeline was built during World War II so that the community could ship its top quality light crude, a strategic resource, to the Alaska route and to centres in the south. The oil pipeline that extends from the Northwest Territories to Zama, Alberta, also ends at Norman Wells in the north.

I recall, by the way, discussing the Canol pipeline when we looked at the bill concerning wells at Norman Wells.

As I have tried to show, the Mackenzie Valley is rich in natural resources and in history. It represents an important chapter in the history of relations between Canadians and the native peoples. It seems obvious to me that those settlers bold enough to do business in this area of the country made their fortunes.

I do not want to repeat everything I said about Bill C-8, but it is pretty much the history of Canada all over again. The first settlers arrived, took possession of the land and the resources and made vast fortunes. The native peoples are still stuck on reserves waiting for the day when they will reap the economic benefits. We know that they are practically living like a third world nation, in very difficult socio-economic conditions. It is a shame that a way has never been found to share equitably the wealth generated by the multinationals and by Canada.

Was this done at the expense of the native peoples? I have just told you that it was. That is the big question. Naturally, there are grey areas. Some people blame the multinationals or the Canadian government, while others argue it is the fault of the native people for refusing to assume their responsibilities. But there is no denying that the socio-economic conditions of native peoples are far inferior to those of all other Canadians.

● (1215)

So even if this needs to be qualified, we believe that this great epic did not always benefit aboriginal peoples. It did very often benefit Canadians who struck it rich, but at the expense of aboriginal lifestyles.

A number of Canadians settled in the Mackenzie Valley and spread their culture there. Many Indians also live there. There are first nations, including the Dene in certain subregions, who are extremely proud of their subregion and who have been living in these areas since time immemorial. There are, among others, the Gwitch'in, the Sahtu Dene and Metis, the Deh Cho and the Dogrib, all subregions of the Greater Mackenzie Valley where aboriginal peoples have shaped Canadian culture through their ancient aboriginal heritage. They have also preserved their culture.

The information we have today on the aboriginals living in the valley is still incomplete. However, observations made by western explorers and traders who travelled through this area confirm that the Dene nation split into three cultural groups: the eastern group, which includes the Yellow Knives, the Dogribs and the Hares, the Slaveys, the Chipewyan and the Beaver; the southwest group that includes the Nahane, the Sekani, the Babine and the Carriers; the northwest group that includes the Kutchin, the Loucheux, the Ahtena and the Khotana.

We can see that in the Dene culture, there are also subcultures, and these people inhabit areas in the Mackenzie Valley covered by this bill.

The word Dene comes from one of the main language groups, the Athapascans, who spread out across Canada, from the Rocky Mountains to Hudson's Bay. In fact, I have in my office a lovely map representing the 50 aboriginal languages still being used across Canada. I must say that Athapaskan is indeed a widely used aboriginal language and one of the main aboriginal languages in Canada.

Incidentally—if I may open a brief parenthesis here—the retention level of these languages is probably better in Quebec than in the rest of Canada. In fact, statistics show that language retention is better among natives in Quebec than elsewhere in Canada. I will close this parenthesis by saying that 50 languages is not insignificant; it goes to show how rich the aboriginal culture is.

The Athapaskans came up with a word that is both very simple and very rich to describe any human being, male or female, any individual or people, including themselves: Dene.

Recently, this word was given a narrower meaning in the political arena. It has become identified with the first nation settled in Denendeh, in the Deh Cho Valley—the Mackenzie Valley—also called Dehogà by the K'ahsho got'ine. In the Dene language, earth, the land, is called ''ndeh'' or ''nne'', hence Denendeh, the land of the people, of the Dene.

I know the parliamentary debates translation team will no doubt be calling my office, as they did after my speech on Bill C-8, but we must keep the aboriginal names. I find it important to keep repeating these names in this House so that we do not forget the great aboriginal culture. I think it is only doing them justice to mention these peoples' names. I also appreciate that it is not easy to keep track for those recording our proceedings. I can assure them of my full co-operation in providing them with any information they might need after I conclude my remarks.

According to the writings of Father Morice, aboriginal nations in the Mackenzie Valley lived off fishing and caribou hunting. They also trapped. Their means of transportation were, and still are, canoes in the summer and snowshoes or dogsleds in the winter.

With whatever they hunt or trap, they make toboggans, clothes, including mittens and coats, and fish nets.

In fact, when I visited the neighbouring region, where the Dene influence is also noticeable, I was impressed by the beautiful and warm mitts, coats, moccasins and clothes that are made and decorated in the great aboriginal cultural tradition of that region of the country.

Since the early days of colonization, relations between the Dene and westerners have always been marked by struggles for territorial ownership. These disputes concern Canadians, who are not very familiar with their object and primary cause. In fact, conflicts occur when the government does not consult aboriginal peoples regarding the development and disposal of their lands. The problem is not a new one: it has always existed.

The disputes essentially relate to the fact that aboriginals and westerners do not share the same vision of the world. Their values are different and often opposed. Let me give you an example.

• (1220)

We westerners have a tendency to say that the land belongs to us. We set boundaries, we mark out the lands we buy in the cities and in the country. In aboriginal culture, the land belongs to everyone. This major philosophical difference has often generated problems. The solution is, of course, to establish the kind of relationship that will benefit both cultures.

It must be realized that, for the first settlers and for the immigrants who followed them, Canada represented an opportunity for a new life. But in the case of aboriginal people, their lives would never be the same. In precolonial times the aboriginal people were autonomous and independent, with their own political system, their own social system, their own educational system. Afterward, they saw their property and their lands slip from their control. A number of historians and ethnologists feel that Canada's prosperity in the north was achieved at the expense of the Indians, as I have already said.

Colonization concentrated initially on the agricultural lands of the south. The resource-rich lands were, however, exploited almost as soon as they were discovered, for instance the treaty 8 and treaty 11 lands in this particular region. Gold was discovered in the Klondike in 1896, and the gold rush began. That is what prompted Canada to sign treaty No. 8 with the Dene, who were opposed to prospectors and miners coming through their territory.

I referred to Voisey Bay when I was speaking on Bill C-8. The same thing is still happening today. We arrive, we explore, we find huge deposits, and we move into lands that have always been inhabited by aboriginal nations as if they were our own. We churn out millions of dollars without any concern for fairness, for paying back part of it in the form of royalties, at least to the aboriginal people.

The treaty was signed in particular because of the 1920 discovery of oil deposits at Norman Wells in the Mackenzie Basin. We can see the spirit behind the treaties, that they were mutual agreements. From the moment that wealth was discovered, there was an interest in signing treaties in order to avoid problems. However, when there was no wealth, we left people alone.

Canada put a lot of effort into trying to convince the Indians that signing Treaty No. 8 and Treaty No. 11 would mean no encroachment on lands and no meddling in their life, which was based on hunting, fishing and trapping. As I said, the signing of Treaty No. 8 and Treaty No. 11 has to be seen in the context of the political and economic events of the time that were shaping Canada's future. These treaties came about as a result of the Klondike gold rush between 1896 and 1898 and of the development by both individuals and businesses of resources like oil and gas, which we looked at earlier in connection with Bill C-8. These events created a very fevered climate.

The Indians, furious at the damage to their economy and the fires in their forests—people did not bother to cut down trees, the forest was simply burned so mining equipment could be brought in—reacted strongly to the invasion of their lands. In June 1898, the Indians around Fort St. John refused to allow police and miners onto their land until a treaty was concluded. The government felt that a treaty had to be concluded with them on their rights to the land.

The treaty commissioners met the Cree and the Dene, who owned 324,900 square kilometres from northern Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia to south of Hay River and of Great Slave Lake in the Northwest Territories. Under Treaty No. 8, the crown continued its policy of offering benefits to Indians who allowed settlers to move onto their land.

This treaty includes the usual clauses on the surrender and transfer of land in exchange for government protection, although the commissioners did not discuss these clauses with the northern aboriginal population. There were no discussions, these clauses were simply applied. So these are the infamous clauses referred to as the extinguishing clauses.

The negotiations went on for many months, and as can often be seen throughout the history of Canada, these negotiations show a lack of understanding by officials of the conditions laid down by the Cree and Dene nations. When these treaties were negotiated, the commissioners did not explain clearly to the first nations the meaning of the concepts of surrender and transfer contained in these documents.

For the Indians, any talks on these lands were based on the assumption that they would keep what they considered to be sufficient land in their respective areas, while allowing newcomers to share them.

● (1225)

As I said earlier, while according to western philosophy the land must be owned by someone, according to aboriginal philosophy, the land belongs to everyone.

Many nations thought they were signing peace and friendship treaties, not land transfer treaties. It is also unlikely that, in their eagerness to close these deals quickly, commissioners spent very much time explaining the concept of land transfer in any great detail.

What I am saying has been faithfully reported in the report of the royal commission on aboriginal peoples.

In a word, the concepts and principles of land transfer contained in these two treaties reflect a different reality, depending on whether one is an aboriginal or a Canadian. No sooner were the treaties signed that the authorities started passing legislation and drafting regulations limiting the fishing, hunting and trapping activities of the aboriginal peoples, which is exactly what they had been afraid of. As a result of these measures, the Dene were condemned to live in poverty and the very foundation of their economy was undermined, while the newcomers on the land benefited and continue to benefit from the godsend that the natural resources in the Mackenzie Valley truly are.

Ownership of the land and resources covered by Treaty No. 8 and Treaty No. 11 has given rise to lengthy discussions on politics and economics, court challenges, comprehensive claims and an inquiry, the one conducted by Mr. Justice Berger.

I find it important to give an overview of the purpose of the two agreements. The bill before us today stems from two agreements, one concerning the Dene settlements on Sahtu land and the other concerning the Gwich'in.

If we pay attention to the way the agreements are worded, we can see that the purpose of both the Gwich'in and the Sahtu comprehensive agreements are identical. It is worthwhile taking a closer look.

The Dene, Metis and Gwich'in people of Canada negotiated the agreement with the following objectives in mind: first, to clearly define the right to own and to use the land and its resources; second, to confer the rights and benefits set out in the agreement in exchange for waiving certain claims which the Dene, Metis and Gwich'ins have, in any part of Canada, by treaty or otherwise. That is the famous extinguishing clause I referred to earlier.

Third, to recognize and promote the way of life of the Dene, Metis and Gwich'in, which is based on their cultural and economic relations with the land. For them, the land is something that belongs to everyone. So, this treaty attempts to reconcile the two philosophies.

Fourth, to promote self-sufficiency for the Sahtu Dene, Metis and Gwich'in, and to recognize their ability to fully participate in all aspects of economic life. They want to move away from the infamous Indian Act. They want a land base with adequate resources to ensure their own economic autonomy.

Fifth, to grant specific benefits, including allowances, lands and other economic benefits, to the Dene, Metis and Gwich'in. Sixth, to grant to the Dene, Metis and Gwich'in rights regarding wildlife harvesting, as well as the right to take part in the decisions relating to wildlife management and to hunting, in accordance with aboriginal culture.

Seventh, to give to the Dene, Metis and Gwich'in the right to take part in the decisions on the use, management and conservation of land, water and resources. The bill before us today applies specifically to this part.

Eighth, to protect and to preserve wildlife and the environment in the region covered to the settlement, for the benefit of present and future generations. Another cultural trait of aboriginal people is that they often think of future generations. Mohawks, among others, often speak of the seventh generation. In other words, their current decisions are based on the fact that the seventh generation must also benefit from them.

Finally, to guarantee to the Dene and Metis the possibility of signing agreements on self-government. These changes are being negotiated and could become reality in the days and months to come.

The Dene, who live in the south of that territory, continue to consider Treaty No. 8 and Treaty No. 11 as the legal and political basis of their relations with Canada. It is the same everywhere. People say there have always been problems regarding the implementation of these two treaties, and there are still problems today.

● (1230)

They want to review the original treaties and interpret them. At the time, in certain numbered treaties, there was a reference to providing a medical kit. Today, aboriginal peoples feel they are entitled to full medical services. And the government is rejecting this wholly or in part.

So, aboriginal peoples would like to see effect given to Treaty No. 8 and Treaty No. 11.

This brings me finally to the position of the Bloc Quebecois.

Mr. Gérard Asselin: Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the hon. member for Saint-Jean, is giving an excellent speech before the House, a speech that required a great deal of research, because the member is concerned about aboriginal communities. He is giving an excellent speech in the House, having spent much time and effort, and I find it unfortunate that there are only two Liberal

members, and even only one Liberal member out of the 155 in the House. I ask therefore for a quorum count.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): An hon. member has called quorum. Do we have a quorum?

And the count having been taken:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The Chair has determined that there is a quorum in the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for all the significance he attaches to the aboriginal voice and to the aboriginal nations in Canada. It is a pity that people are more interested in having lunch than in hearing about the future of the aboriginal nations. This may be a reflection of government behaviour toward aboriginal issues in recent years. I feel it is quite symptomatic of what is going on. I would like to thank my colleague nevertheless.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. With all the respect I have for my colleague opposite, and in particular his commitment to and work in the area of aboriginal affairs, to somehow want to leave us with the view that having lunch is more important than the issue before the House is total rubbish. On the other hand, I do not think it is parliamentary to reflect on the absence of members. It does not serve well either side of the House.

I do not want to take any more time of the House because the issue being debated is very important. I salute my colleague opposite who does a tremendous amount of work on this issue. However I hope he would stay to the debate and substance of the issue rather than reflect on the presence or absence of members.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The government whip is quite correct. It is an established precedent in the House that we do not reflect on the absence or presence of members of the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand: Mr. Speaker, you will agree with me, however, that the procedural question as to whether there is a quorum does not mean that the House is full at that time. It means the opposite rather. I think that is what my hon. colleague meant to say. I agree with the hon. government whip that I may have gone further than I meant to when I said that the Liberal Party was more interested in having lunch than in looking after the aboriginal nations.

As for the position of the Bloc Quebecois, and I will conclude with this since I have not much time left, the Bloc Quebecois will oppose this bill on the following grounds. There are two agreements, one with the Sahtu Dene and the other with the Gwich'in. The government said it would use those agreements as the basis of a bill which would handle the entire question of water and lands in the Mackenzie Valley. By that very fact, all of the other communities have not settled their claims are being included. That strikes us as a major problem.

We have consulted these communities and they have told us that they had pulled out of the negotiations and that now legislation was being applied to them, implementing follow-up or application of an agreement that does not concern them. In other words, no land claim agreements were concluded with them, and here we are imposing one because of agreements that were reached elsewhere.

• (1235)

Specifically, the Deh Cho and the Dogrib withdrew from the agreements and were not consulted on anything further. Today they are faced with a bill that will be including them.

There are implementation problems of such proportion, in my opinion, that the Bloc cannot today support such a bill.

Another point was raised in discussions, particularly with the Deh Cho and the Dogrib. They wanted complete sovereignty over their land. In other words, they no longer wanted to be a part of Canada, and the federal government is totally opposed to that sort of thing. I wanted to raise the point because I did not want this example to be used to tell Quebec that the native peoples in northern Quebec were entitled to separate from northern Quebec.

If it is not permitted in Canada, it should not be permitted in Quebec either, and if this is the case, the sovereignists and the federalists should not be going at each other over the ins and outs of this debate. I felt it important to say that.

Therefore, the Bloc Quebecois opposes Bill C-6, because it wants it to apply only to the native peoples in the Sahtu region and to the Gwich'in, with whom the government has agreements. We oppose having the bill apply to the others as well. Accordingly, the Bloc Quebecois opposes the bill at second reading.

[*English*]

Ms. Louise Hardy (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of the aboriginal royal commission, the passage of Bill C-6 is not just about honouring federal government obligations or paying moral debt to aboriginal people. It is about the development and implementation of firm and consensual foundations for a new relationship between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians. In this case it is about a fair sharing of Mackenzie Valley land and water

resources and the strengthening of a relationship of mutual and peaceful co-existence.

It is my pleasure to rise in the House to participate in the debate on Bill C-6, an act to provide for an integrated system of land and water management in the Mackenzie Valley, to establish certain boards for that purpose and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

The bill implements obligations under land claims agreements between the Government of Canada, the Gwich'in, the Sahtu Dene and the Metis respectively. The main purpose of the bill in accordance with the land claims agreements is to create an integrated co-management regime for land and waters in the Mackenzie Valley that would be applied through the creation of certain boards.

These boards will be comprised of 50% first nations representatives and the other 50% federal and territorial representatives. This will give the first nations a far stronger role in decision making. It is the result of extensive consultations and a co-operative effort among the northwest first nations, the territorial government and the federal government.

The Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated supports the enactment of the bill. The Gwich'in Tribal Council is on record supporting the bill. The Government of the Northwest Territories supports the intent of the bill. The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and the Canada Energy Pipeline Association support the bill. We support the bill and speedy passage of the legislation. One of the main reasons for our support is the co-operative effort behind the drafting of the bill.

The bill provides the land use planning boards with the power to develop land use plans and to ensure that future use of the land is done according to the approved plans. The land and water boards and their panels are given the power to regulate the use of the lands and the water, including the issuance of land permits and water licences. The Environmental Impact Review Board will be the main instrument for the examination of the environmental impact of proposed development, including public review.

With an increase in local accountability and responsibility, particularly when the northwest first nation and the territorial government will be in the majority position on each of the boards being created, there is no question that the new integrated system of land and water management in the Mackenzie Valley will be far more sustainable in the long run.

For example, the Kluane first nations and non-aboriginal people who live in an area of Kluane have land use planning boards. The population in that area is just over 300 people and those meetings regularly draw out over 150 people to participate in the planning and care of the land in that area.

● (1240)

The Liberals have made polluters responsible for policing themselves. Degradation of our environment including air, soil and water has increased under the government. Canada is falling behind its international obligations to protect the environment. Our Arctic is polluted because of specific actions or policies of the federal government. The federal Government of Canada is failing to protect our air, water resources and ecosystems, and there is a long record to prove it.

We are all aware of and have experienced the dramatic implications, including in my own riding, of the cuts in spending and staff the government has imposed on Environment Canada. The impact of such a policy has been compounded by provincial and territorial cuts in the same areas.

Canadians have seen the environmental protection service of Environment Canada hard hit with the downsizing of the government. This was the branch that set unenforced regulations on industries like mining, chemical production, and pulp and paper. We are aware the federal government with its ideological doctrine of business competitiveness and deregulation is imposing declining standards on our environmental conservation programs.

We are optimistic that the devolution process and the implementation of land claims agreements like the one being completed by the passage of the bill will stop the trend to degrading our environment.

The relationship between the first nations and the environment is one embedded in a different cultural relationship and is not there for short term economic gain.

The report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples grasped the spiritual relationship of the first nations with their environment. The final report of the commission indicated the ultimate importance to aboriginal societies of the spiritual relationship to the land. The relationship arises not only because of dependence on the natural world for life itself but out of a belief that human beings were placed on earth at creation and given special responsibilities for the stewardship of our environment.

The views of aboriginal society will now be included in the new resource policy for the valley. It will be its responsibility to manage land and water in the valley in the most appropriate way.

It is a pleasure to be present and participate in the debate of a bill promoting a more positive relationship between aboriginal groups and the rest of Canadians. Bill C-6 has implemented a new approach concerning the recognition of the rights of aboriginal people in the management of land and water resources. This new approach ratifies respect for the treaty relationships that Canada is

creating with our aboriginal societies. That is good for aboriginals of the country and good for Canada as a nation.

In conclusion, I reiterate our support for the bill and will work for its passage in a quick and speedy way that shows respect for the people who so carefully drafted the bill.

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to make a few remarks about the principle of Bill C-6. I believe in and will speak to the principle of the bill. I make these remarks as the Progressive Conservative critic of Indian affairs and northern development. I also make them as someone who has over the years watched from a distance. Frankly I have been amazed at the length of time it takes for the valid aspirations of aboriginal peoples to be satisfied by the Government of Canada.

I am most thankful that aboriginal leadership in the Mackenzie Valley has been so very patient over the decades with what I am willing to bet was an endless round of negotiation with government officials.

This is no ordinary bill. It represents a principle that is so laudable and so welcome Canadians should be thankful it has arrived after so many years of toing and froing.

● (1245)

Hon. members may know this bill represents a conclusion of sorts to the precedent setting litigation and negotiation of aboriginal title claims in the Northwest Territories. Perhaps some will remember that the native peoples up there were faced with what some saw as the stark reality of a huge development project showing up on their doorstep without any input from them.

Essentially there were and remain, of course, concerns about a disruption of a way of life, a disruption of the lands and the waters. For people in the Northwest Territories, life is the land and the water. One of the most remarkable features of this land is the great and powerful Mackenzie River, one of the world's longest at 4,241 kilometres. It and its huge valley need to be respected and protected.

I am only just learning the history of this land myself. Perhaps it would be useful to cite some of it respecting this matter so that other members might better understand this legislation.

On April 2, 1973, 24 years ago, some 16 bands filed a caveat in the land titles office in Yellowknife claiming aboriginal rights to almost half the land in the Northwest Territories. When they did that, they got the government's attention. The effect of that caveat would have been to make any further land grants in the area subject to the claim of the Indians if it were subsequently found that they had a valid legal interest in the land.

That may sound like legalese and I suppose it is, but it is very important legalese and it was very important to the eventual settlement of the land claims in the Northwest Territories and in Canada as a whole.

Hearings were held and an interim judgment was handed down from the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories which upheld the caveat saying ''that there is enough doubt as to whether the full aboriginal title has been extinguished, certainly in the minds of the Indians, to justify the caveat or to protect the Indian position until a final adjudication can be obtained''.

This process has moved slowly and if you will pardon the pun it has moved glacially slowly. Of course, the federal government appealed. That hearing was to take place before the appellate division of the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories in June 1975. Assuredly, this has been a slow process.

Meanwhile, tired of waiting but wanting to get on with the job, behind the scenes the aboriginal leadership negotiated successfully with the then minister of Indian affairs to engage in preliminary discussions to develop the groundwork for a comprehensive settlement of Indian claims in the Northwest Territories. Essentially the aboriginal leadership pushed the idea of fairness, not a radical idea. They were adamant that a settlement of native claims must precede the pipeline or any other major development projects.

This evolved slowly. Maybe for some it was terribly slow. Certainly a great many people got tired of waiting. Finally it evolved to the present date, until Bill C-6 is before us today.

This bill, I am told, was developed by a co-ordinating group comprised of representatives from DIAND, Northwest Territories government, representatives of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, the Sahtu Secretariat and the Department of Justice. We are all hopeful that their many years of dialogue have borne fruit.

The Progressive Conservative Party is in favour of transferring responsibilities and power to the local level and sharing management and development duties. We believe, as most Canadians believe, that this is an important step in empowering all residents of the Northwest Territories. In principle, the joint boards this bill will establish are a good idea. However, I am looking forward to the hearings before committee to give it closer examination.

This bill is intended to implement obligations under land claims signed five years ago, as well as in September 1993. In 1992, the Gwitch'in Tribal Council settled a comprehensive land claim that provided for 22,422 square kilometres of land in the northwestern portion of the Northwest Territories and 1,554 square kilometres of land in Yukon. It also provided for subsurface rights, a share in the resource royalties derived from the valley, tax free capital transfers, hunting rights, a greater role in the management of wildlife,

land and the environment, and the right of first refusal on a variety of activities related to wildlife.

• (1250)

These are good things and surely we have made some headway since 1973. Yet if they represent one principle it would be one related to good government. I am sure the current minister would recognize the efforts and the success of the previous Conservative government in establishing this excellent partnership.

The bill before us provides for the establishment of management boards to co-ordinate environmental assessment and land and water regulation in the Mackenzie Valley. The valley is 4,241 kilometres long. This is a huge undertaking by the government of this country and I commend the government for it. People often think of the north or the Mackenzie Valley as a barren wasteland. On the contrary, it has been home to the Inuit and the Dene for 10,000 years. Martin Frobisher's expeditions back in the 1570s were the first recorded visits to the Northwest Territories by an outsider.

I hope this bill will go some way to ensure that with all the wealth and the potential to be found under the surface of the land and the water in the Mackenzie Valley that outsiders respect the land and water and that they show some respect for the people who are called the insiders of the Mackenzie Valley.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me as the representative for the Conservative Party to participate in this debate. The Progressive Conservative Party of Canada supports this bill. We support its goals and aspirations. Furthermore we support the goals and the aspirations of the people who live in the north and who have brought this bill forward.

Mr. Derrek Konrad (Prince Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of points with respect to the hon. member's speech. He claimed that the aboriginals have claimed up to half the territory of the Northwest Territories. This rather ambitious claim could have been dealt with in two ways, through the courts or through negotiation.

In the years following that claim, governments have decided not to use the courts as a method of resolving these claim disputes. When a dispute arises if one partner feels he is in an advantageous position it is very unlikely that he will be willing to go to court. He obviously wants to negotiate.

He lauded the past Conservative government for negotiating away large tracts of land and many rights and benefits not on the basis of long term residency in the Northwest Territories but on the basis of race. Could the member comment on whether he believes this is the way to go?

He talked about first rights of refusal on many activities. Is that the correct way to go? He knows that when one group obtains rights it is usually at the expense of another group. I would like him to clarify some of these things for me, especially the issue of adjudication or negotiation.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his questions. He raises some valid points. We in this House have to remember that these issues are not completely settled yet. It is second reading of the bill. We have a way to go yet. I was alluding to the general thrust and the point of the bill. Certainly we support that.

• (1255)

The hon. member commented on the size of the land claim agreement, the fact that it deals with surface rights and that the north is a polyglot of people and represents more than just the native peoples. Many people have moved to the north in the last couple of hundred years. The bill applies to everyone in the north. It is our belief that there is room for everyone and there is room in this bill to include everyone.

It is not the intent of this party to leave any group out and I do not believe it is the intent of the bill to leave any group in the north out. I think it is all-encompassing and reflects the rights of everyone.

Hon. Ethel Blondin-Andrew (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on Bill C-6, the Mackenzie Valley resource management act. I have been listening to my colleagues on all sides of the House speak to this bill. It has been a very interesting and rewarding experience, to say the least, that we have agreements on various aspects, if not the total intent and principle of the bill.

First, the principles on which this bill is based are sound and acceptable I believe to most members. The obligation to provide a bill to help us to give life to provisions of those claims that have been settled is quite clear.

We have an obligation because we have enacted legislation at another time that clearly indicates that in order for those claims to have full effect and force, this regime needs to be enacted. That is quite clear. It is indisputable.

I believe that Bill C-6 is proposed to enhance local public government in the Mackenzie Valley, to provide certainty and consistency for residents and industry and fulfil outstanding obligations under the Gwich'in and Sahtu Dene and Metis land claim agreements.

It is not unusual for any government to find itself in a catch-22 situation because not all things happen at the same time or at the same speed. There are those in the Mackenzie Valley area who have yet to settle their claims. There are those who have concerns but we are only at second reading of the bill. It is quite plain to see that the democratic process will allow them to have their say, that will

make provisions for them to speak their mind to the bill and to quell their fears.

Some features of the Mackenzie Valley resource management act will act as an advantage to Mackenzie Valley First Nations without claim settlements. These are to be interpreted. When we interpret them each individual and group comes up with its own interpretation.

First, clause 5(2) should give some comfort to those individuals. It speaks to the aboriginal and treaty rights being protected under that clause. It is an act that would be reviewed in consultation with First Nations, which I just spoke to previously. Clause 5(1) states that it does not affect the Indian Act.

Clauses 99 and 112 provide for the nomination of members to the boards, thereby providing a much stronger voice in resource management decision making throughout the Mackenzie Valley.

Clause 108 allows for permanent regional land and water panels on settlement of land claims.

There are also advances for the Government of the Northwest Territories. It clearly support this. We have in writing the support of the territorial government for this integrated management resource regime. It is a system it feels holds the principles of equality that will allow for all groups to come forward and to participate with a good sense of fairness and equal participation.

● (1300)

It also talks about public boards in parts 4 and 5 while integrating the regions. It provides a form of public government that may accommodate self-government, co-management of resources endorsed by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

Many of these issues and nuances that relate to it or aspects of it could be debated by various members but generally the obligation for us to enact this bill is clear. The principles that it holds are democratic, fair and representative and I believe have a fair buy-in from all parties concerned.

The government is not into a regime of overregulation so that industry cannot move. That is not what this government is on about. We are not about exclusion and hiding a set of guidelines that preclude everyone else. That is not the extent to which the government would like to operate. What we are on about is to make it so that the goals are commendable and that there are clear reasons for this House to support this legislation.

The parliamentary secretary has informed the House that the regional land claim agreements of the Gwich'in, the Sahtu Dene and Metis commit the government to establish a new resource regulatory regime in the respective settlement areas. They have also heard from NDP members, members opposite, and my hon. colleague from the Conservative Party who just spoke about some of these issues.

The boards created under Bill C-6 are public government boards which will operate in the public interest. These boards are extremely important. Not only is the process important but the ensuing products of this act will be extremely important because they are integrated and they are meant to serve all people. They are meant not to prejudice, nor to abrogate or derogate the rights of those who have yet to settle their claims.

The intent of the government is to serve all fairly. That is what raises the whole spectre of a catch 22. In trying to serve all members of its constituencies fairly, we face this dilemma. We are at second reading. We know that those individuals who have concerns have the opportunity to be heard. That is extremely important.

Under the new regime, people from the Mackenzie Valley will sit on the boards. There will be an opportunity for increased input through public hearings. As well the nominees of different groups will bring their own perspectives to the boards resulting in a balance of interest and best overall decisions.

I would like to speak to why it is absolutely important that we have this regime. In the Northwest Territories we are about to become the producer, a significant producer of quality diamonds in Canada's north. By 1998 the first mine will account for about 6% of the world's diamond production by value. With other prospects coming into production this could climb to 15% or more within the next 10 years.

We do not hear much about that. We hear about Voisey's Bay and all of the other regimes which are coming forward, but this is significant. This is the largest diamond development in the western hemisphere, outside of a small diamond development in Colorado to the south of us.

The diamond industry is unlike any other. Canada will soon join an exclusive club of producers of one of the most valuable and coveted commodities on earth. We are believed to be in the top percentage of the highest value of diamonds in the world. Diamond mining produces an exceptionally high return on investment at approximately 50%.

For example a company which is currently in diamond development in the north will recover the capital costs associated with its first mine at Lac de Gras within the first five years of operation. How many businesses do that? Usually there are long term strategic goals for economic recovery in a new business. This is significant. The company will go on to generate over $14.3 billion in income during 25 years with just one mine. There are other proposed mines. Its profit over that same period is estimated at $4.3 billion.

• (1305)

Yes, I am aware that there are fair returns for the people who live there, but there are other things we must consider.

The Government of Canada will also be a major beneficiary of the north's new diamond mining industry. It will earn $2.4 billion in taxes and royalties just with the first diamond mine. The federal government's net fiscal benefits increase to $4.4 billion when royalties, corporate and personal income taxes, indirect and induced fiscal impacts and grant offsets to the Government of the Northwest Territories are factored in. These are all new numbers. They are not generated by our government but they are out there.

Of all the parties involved, the Northwest Territories stands to gain the least from this lucrative industry. It will receive only $.2 billion. So far that is the information we have and the information I have. All this to say that the $7 million raised annually in tax revenues by the territorial government will be far less than what it will spend on infrastructure and social programs over the lifetime of the mine. That is significant considering the cutbacks various levels of government have experienced.

Despite advertising claims, diamonds are not forever. The governments and people at the territorial level feel that the newest industry in Canada, developing diamond value added industries in Canada should be done in the north. Billions of dollars and potentially hundreds if not thousands of manufacturing and retail jobs are at stake.

Every diamond producing country in the world demands valuation and sorting take place within its borders before diamonds are exported. This apparently is the standard. Many require that diamonds be set aside for domestic production or insist on a cutting and polishing industry domestically.

As a result, thriving diamond industries exist in places as diverse as Gaborone, Botswana, Freetown and Perth. In the Northwest Territories the residents and the leaders believe no less and we share the same view that those value added activities should happen within our own borders. What happens in the Northwest Territories is good for Alberta, Manitoba, B.C., Saskatchewan, Newfoundland, Quebec and Ontario because we have a small population. We attract those people by way of service contracts and workers.

When I go home I travel almost every week with workers who are going out to those activities including the other mines that had a rough ride with their stocks and shares last night. Nonetheless there is that kind of development in the north.

In the Northwest Territories we have other activities that are ensuing. Lots of land has been put up for bid for exploration. Some very welcome contenders have put bids on those. I cannot say the names of those groups. They are in the oil and gas field and we also have gold and other mineral resource development in the north.

Oil and gas is a major industry for our people in the north and we value that. That is why we seek a balance with this legislation. We know we need to have that kind of a balance. We know we need to be able to speak to all the parts of this bill, all the constituents of this bill, not just one aspect.

It is extremely important that the recipients, the major benefactors in terms of resource development, be northerners. That does not mean them exclusively. It means other levels in this country, the federal government, the territorial government, the municipal governments, industry and various other industries from abroad should benefit as well. There is a balance to be struck but there is far greater opportunity than I think we recognize.

This is an important bill because it is a step forward in the devolution process in the Northwest Territories. It will ensure government for and by those directly affected by the decisions. It will ensure better overall planning of development, as well as a better understanding of the cumulative environmental effects of development. These boards will serve the interests of land owners, developers and the public alike.

• (1310)

I am not a stranger to the views that prevail out there on this particular bill. I have had access to industry members who do not necessarily favour it. I have had access to aboriginal groups who do not favour various parts of this bill but who think the principles if they apply to everyone are fair and okay.

I have had access to the groups that will be well served by this bill but who understand and are sensitive to their colleagues. They know that nonetheless unless they have this bill they will not be able to enact those provisions in their claims. They cannot move forward to actualize and implement their claim the way they should unless they have this bill.

Therefore the dilemma we have is that we must do our level best in this House, as members of the House, to serve all of those who would best be served by finding the balance in the legislation to respect the rights of all those who will be affected by it. That does not mean we do not do anything, that we are caught in inertia or that we are paralyzed. It means that we must be careful and thoughtful, which is what we do as legislators, and we should be.

The new boards will have powers under the legislation. The boards will have the right to summon witnesses and order them to give evidence or produce documents necessary for carrying out the board's responsibilities. This will be enforceable in the same manner as an order of the courts.

Decisions and orders of the boards may be appealed to the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories. If there is a conflict between this legislation and a land claim settlement, the settlement agreement will prevail. That is apparently the law.

The law is subject to interpretation and it is subject to the way it is enforced. Laws are not meant to be brutal. Laws are meant to be enforced considering the human factor. The human factor is a multifaceted one. It is one which has many sides.

We do not live in the Northwest Territories, especially in the Mackenzie Valley, in a homogeneous setting. We live in a heterogeneous setting. We have many cultures and many groups. We have many people with different levels of education and skills. We have people who are in industry. We have people who have an extreme attachment to environmental issues.

We continue in our own way in the Northwest Territories to find the balance. I as a legislator am tasked with this. My view is that it is important that we fulfil the crown's commitments to the Gwich'in, the Sahtu Dene and the Metis.

As the parliamentary secretary has indicated, extensive consultations have taken place regarding this legislation. I appreciate the concerns and issues which have been raised by the First Nations in the Northwest Territories. It is my obligation as their member of Parliament to see this time as an opportunity for discussion and debate to continue. Let them come forward with their views. They can best speak to them. I cannot speak on their behalf.

I therefore urge my hon. colleagues to join me in supporting Bill C-6. It speaks to many of the issues I have raised, such as the profile of one of the major developments in the western hemisphere, the whole diamond industry, which is unprecedented in North America.

We have an opportunity to build. We have an opportunity to share. We have an opportunity to work together. I do not see any mitigating factors which would prevent us from doing that. I do not see anything stopping us from engaging in a process that is fair, consultative and that looks for the best product for our citizens. It is our obligation to do that as members of Parliament, as ministers of the crown, or whatever role we are engaged in in an official capacity.

I hope we will take this opportunity to invite those who have questions to come forward and to speak for themselves.

● (1315)

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I was particularly impressed with the content, passion and the obvious understanding with which the hon. member presented her arguments in favour of Bill C-6.

There are a couple of questions I would like to address to the hon. member which deal with some of the words used which reverberate very favourably in my mind. These are words like fairness, balance and the development of the economy for individuals and entrepreneurs as well as for the country at large.

I ask the hon. member if she would please tell the House to what degree would her government be prepared to amend the proposed bill which is now before the House to accommodate some of the questions and concerns that the first nations, the Metis and business people have, as well as other people across Canada. She states rather correctly that many of the things that will be done here will affect not only the Northwest Territories but Alberta and other provinces and the federal government in particular.

I wonder if she would address to what degree will she and her government accept amendments to accommodate the various conflicting interests at this time.

Hon. Ethel Blondin-Andrew: Mr. Speaker, I have been in Parliament for nine years, now in my third term. It has been my experience that amendments are a way of life when we are dealing with various acts and bills.

We are talking very strongly about the principles of this bill. I have not heard any amendments come forward. I do not have a list of amendments. Those groups that will best speak for themselves, that have those concerns have not come forward and given me those lists or inventories of amendments. I am not the minister to speak to those or the parliamentary secretary. They will be dealt with in a fair and judicious manner.

However, we must remember that the principles of the bill should be upheld and not be undercut by amendments which would take the bill down. That would not be acceptable. It would defeat the original purpose of the bill.

I believe that we have a consultative process and ideas are brought forward which will best reflect what is needed for all constituents concerned with this bill. I think those will be entertained.

I cannot come forward today and say that certain sections of the bill will be amended. I cannot do that because it is unrealistic. I would assume it does not undercut the principles of the bill or undo the bill generally. At various stages amendments are entertained. However, I do not know of any specifics from the constituent groups yet.

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member and I congratulate her on her remarks.

I want to comment on a couple of things in the bill in general and specifically on the devolution of power to the NWT. I would like her to comment on the government's position about the devolution of power. Is there a willingness on behalf of the government to follow up Bill C-6 with necessary bills and regulations which will

eventually lead to some type of provincial recognition by the government of Canada, as many other provinces have evolved in the country? Is there a willingness on behalf of the government to follow that through?

Hon. Ethel Blondin-Andrew: Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak on behalf of the minister responsible for this bill. However, within the confines of the territorial government's legislative assembly a speech was given about the support for devolution. Following there were arrangements with regard to health and we transferred responsibilities for that. We are in the process of looking at various other opportunities on both sides which will speak to honouring the whole process of devolution. However, we must take caution.

• (1320)

In devolving responsibility we must understand that there are many players and many people are affected. There are the Inuit people, the first nations people, the Metis people, the non-aboriginal people who come from all parts of Canada to be permanent residents of the north, whom we love and respect, who share with us in our toils every day in building a wonderful part of this country. We must be cautious that we do not exclude, undercut or destroy the rights of those people in achieving what we might perceive to be a higher goal. We must be conscious of that and that is not easy to do. It is complicated. It is complex and is something that requires a great deal of sensitivity and a great deal of care.

My hon. colleague will know that there is a commitment but it is one that is undertaken with great caution.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I compliment the member on her commitment to bringing jobs to the Northwest Territories, to the diamond mines that are currently under development and the classification and sorting of the diamonds, these highly skilled and quality jobs. It is vital that we recognize that they could quite easily be located in the north and add value to the development of the northern economy.

I am a little concerned about the numbers of boards and jurisdictions we are creating. This bill creates about five or six different boards for a very small population. I appreciate the environmental concerns and the fragility of the environment. I have two questions for the hon. member.

First, how can we ensure that development will proceed apace as it can and perhaps as it should to provide job opportunities and skills and economic development for the north?

Second, I am concerned about the devolution of powers by the minister. The bill gives the minister powers to delegate responsibilities to the Government of the Northwest Territories. It is not clear to me whether these boards will always report back to the minister specifically or whether it is within his power to delegate the reporting responsibility of the boards back to the Government of the Northwest Territories or to him always.

Hon. Ethel Blondin-Andrew: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague raises some very important points. There is no doubt in my mind that this bill is directly aimed at dealing with the issue of certainty which will give comfort to the various constituent groups that they can proceed in a balanced and sustainable way with development. That is easier said than done. We do not always have friendly partners in that process.

The north has exemplified through the kinds of agreements it has reached over the years under various development regimes that it can work together and I think this bill will aid that. When this bill comes to its final resolution it will do that.

The issue of devolution is a little more complicated. I am not sure of all the micro managing details and all the tasks assigned to the various members of the board. I am not that familiar with the bill. I am aware of the general structure of what would result from this bill.

The boards are designed to have an adjudication process that would serve itself well without too much interference, but there is an overriding obligation because it is government legislation. It would not be guided on every detail of what it does. There is a process for them to be the masters of their own destinies, as we would have in the House standing committees but on a higher level. It requires legislation to enact those boards. They have the power to guide themselves.

I am not totally familiar with the reporting system but I know they have a great deal of autonomy. They must be arm's length and I believe the bill speaks to that quite clearly.

• (1325)

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I sat here too and listened to the member opposite speak with regard to this bill. Bill C-6 was originally introduced in this House on December 12 as Bill C-80.

I would like to get back to the speech of the member opposite if I may for a moment. She mentioned quite proudly the diamond mines in the north, and justifiably so.

I remember not that long ago standing in this House raising some concerns about the length of time it was taking to come on stream through the red tape and bureaucracy that we tend to create in this country.

It has taken years of frustration for the owners and the participants in the BHP diamond mine to get up and on stream while the competition in other countries went ahead.

I want this House to be well aware of the legislation that we create in this House, how it can hamper the development and the process in these areas.

Make no mistake about it, the legislation that we developed here hampered the diamond fields of the north. It never helped them, not one bit. I want to make sure this House is fully aware of that. I want to make sure the member opposite is also aware of that and takes that into consideration as we debate this bill.

There are many concerns with regard to this bill in the north. Some I have heard from the opposite side, and some from this side too have tried to address this. The main concern here is that when we pass legislation, it is far easier to pass it than to repeal it.

As we go through Bill C-6 and talk to all the players involved, not just one or two, we find there is an abundance of concern with regard to where this bill is going and what we are attempting to create here.

We have no problem with setting up some of these boards to help the people in the different areas but we do have concerns when we hear from people in these outlying areas saying about the lack of consultation with regard to this, the complexity of the laws, the complexity of the language used in order to create these laws not fully understood by the participants involved.

That has to become a concern of every politician in this House when we allow this to take place. We all know legal language is probably the hardest language to understand next to a politician.

We have to be very aware of what we are doing when we create laws formed basically by lawyers here in the House so that when we go out to the people to try to put through legislation they fully understand the legislation being put in place.

From some of the letters we have we know this is not what happened here. We know that the concern is there due to this legal language. We also know there is concern. I heard today that there was concern that this was legislation by exhaustion.

We are talking about over 30 drafts of this legislation going forward to these people and basically being online until this got through some of these areas. I have concern about that.

I also have concern when we talk about areas such as this regarding cost. We know these people cannot afford to come to Ottawa to address these concerns. We also know there are some areas they cannot get to, say Yellowknife.

What is wrong with our sending people out there to talk to them? I have done it. I am sure other members of the House have done it too.

• (1330)

These people deserve to be heard. We are enacting legislation in the House pertaining to the way they live, make their living and in many cases raise their families. We in the House have to be very aware of that. We have to make sure there is absolute clarity when we make such legislation.

The Sahtu and Dene Band information session in September raised many question. Far too many of them were answered with uncertainty. It scares me when I hear that their questions were answered with uncertainty. Why? Often the response to such matters was that it would have to be settled in court.

I am just an ordinary person from a place called Vernon, British Columbia, just outside Armstrong. When I read people are afraid we are creating policy that will wind up in court, I have grave concerns about where we are going.

Are we sitting here as a government, as opposition members and as other members of the House to create legislation to further lawyers? Or, are we supposed to be here to further the benefit of the people so they do not have to worry about legislation that introduces the idea it may have to be settled in court. I question that and I worry about that.

There is also question of the extra time limits that will be imposed and the extra level of bureaucracy and the red tape that will be created, especially in the further exploration and development in mining.

We all know what happens in the mining industry. We all have grave concerns about what will happen if the industry ever decided one day that perhaps Canada was not the place to do business in. We have to address some of these concerns. We hear from exploration companies that unnecessary red tape is already creating this distinct possibility.

I sat and still sit on the natural resources committee. I can remember agreeing with all parties in the House in the last session to preparing a draft policy entitled ''Keep Mining off the Rocks in Canada''. We worked very hard on it. Yet not one decision of that committee has come to the floor of the House. It sits on some shelf gathering dust. Maybe that is a make work project for government, keeping people busy dusting off policies that would benefit the Canadian populace as a whole. We supply people to dust them off every now and then so that maybe they can refer to them but never in the House.

It makes me wonder about the legitimacy of much of the committee work, as I am sure many members of the House wonder. We put in many hours trying to clarify legislation, only for it to be taken from our hands and drafted into language that very few of us really understand. The lack of clarity has to be the first concern.

We also have to be concerned about what we are creating in the process with regard to the legality problems that could be created and fostered. We have to consider seriously a system that could be under-resourced. I have not heard much about this concern, but we have to consider it, especially its technical capacity. We have to be aware that it might put us at a disadvantage in dealing with the large workload the bill will create by agreements and changes in leasing permits. We have to be concerned about many of these areas.

• (1335)

When the legislation goes to committee I would like to see the amendments seriously debated and considered instead of just washed over. If we were to address some of the amendments that come forward with regard to the bill it would take away a lot of the worry for the people living up there, both native and non-native. It would definitely take away some of the worry for mining exploration companies, the biggest employer in the area.

This has to happen in legislation if we are to go forward with good pieces of legislation that benefit everybody. These are legitimate concerns. I hope members of the House understand them, look at them and are willing to address them through committee work.

Mr. Bernard Patry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his remarks and his concerns.

In December 1993, DIAND published an information package on the Mackenzie Valley resources management bill. The package was announced in the northern media in January 1994 and distributed to all first nations in the Mackenzie Valley, other pertinent aboriginal and non-aboriginal groups, communities, industries, federal and territorial government departments.

In June 1994, DIAND officials met in Calgary with the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, CAPP, and with the Canadian Energy Pipeline Association, CEPA; in May 1995 in Calgary again with CAPP and CEPA; in June 1995 in Vancouver with the Canadian Mining Association and Northwest Territories Chamber of Mines; in August 1996 again with CAPP and CEPA; in April and September 1997 with the Northwest Territories Chamber of Mines.

Does the member feel the government has an obligation to the Gwich'in and Sahtu regarding their land claims?

Mr. Darrel Stinson: Mr. Speaker, yes, it does have an obligation. It also has an obligation to everybody and to listen to everybody. That is what the House is supposed to be for.

If the member reads through his notes he will quickly realize that the DIAND information session in September 1997 raised many questions that were left unanswered. The ones that were answered were answered with uncertainty, often with the wording that such matters would be settled in court. If legal recourse is the only way to settle matters, it is time to amend the legislation. The hon. member should be aware of that.

We have to look at all of it before we go ahead and just pass legislation. Just because part of it is right does not make the whole right. Why would we pass something that is 50% good and 50% bad? Why would we pass anything that has anything bad in it? It should be 100% good if at all possible. That is good legislation.

Good legislation is not having to go back 10 years from now and having to amend something that we put into place in the House.

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I was rather interested in my colleague's comments.

The member referred a bit to the previous speaker, the hon. secretary of state of the Liberal Party. Implicit in her remarks was efficiency. I remember my colleague stating rather correctly that there was an impediment to the establishment of exploration companies and so on. Implicit in the other comments was that this would expedite, make better and make more efficient the decision making process.

• (1340)

Could the member comment briefly on exactly how the creation of four to seven boards—and it is not quite clear how many there will be—would actually expedite and make more efficient the decision making process and thereby make it a more profitable venture?

Mr. Darrel Stinson: Mr. Speaker, at least three new boards will be created. There is absolutely no way that will speed anything up. We all know what happens when we get tied down in bureaucratic red tape.

I sat on the natural resources committee. We looked for a one window shop. Now we have created more than that. We have created more legislation, more red tape, and more headaches for exploration and development in that area in particular and in land management. More bureaucracy is exactly what we are creating. Instead of trying to make something smaller and more simple we are now expanding to make it more complex and more frustrating for everybody trying to do business.

Mr. Werner Schmidt: Will it cost more tax dollars?

Mr. Darrel Stinson: It will definitely cost more tax dollars. There is absolutely no doubt about that. It will cost a fair amount in more tax dollars for more uncertainty. That is exactly what we are doing.

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very interested in the recent exchange between my colleagues from Kelowna and Okanagan—Shuswap. I have a couple of questions for the hon. member for Okanagan—Shuswap.

I am a bit confused. If we have worked on these problems for so long we do not want to pass something that is not right. We want something that is simple and that natural resources will understand. We want a lot of things out of the legislation we will obviously not get. We need something that can be worked with, something that is balanced and something that is fair.

I do not think my hon. colleague can have it both ways. There is no way he will be right 100% of the time. We all know that.

I ask the member to explain the term under-resourced, another word that puzzles me. He used that term in his speech. He said something about conditions in the north or development being under-resourced. Could I have an explanation?

Mr. Darrel Stinson: Mr. Speaker, I will answer the last question first. When we put these boards into place we had to be very aware that it would cost taxpayers a lot more money. It is under-resourced to handle this issue at this point in time. There is absolutely no doubt about that. Taxpayers will have to pick up that cost and we have to remember that.

As for being right 100% of the time, no. I do not think anybody in the House has ever been right 100% of the time, at least no member who is still living. I am not sure about those who have passed away. I have read many times in their speeches that they absolutely thought they were right 100% of the time, and the rest of us have had to suffer for their decisions.

One reason I am here is to make sure those who think they are right 100% of the time take a second look and maybe even a third look, a sober sincere look.

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the House on Bill C-6, the Mackenzie Valley resource management act. I am pleased to join my hon. colleagues, the secretary of state and the parliamentary secretary, in speaking in support of the legislation.

I will explain the roles and responsibilities of the new boards the bill establishes and how they will bring decision making to the residents of the Mackenzie Valley.

Bill C-6 will establish a total of six new boards, two of which will have jurisdiction throughout the Mackenzie Valley. The other four boards will be regional institutions, two in the Gwich'in settlement area and two in the Sahtu settlement area.

Under Bill C-6 each of the Gwich'in and Sahtu settlement areas will have a regional land use planning board composed of two nominees from the aboriginal beneficiary group, two from government and a chairperson. Support services will be provided by a small technical and administrative staff.

● (1345)

This board will be responsible for land use planning for all lands and waters within the settlement area, except for lands in national parks or within the boundaries of a local government. As the parliamentary secretary has stated, the purpose of this planning will be to protect and promote the social, cultural and economic well-being of the residents of the settlement area.

Aboriginal organizations, governments and the general public in each settlement area will have an opportunity to comment on draft land use plans or any proposed changes to the plan. The plan must be approved by the affected aboriginal group and the federal and territorial governments. It will be reviewed every five years.

The land and water authorities in the settlement area will conduct their operations according to the approved plan. Each board will monitor the implementation of its land use plan and will determine whether development proposals conform with it.

From time to time these regional land use planning boards may participate in co-operative planning exercises with similar institutions in adjacent areas. Of course, it is hoped that eventually the Dogrib, the Deh Cho and the other Treaty 8 areas of the Mackenzie Valley will become part of this overall picture.

A regional land and water board will also operate in each of the settlement areas. These boards will consist of five members: two from government, two from the aboriginal beneficiary group and a chairperson.

The regional land and water boards will issue, amend or renew land use permits and water licences for all lands and waters in the settlement area, except where these powers are already exercised by a local government. Support will be provided by a small technical and administrative staff.

These boards will not issue licences or permits for projects that are not compatible with the land use plan for the settlement area. As well, proposals must have been subjected to an environmental impact assessment before a licence or permit will be issued. This permitting and licensing process takes into account certain protection and guarantees for waters that lie on or flow through settlement areas granted by the Gwich'in, Sahtu Dene and Metis land claim agreements.

Bill C-6 also includes provisions for inspections, for fines and for prison terms for persons who contravene any regulations made under this legislation or who fail to comply with the terms of a permit. The board may also order that compensation be provided to a First Nation with a claim agreement for any substantial change in the quality, quantity or rate of flow of waters through or adjacent to the settlement lands of the First Nation.

This bill obviously takes an ecosystem approach to this problem, similar to that which we have in conservation areas of other provinces.

In looking beyond the settlement areas, of which there are five, these regional land claim agreements foresaw the need for a co-ordinated system of resource regulation throughout the Mack-

enzie Valley. Toward this end, Bill C-6 will authorize the governor in council to establish the Mackenzie Valley land and water board to promote co-ordination and consistency in the regional permitting and licensing process.

This valley-wide board will deal with issues or projects whose impacts may cross settlement areas or will be outside settlement areas. Special panels may be established for this purpose. The land and water board of each settlement area will become a permanent panel of the larger valley-wide board.

The sixth board which will be established under Bill C-6, the environmental impact review board, will also exercise jurisdiction over the entire valley. This board will be located in Yellowknife and will have up to 11 members, including a chairperson. It will have equal nominees from government and aboriginal groups, including at least one member from each of the Gwich'in and Sahtu organizations.

• (1350)

The environmental impact review board will assess and, where necessary, publicly review all development proposals in the Mackenzie Valley. Based on these assessments and reviews, the board will recommend rejection or approval of projects to the minister. Its members will be supported by a small environmental and administrative staff.

The objective of the board is clear: to ensure that the environmental impacts of development proposals in the valley receive careful consideration before actions are taken. The board will also ensure that these development proposals do not cause significant adverse affects outside the valley. It will ensure aboriginal organizations, government and the public have the opportunity to express their concerns during the assessment and review process.

Bill C-6 stipulates that preliminary screening, assessments and reviews of development proposals are to be carried out in a timely and expeditious manner. As an initial step, all proposals will be screened to determined whether an assessment is required. The assessment will determine whether a full scale review is required. It should be noted that the minister may order that a review be undertaken even if the board decides it is not necessary.

When a review is undertaken, the review panel must have at least three members. Aboriginal people will have guaranteed representation on the review board when the proposal is within a claim settlement area.

Once an environment review has been completed under Bill C-6, the minister has a number of options. The minister may accept the recommendations of the review panel; refer the recommendations back to the panel for further consideration; accept the recommendations, with modifications, or reject them.

The minister's decision on how to proceed with the board's recommendations may be augmented by information that was not before the review panel or on matters of public interest not considered by the review board. Once a decision has been made, it will be implemented by the appropriate regulatory authorities.

These boards establish a comprehensive system of checks and balances for resource management in the Mackenzie Valley area. They do this while meeting the spirit of the recommendations on co-management put forward by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

Having mentioned that document, I want to review with all members the four principle bases on which the commission says we must deal in the future with aboriginal people. Those principles are recognition, respect, sharing and responsibility.

In pursuing Bill C-6 we will find that the original inhabitants of this part of Canada and the north have been recognized and have been dealt with as partners. They have been dealt with with respect by their required appointment to these various boards and by the rights they have negotiated under land claim agreements. They are sharing with us in the co-management of development and resources. We are saying to them ''You have major responsibilities in this area to protect not only your settlement area but the whole of the Mackenzie Valley resource, be it natural or human or aesthetic''.

I have letters from the Premier of the Government of the North West Territories, Don Morin, approving and supporting Bill C-6. I have letters from the Gwich'in Tribal Council and its president, Willard Hagen, a letter from the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated from the president, Larry Tourangeau, a letter from the president of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and a letter from the Canadian Energy Pipeline Association all approving Bill C-6.

• (1355)

Mr. Bernard Patry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-6 is partially in response to those who wanted resources management in the north to be accessible to northerners. This is a more open, visible and locally responsible form of managing resources.

Having original panels of a board with meetings and hearings held in regions is expected to be more cost effective than holding meetings in Yellowknife. In this integrated system, the developer will apply for land and water authorization in only one place. If the development is wholly within a settlement area, the developer will obtain the authorization from the original panel.

My question is the following. Does the member feel that the creation of a regional land and water panel and a valley-wide board is a duplication or an increase in bureaucracy?

Mr. John Finlay: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the parliamentary secretary, although I only heard about one-third of it. I think he said something about the number of panels. I explained that there were six. Of course, when we get the other settlement areas there will have to be another two panels for each one. I do not know how we can get away from panels if we are going to share responsibility and get input from the people who care about the place they live, about its future and its development.

I do not know if I have answered the parliamentary secretary's question, but that is my point of view.

The Speaker: We will return to the debate after question period. It being almost 2 p.m., we will now proceed to statements by members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, what has institutionalized apartheid created in Canada? An infant mortality rate 1.7 times higher than the rest of the population, a tuberculosis rate 7 times higher than anybody else, a youth suicide rate 8 times higher and an environment where sexual abuse is rampant.

The Government of Canada is directly responsible for this by creating separate developments and an institutionalized welfare state among aboriginal people that would rot the soul of anyone. It has kept the boot on the throats of aboriginal people, preventing them from integrating into Canadian society and becoming self-sufficient.

Endless reports from the auditor general to the royal commission have all condemned the government for pursuing courses that have simply failed.

This will not end until aboriginal people have the responsibility and power to manage their own affairs, just as it is for the rest of Canada. The government must stop the separate development of aboriginal people, stop apartheid in Canada—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Scarborough East.

* * *

WILBER SUTHERLAND

Mr. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on September 3, Canada lost a great visionary in the person of Wilber Sutherland. He had a great gift for bringing people together so that they could express themselves in creative ways.

One of his projects was the national ad hoc interfaith working group's preamble to the Constitution, which reads in part:

> We affirm that our country is founded upon principles that acknowledge the supremacy of God, the dignity of each person, the importance of family and the value of community.
>
> We recognize that we remain free only when freedom is founded upon respect for moral and spiritual values and the rule of law in the service of justice.

Wilber is up for a nomination of an Order of Canada. I am hopeful that his name will be considered favourably.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BREAST CANCER

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, throughout the month that is now coming to an end, a number of public events have been held to make people aware of the plight of over one million Canadian and Quebec women who have breast cancer.

● (1400)

I remind the House and the public that breast cancer does not strike only in October; but hits thousands of women every minute of every hour of every day, throughout the year.

For example, in 1997, over 18,000 women will develop breast cancer. One woman in nine will be diagnosed with the disease. Over 5,000 of them will die, including 15 today, in spite of all the efforts made in recent years.

Research and prevention are the keys to a better understanding of how to treat breast cancer. I urge the government to keep this is mind.

* * *

[*English*]

HILLOWE'EN

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton West—Mississauga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon the attention of this House will be diverted by a much stickier matter. I am sure that every member is aware of what awaits them this evening, the fourth annual confectionery caucus Hallowe'en party.

Hillowe'en provides an opportunity for Canada's value added confectionery manufacturers to display their products and raise awareness about this century old Canadian industry's contribution to our economy.

As a member of the confectionery caucus, I am proud to be associated with an industry that supports the direct employment of over 7,000 Canadians and generates over $1.6 billion in factory sales annually.

My riding of Brampton West—Mississauga is home to one of Canada's largest confectionery manufacturers, Hershey, which employs 1,600 people across Canada.

Please join the members of the confectionery caucus, the Manufacturers' Association of Canada and me for an evening of fun and sweets.

The Speaker: I understand that's going to be a Hill of a party.

* * *

MISSISSAUGA FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I bring to the attention of members that last month the Mississauga Fire and Emergency Services won first place in the overall competition at the 14th annual international auto extraction competition held in Vancouver.

[*Translation*]

Twenty-five teams representing Canada, the United States, England and Australia, to name just a few, took part in this three-day event. The two series of tests consisted in freeing dummies from wrecked vehicles with hydraulic equipment and portable tools.

[*English*]

The Mississauga team won the competition with the fastest reaction times.

I wish to take advantage of this week's annual meeting of the International Association of Firefighters to extend congratulations to the Mississauga extraction team on a job well done.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CAVALIER TEXTILES

Mr. Claude Drouin (Beauce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to mention that Cavalier Textiles is the main supplier of specialized spun yarn and strands in Canada.

The company develops, produces and markets a full range of synthetic yarn and cotton products considered to be the best on the market. The company is reaffirming its leadership by investing $14.7 million to modernize its four Quebec plants in Sherbrooke, Drummondville, Montmagny and Saint-Georges de Beauce.

As part of this investment, the Canadian and Quebec governments will grant a refundable loan of $2,868,000 under the Canada-Quebec subsidiary agreement on industrial development. The loan will allow Cavalier Textiles to speed up its own investments, which will result in the creation of close to 50 new jobs, while preserving existing jobs.

This is yet another illustration that there is strength in unity and that, together, Quebec and Canada can help our businesses.

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend Victoria provincial court judge Brian MacKenzie.

Last Friday Judge MacKenzie sent a clear message to individuals breaking into homes in greater Victoria. He sentenced Raymond Caziere to seven years in jail for breaking into the home of Elizabeth Kitchen and terrorizing the 73-year old with a butcher knife. He gave Caziere a further two years for a total of nine years for other crimes he committed.

Judge MacKenzie's ruling clearly puts the interests of victims first. The nine year sentence is longer than most people get for manslaughter. Judge MacKenzie is sending a message to predators such as Caziere that Canadians are no longer going to tolerate this type of action.

Most important, I would like to encourage the Minister of Justice to follow Judge MacKenzie's lead and start getting serious about punishing criminals. Three cheers for Judge MacKenzie.

* * *

• (1405)

CAMETOID ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES LIMITED

Mrs. Judi Longfield (Whitby—Ajax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had the honour to announce a repayable loan investment of $450,000 through Technology Partnerships Canada to Cametoid Advanced Technologies Limited, a company in my riding.

Cametoid is a world leader in the development of protective coatings for the aerospace industry and this investment will help Cametoid move forward and develop new technologies that will enhance Canada's capabilities in this very important area.

Developing advanced technologies is one of the goals the federal government has identified for Technology Partnerships Canada, creating meaningful employment is another. Once the project has been successfully completed and the firm moves to full commercialization it is expected that about 17 new direct jobs as well as 10 to 20 indirect jobs will be created in my riding.

With creative partnerships like this one with Cametoid this government is helping to build the kind of economic development that we need in the coming century. We are developing the foundation—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

S. O. 31

ARTHUR LEE

Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Arthur Lee, a Chinese Canadian, donated $400,000 to purchase John McCrae's medals.

Mr. Lee believes it was his duty as a Canadian to make a contribution to his adopted country, Canada. What a noble expression to show his love and appreciation to Canada.

I wish to point out to my opposition colleagues that many Asian immigrants have made special contributions to Canada like Mr. Lee. They built the railway for Canada and they defended Canada in the wars. Today many Asian immigrants contribute to our economic growth and social development in Canada.

I wish to recognize their special contributions like those of Mr. Lee.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, a man sexually assaulted his step-daughter for 12 years beginning when she was a child. An impaired driver killed his friend. A woman tried to hire someone to kill her daughter. A British Columbia man was convicted of abducting and sodomizing a single mother.

None of these criminals served time in jail. Why? Because of the Liberals' conditional sentencing law. In case after case violent criminals are being freed by the courts of this country to walk our streets.

This is wrong. It is an injustice in the eyes of victims and Canadians all across this country, and it is an injustice in the eyes of crown prosecutors.

In Alberta, B.C. and Ontario case after case involving conditional sentencing is being appealed by the crown. If the justice minister would simply amend the law limiting the use of conditional sentencing to non-violent offences the Liberals would not once again find their legislation under attack in the courts and our justice system would not be held in contempt by a growing number of Canadians.

* * *

CANADIANS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks the one year anniversary of the report of the task force on disability issues, chaired so ably by my colleague, the hon. member for Fredericton—York—Sunbury, our solicitor general.

At the one year mark this government has much to be proud of. The Minister of Human Resources Development is providing leadership through the ministerial council on social policy renewal. He is replacing the VRDP program and has introduced the opportunities fund to help Canadians with disabilities integrate into the economic life of their communities.

The Minister of Finance has expanded the medical expense tax credit and supplement that recognize the cost of disability.

The Minister of Justice has tabled amendments to ensure that Canadians with disabilities have greater and more equitable access to the justice system.

The minister of revenue has established an advisory committee of persons with disabilities to help ensure that the Income Tax Act is applied fairly.

This government has acted on priority recommendations from the task force and I am confident that the government will continue to exercise leadership on disability issues.

The Speaker: Colleagues, I have mentioned before that many times these microphones are so sensitive that we should not hit them even with papers because it comes out in the sound. Please be careful.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last Friday, the Minister of Human Resources Development was in Laval lauding the virtues of federalist style partnerships.

The minister was cynical enough to tell the government of Quebec how it should behave. Yet, the minister does not really have anything to be proud of in the area of social policy, because he is the one who unscrupulously butchered the Employment Insurance Act, who did not raise any objections to the cuts in social transfers, who deprived Quebeckers of all forms of basic justice in the negotiations on parental leave, who is getting ready to invest again in job training when the ink is not even dry on the agreements signed with Quebec.

• (1410)

The so-called social union he wants to saddle us with whether we like it or not is only the tip of the iceberg in a government obsessed with centralization.

But as Quebec keeps saying, its areas of jurisdiction are not negotiable.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADA PENSION PLAN

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's events have seen a serious downturn affecting stock markets around the world. The contraction of global investment has very

clear policy ramifications for Canada, particularly with regard to the future of the Canada pension plan.

The government suggestion of investing CPP funds into the stock exchange roulette increases the risk to future retirees due to worldwide speculation and downturns. History shows and recent events suggest that there is a clear warning against gambling with Canadian savings.

While the Liberal government wants to put the nation's CPP fund at the mercy of the stock exchange roulette, the Reform Party suggests to Canadians that their fully indexed public savings should be moved completely out of CPP and invested into private speculative markets which could lose their entire value.

Canadian savings should not be handed over to the compulsive gamblers in the casino society. Canadians want safe money in safe havens.

* * *

[*Translation*]

LAURENT BEAUDOIN

Mr. Jacques Saada (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 26, Laurent Beaudoin, president of Bombardier, was named Person of the Year at the 14th Gala de l'Excellence organized by *La Presse*.

Mr. Beaudoin's career is closely linked to the growth of Bombardier. Under his leadership, since 1966, the company's sales have soared from $10 million to $8 billion.

Under his direction, Bombardier has made it its mission to play a leadership role in all its areas of activity. The company excels in design, manufacturing and marketing.

It should also be noted that Mr. Beaudoin has always demonstrated his strong commitment to Canada and its capabilities.

On behalf of my colleagues, I wish to acknowledge the work done by Laurent Beaudoin, a role model for a whole generation.

* * *

[*English*]

FIREFIGHTING

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, the lack of immediate information regarding hazardous material is a major reason why firefighting is one of the world's most dangerous professions.

Firefighters deserve the right to know exactly what hazardous materials may be present at any incident. Access to reliable information within the first three to four minutes of arrival will save lives by ensuring that firefighters use the most effective response techniques at any incident involving hazardous materials.

The operational respond system makes it easier for firefighters to save lives, including their own.

I and my colleagues, along with the International Association of Firefighters, which is in Ottawa this week, urge the transport minister to make additional funding available for operational respond's Canadian test sites so that a proper assessment is possible which demonstrates that operational respond is needed throughout Canada.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. John O'Reilly (Victoria—Haliburton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the 35th Parliament of Canada the riding of Victoria—Haliburton was successful in obtaining 238 infrastructure grants from the federal initiated program. That number was the highest in rural Canada. We in Victoria—Haliburton are pleased with the level of co-operation from all levels of government.

The provincial member and the federal member worked together to encourage municipal leaders to submit programs, and we were all winners.

In the present program we in Victoria—Haliburton are once again leading the way with over 53 projects in the works.

I want to guarantee the residents of Victoria—Haliburton, in particular upcoming municipal candidates, that my complete support for this program is guaranteed. Let us keep the approvals flowing.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, for weeks we have been trying to find out what the Liberal position is on gas emissions for the Kyoto summit.

● (1415)

Is their policy going to be based on science? Is it going to be based on an agreement with the provinces, consumers and taxpayers?

Yesterday the truth came out. Instead of a made in Canada solution, the Prime Minister is taking his lead from his golfing buddy, Bill Clinton. It gives new meaning to the words green tax.

Why is the Prime Minister taking his lead on Canada's environmental position from Bill Clinton?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we understand that gas emissions are a

problem. Protection of the environment is extremely important not only for Canada but for the world. There is an upcoming conference in Kyoto. There is a large gap between different parts of the world. My ministers are consulting at this time with the provinces and stakeholders and we are developing a Canadian position.

One thing is clear. We will not take a position of doing nothing when the world is confronted with such a problem. While I was in Great Britain I—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the environment minister said she would release the Liberal position on Kyoto when she feels it is appropriate. I would like to remind the Liberals that the Kyoto meetings are in December 1997. All the other G-7 nations have released their targets already.

Many people believe the real cause of delay in getting a government position is a nasty squabble among cabinet ministers. If that is the case, the Prime Minister has an obligation to settle that squabble now.

When does the Prime Minister feel that he can release his emissions levels and cost targets, or does he need to talk to Bill Clinton about that too?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at this moment we are doing the responsible thing. We are consulting with the provinces. If the Leader of the Opposition does not want us to discuss with the provinces, he should say so and we would have a definite position today. I will not have a definite position until I have consulted with the people who want to have something to do with it in Canada.

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, our other worry with respect to any issue raised with this government is that ultimately the answer will come back as some kind of tax. When we wanted to fix the deficit, their answer was increased income taxes. If we want to fix the pension plan, they increase the payroll taxes. If we want to fix the environment, we are going to get fuel taxes and green taxes.

If the Liberal Kyoto deal goes through, the CPP estimates that we could be paying almost 90¢ a litre for gas. We are already paying more for gas than the Americans and this makes it worse. How high is the Prime Minister prepared to hike—

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only one so far in this House who has proposed a tax is the member for Nanaimo—Alberni who said that we should have—

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien: Yes, he said that. He was described nicely by the office of the Leader of the Opposition as a dopey mental hiccup. I never treated any of my members of Parliament with that type of unacceptable language.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): There may be some members who would dispute that.

Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister's emergency phone call last week for one-upmanship over Bill Clinton is about bragging rights and seemingly bragging rights alone. What we have here are two little boys arguing over whose green tax is bigger.

Let me ask the Prime Minister this. How far is he willing to go to win his own macho game with Bill Clinton?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to make jokes about the environment and global warming. I was at the Commonwealth meeting and some countries feel they have a very serious problem at this moment. It is a very serious global problem.

As usual the member for Edmonton North cannot be serious about anything.

• (1420)

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this is so serious it is exactly why we are pressing this Prime Minister for something to take to Kyoto, not just bring home.

Under Bill Clinton's green plan, Canadian families would have their taxes increased by thousands of dollars per year. In fact the jump at the pumps could go as high as 30¢ a litre and our Prime Minister wants to go one up on Bill Clinton with those.

Canadians need assurance on this very serious subject. How in the world can Canadians trust a Prime Minister who says to Bill Clinton ''You show me your tax hike and I will show you mine''?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been here for four years now and Reform members always shoot at a target which does not exist.

The only people who talk about a tax in the House of Commons are the members of the Reform Party.

We will take a responsible position for Canadians.

It is a serious problem, despite the lack of opposition policies in this field.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PRISON SYSTEM

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General of Canada.

In Trois-Rivières-Ouest, a hotel known as Auberge du Canada is very popular with biker gang members. It is owned by a numbered company, 2837617 Canada Ltd., whose principal shareholder is

Michel Deslauriers. Now, Michel Deslauriers is also the warden of Institut Leclerc, a federal penitentiary in Laval.

Does the solicitor general find it acceptable for one of his employees to be the principal shareholder of a hotel popular with biker gang members?

[*English*]

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will have to confirm those allegations and get back to the member.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, considering the recent murders of peace officers for which biker gangs are strong suspects, does the solicitor general find it normal for one of his penitentiary wardens not only to be the principal shareholder but also to come in regular and close contact with these biker gangs, his clients, since he is not only the owner but also the manager of the hotel?

[*English*]

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat that I will take the member's allegations under advisement and I will get back to him.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the solicitor general was one of the very few members of cabinet unaware of the fact that a Liberal Party fundraiser was under investigation. Now, he claims to be unaware of what is going on in his own department. If he belonged to a biker gang, his nickname would certainly be ''Andy knows nothing''.

Is it not surprising—and this is my question—that an official of the Department of the Solicitor General and, what is more, the warden of an institution, can have such close contact with biker gangs without the department's management or minister knowing anything about it?

[*English*]

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very good to establish due process.

I am going to look into this and I will get back to the member.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, truth is stranger than fiction. This situation is like a scene straight out of *Omerta*, the television series.

Does the solicitor general intend to immediately suspend the warden of the Institut Leclerc and to institute a public inquiry to find out why no one in his department took action in this incredible situation, and himself first and foremost, once again?

[*English*]

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will look into this as I said and report back.

* * *

ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Watching this government unveil its position on climate change is a little like watching a slow strip tease. First the Minister of the Environment talks vaguely about targets. Then the Minister of Natural Resources hints at carbon taxes. Now perhaps the Prime Minister is finally ready to perform.

When will the Liberals stop dancing around this issue and show some leadership? When will the Prime Minister let Canadians know what Canada's position on the climate change crisis will be at Kyoto?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, we are at this moment consulting with the stakeholders and the provinces on this very important issue.

The position of Canada is very clear. We cannot go and have nothing happening in Kyoto. We would like to have real progress in Kyoto. We are developing a Canadian position with all those who can participate. At the same time we are consulting with the other countries so there will be a consensus in Kyoto and it is—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Halifax.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is the story with everybody except Canadians. Scientists and economists at home and abroad agree that developing strategies in meeting targets to reduce greenhouse gases can actually be a powerful job creator. If the Canadian government were doing its homework, it would know that jobs must be an integral part of any effective climate change strategy.

Will the Prime Minister bring to Kyoto plans that maximize jobs and economic opportunities for Canadians?

[*Translation*]

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes.

[*English*]

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is on the issue of climate change with a practical application of how Canada can deal with this issue. The Government of Canada, this government, reported in the estimates of

1994-95 that it would be consulting with stakeholders on economic instruments. It made a commitment in the red book to do so.

Can the government report to us today what work has been done on economic instruments so there will be answers to this very important problem of climate change?

Hon. Christine Stewart (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has been looking at a very long list of measures that can be taken to meet whatever the target and timelines are that are agreed upon in Kyoto.

We did put one measure in our last budget, $60 million for refurbishing commercial buildings. Many of the measures that can be taken will be taken by the federal government, but other partners in this issue will also have to take their own measures. That will all be a matter of discussion between the federal government and all of our partners.

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, the government was saying that three or four years ago. I find it revealing today that it is the Minister of the Environment, not the Minister of Finance who is answering the questions on economic instruments.

Maybe we can help the government today in this problem it has. Will the government confirm that it will propose joint implementation in Kyoto? Will it also confirm that it will propose the use of economic instruments, take up the offer of President Clinton and look at how we can implement some tradable permit system here in North America?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there has been extensive work done within the Department of Finance. There has been extensive work done in conjunction with the Minister of the Environment on the whole issue of economic instruments on tradable permits. We have discussed this at the same time with our counterparts internationally within the G-7. We have advanced the yardstick substantially. Unfortunately when we took over government in 1993 we virtually had to start at zero.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it turns out that while the Prime Minister was in Britain golfing, he bragged that it was he who introduced the GST. Not only that, he told them that it was a wonderful tax. He was bubbling over with enthusiasm for the hated GST.

My question is for the Prime Minister, a man who is well-known for his love of golf. Is this what they mean by the term improving your lie?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

● (1430)

The Speaker: That is your mulligan for today.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand the hon. member is always in the rough. Someone will find him sooner or later with his head in the sand.

The GST tax has existed in Canada for a long time. We have opposed the GST. I said that it was introduced in Canada some time ago and that it was controversial. That is still my position. We have harmonized with many of the provinces so that it is working better.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know if that was a mulligan. It sounded like a Mulroney to me.

The prime minister went so far as to say we introduced it. I think that will leave Canadians teed off. Now we know how he keeps his score down.

Does the prime minister really believe his government truly introduced the GST, or did he just take a golf ball in the head at St. Andrews?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when a question is asked of the Prime Minister of Canada about Canada he speaks on behalf of Canada. That is exactly what I did.

I said that when we introduced it in Canada, in the Parliament of Canada, my party voted against it but it was the will of the Parliament of Canada. I said when it was introduced in Canada it was very controversial but it was replacing another tax.

The Prime Minister of Canada is the Prime Minister of Canada and has been the leader of the Liberal Party for four years. With this opposition he will be here for a long time.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PRISON SYSTEM

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how unacceptable and incredible that the warden of a federal penitentiary has close business dealings with a highly criminal biker gang.

Is the solicitor general aware that the warden of a penitentiary has the authority to hand out temporary parole and that the close contacts between the warden of the Leclerc penitentiary and criminal biker gangs therefore leave us with doubts about the criteria applied in the granting of these privileges?

[*English*]

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the charges that have been made this afternoon are very

serious. I am going to look into them. If the facts behind the charges are true, action will be taken.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while he is looking into the matter, does the solicitor general also intend to look into all the internal privileges that this warden hands out to inmates, to his friends in the institution of which he is the head?

[*English*]

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if in fact these allegations are true all the allegations put forward will be looked into, yes.

* * *

FINANCE

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister is rumoured to be a successful businessman. Now this financial wizard is telling our kids that he will be taking 10% of their lifetime earnings. He will manage their money so well that by the time they retire he will give them a whopping 1.8% on all that money, 1.8% on a lifetime investment.

As a businessman would the minister put his money in a venture like that?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the return that is projected is a 3.8% return, which is in fact a real return, roughly in line with that projected by most other major pension funds.

The great advantage of the Canada pension plan is regardless of market fluctuations the Government of Canada stands behind the CPP.

The Reform Party wants to subject Canadians to having a substantial portion of their retirement totally at the will of market volatility.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister may have come up with some great sound bytes to sell his pyramid scheme, but anyone who reads the fine print gets cold feet in a hurry.

Yesterday Alberta's treasurer said ''If it takes a little longer to improve this scheme then we will take the time to help the feds get it right''.

• (1435)

Other leaders in the country believe our kids deserve more than 1.8% earnings over a lifetime. Why doesn't the minister?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the very extensive negotiations and consultations with the provinces and with the public, which lasted over two and a half years, the province of Alberta played a very constructive role.

It is one of the major factors along with the other provinces as a result of which we were able to save the Canada pension plan. The real issue is whether the Reform Party is recommending that it would renege on the $600 billion liability owed to existing Canadians and those who are currently retired.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PRISON SYSTEM

Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the solicitor general.

For some time now, a penitentiary warden has had a prison clientele that belongs to the same criminal organization as the clientele of the tavern he runs in the evenings. All this is public knowledge, while the solicitor general, whose responsibility it is to maintain the security and integrity of the prison system, has never been informed of this incredible fact.

Does the solicitor general realize that, because of his inability to stay on top of what is going on in the department, he is creating enormous doubt in the minds of the public and adding considerably to the concern—

The Speaker: The solicitor general.

[*English*]

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are 49 federal penitentiaries in Canada. There are 14,000 people in those penitentiaries. It is a very difficult place in which to work.

It is hard for the employees. It is hard in terms of the safety of those employees and it does not do any good to repeat allegations.

We will look into it. It is very serious and if those allegations bear out action will taken.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since the minister was not informed about a situation as unacceptable as that involving the warden of the Leclerc penitentiary, what useful guarantee can he give us that there are not other similar cases in his department?

[*English*]

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very important that due process take its course. We need to look into this. As we do, if allegations that are made are borne out action will be taken.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Last Thursday the minister justified increasing current immigration levels contending that the Canadian economy was growing,

inflation was down, interest rates were low and hundreds of thousands of new jobs had been created.

The same day the prime minister asked the United Kingdom Chamber of Commerce ''to take our jobless youth off our hands and hire them as interns''.

Who is right on Canada's ability to absorb more immigrants, the minister or the prime minister?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud that we can welcome even more immigrants into this country, because they are contributing to the development of our economic and social life.

It is very clear from the figures we have that we can increase the number of new arrivals into Canada next year and we are very pleased about this.

[*English*]

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I think the prime minister was right. There is 16% youth unemployment in the country right now.

Will the minister admit that she is wrong and revise the immigration levels?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no study or analysis showing a direct connection between the rate of unemployment and immigration to this country. None whatsoever. And if the Reform Party has a study showing otherwise, then let us see it.

That having been said, we have consulted a number of people in this country about the new immigration levels and I am proud to report to the House that the Province of British Columbia supports the immigration level in this country.

* * *

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

We still do not know if the Liberal members will have to toe the party line in the vote on the proposed constitutional amendment regarding the educational system approved unanimously by the National Assembly.

By failing to give a clear direction immediately, is the Prime Minister not helping to create uncertainty about the outcome of this debate and would it not be better if he indicated a specific direction to his troops right away?

• (1440)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we announced, the government brought the resolution before the House very quickly. The government supports it and we have made this clear. I therefore wonder why the hon. member did not understand earlier.

We held a free vote on the Newfoundland question. I intend to allow members to vote as they wish, as I did last time, and I hope that the other parties will do the same.

* * *

[*English*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has a strong reputation for defending human rights internationally and was responsible for having rape in situations of conflict recognized as a war crime.

Could the Minister of Foreign Affairs tell the House what initiatives the government has taken recently to deal more effectively with terrorists and some crimes against humanity?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada chairs a group of states which is moving toward a conference in 1998 to set up an international court. To achieve that purpose the prime minister is now leading a diplomatic initiative to get support for the initiative.

In a communique out of Edinburgh the Commonwealth states that it was the first time it was able to get a full consensus of all the Commonwealth nations to support the idea of an international criminal court. This enables us to take a major step forward in achieving this very important development concerning human rights.

* * *

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday when we asked the solicitor general about the outrageous plan to repay drug and gambling debts by prisoners he said he did not agree with it. We are glad to know where he stands.

He has had a day to make inquiries. Now the question is what is he going to do about it.

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the House yesterday the suggestion was made that Correctional Service Canada was repaying drug loans of inmates. It is absolutely not accurate and I would like to read a statement: ''The leadership of the Union of the Solicitor General Employees and the Correctional Service Canada are addressing and will continue to address any and all safety issue concerning federal correctional facilities. Both parties feel it is counterproductive to have outside critics attack the professionalism of the service, its

staff, by intentionally raising fears and making inflammatory statements''.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want to know when the solicitor general will take charge of those prisons.

We have raised the concerns of guards, victims of crime, the wardens, and we have not received answers. Again my question is what is he going to do about it and when is he going to do it.

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe Canadians are more interested in when the party that pretends to protect the employees does not listen to what they tell it to do. Stop inflaming the situation with these wrong accusations when you claim to be doing it in the interest of the employees.

* * *

OPERATION RESPOND

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport and it concerns funding for Operation Respond, a program used by firefighters to respond quickly to accidents involving hazardous materials.

Professional firefighters are in Ottawa this week urging the government to provide additional funding to establish new test sites and a credible evaluation system.

Will the minister respond positively? Will he provide the additional funds needed for Operation Respond, funds which could very well mean the difference between life and death in emergency situations?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after many years of lobbying it was this government in 1997 that decided to fund Operation Respond. I think that is very commendable. We share the hon. member's concerns.

A period of evaluation is going on right now. Once that is concluded I will be able to address more fully the issue at hand.

* * *

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is the first anniversary of *The Will to Act*, the Andy Scott Federal Task Force Report on Persons with Disabilities.

This task force was set up to—

● (1445)

The Speaker: I would ask the hon. member to go directly to her question, please.

Ms. Wendy Lill: My question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. Will the government act on the recommendations of its own task force and appoint a minister responsible for persons with disabilities and introduce a Canadians with disabilities act?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like thank the hon. member for her very good question. I am glad she is reminding us that this is a task force of this government which has been promoting helping persons with disabilities.

As a government we have been moving on all fronts. As a matter of fact, the last budget announced an Opportunities Fund of $30 million per year for three years to support persons with disabilities. We have approved $70 million per year in tax measures to recognize the extra cost of persons with disabilities—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

It seems that the federal government is not simply content with destroying the east coast and west coast fisheries, but now it wants to destroy a fishery that is actually working, and I speak of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation.

In a recent announcement, the minister appointed Ron Fewchuk as president and general manager of the corporation, a position I might add that pays up to $103,000 a year.

What qualifications does Mr. Fewchuk have other than being an ex-Liberal MP? Did the minister consult with the board chairman, the board and in fact—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not subscribe to the theory that members of Parliament come to this House with no abilities or qualities and when they leave this House have no abilities and qualities. When I look at the opposition Conservatives I may have to revise my view.

The government has appointed the former Reform member for Saanich—Gulf Islands to the Veterans Appeal Board. We have appointed competent members of other parties to boards and commissions. I see no reason why Liberal members should not be similarly treated.

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC): Mr. Speaker, the minister is aware that the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation is prepared to retain Mr. Dunn who is the current CEO, in effect have two CEOs. Mr. Dunn will do the real work. Mr. Fewchuk will probably bait hooks.

Is the minister prepared to pay for Mr. Fewchuk's patronage salary out of his department's budget and not out of the fishermen's and get them off the hook?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all I can hear from the Conservative Party on the other side is that we should go out and fire Kim Campbell. We should fire Benoit Bouchard. We should fire—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. David Anderson: And clearly the Reform Party believes we should fire Jack Frazer as well.

* * *

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. Reg Alcock (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently the Governor of North Dakota made a suggestion that U.S. wheat producers be allowed to sell their grain to and through the Canadian Wheat Board.

I would like to ask the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board if this is what he means by inclusion in Bill C-4?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the suggestion from the Governor of North Dakota was very interesting. Quite frankly, the proposition that he made may border on the fringes of illegality, but maybe it should be taken under advisement. Certainly he is calling for better cross-border collaboration between Canada and the United States in the grain trade. That is a very positive thing.

With respect to Bill C-4, we are listening very carefully to all of the representations that are being made to the standing committee on agriculture and we will take all of that advice into account in our final decisions.

● (1450)

Mr. Jake E. Hoeppner (Portage—Lisgar, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in early October the Manitoba court of appeal ruled that the only responsibility of the Canadian Wheat Board was to Parliament and this responsibility negated any desire or any provision for them to get the best price for farmers' grain.

Does the wheat board minister agree with that ruling?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this hon. member knows, because he is a party to a legal proceeding that is presently under appeal, that he is asking a question which I cannot answer in the context of that legal proceeding.

In fact he is the plaintiff and he has no business asking that question. I can assure him, however, that the Canadian Wheat Board in every market around the world extracts the very best price it can possibly get for the farmers of Canada.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TOBACCO ACT

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

The government announced measures which will soften its anti-tobacco legislation and which will likely help keep the Canadian Grand Prix in Montreal.

Will the minister explain why the Liberal cabinet decided to adopt measures which will only help the Grand Prix, while leaving other major sports and cultural events to fend for themselves?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government proposed the anti-tobacco legislation that has now been passed by Parliament to fight tobacco consumption, which is a major threat to the health of Canadians.

At the same time, we recognized some months ago, in the letter we sent in April, that some legislative changes were required to accommodate Formula 1 racing. Therefore, we will soon be introducing an amendment to follow up on our commitment.

* * *

[*English*]

SHIPBUILDING

Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry.

Highly skilled Canadian workers on both coasts sit idle as the government turns a blind eye to Canadian shipping companies investing in shipbuilding jobs in Asia where exploited labour is cheaper and environmental standards are even worse than here.

The government's neglect is threatening to torpedo the entire industry and jettison a whole generation of trained shipyard workers.

Will the minister honour his 1992 promise to the Halifax workers and commit to a national shipbuilding policy that includes—

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member is aware that Canada continues to work very hard in the context of the OECD working group to put an end to what are pernicious subsidies, particularly in the shipbuilding sector that supply many countries around the world. If he is asking me to announce that Canada will get into a subsidy bidding war in shipbuilding, the answer to him as it was for the member for Saint John last week is absolutely no.

CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, we are fast approaching Remembrance Day and Canadians know that our veterans fought Canada's wars to protect our peace.

It has been brought to my attention that the government is looking at changing the name of the Canadian War Museum to the Canadian peace and security museum. I have been getting calls from veterans from across Canada and they are very upset.

Would the Minister of Veterans Affairs assure the House today that the name of the Canadian War Museum will not be changed and that it will remain as it is today.

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian War Museum will continue to be recognized as one of the premier museums in Canada. We are hoping that as the Canadian War Museum embarks on its program for the millennium that the very strong support that was shown for the recent medal acquisition will become a giant fundraising campaign for the Canadian War Museum and it will keep its current name.

* * *

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. David Iftody (Provencher, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Western Canadian farmers are legitimately anxious about the transportation of their grain.

The Canadian Transportation Agency is now delaying necessary investigations into the movement of grain apparently until the spring of 1998. The spring of 1998 is too late.

● (1455)

Will that grain be moving this year, next year and the year thereafter? And what is the Minister of Transport prepared to do about these delays in the transportation agency?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government and, indeed, all stakeholders are concerned that there not be a delay in the grain transportation review. However, as a government we have to be careful not to do anything that impinges on the integrity of the process of the CTA in hearing the wheat board complaint.

Preparatory work is under way. Very soon I will be announcing the appointment of an eminent person to conduct the grain review, to deal with the preparatory work and to continue in such a way that we will not transgress any of those items now being discussed at the CTA.

PIPELINES

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and Mr. Bouchard wanted the Sable Island pipeline to go through Quebec. Will the Prime Minister respect yesterday's decision of the joint environmental review panel in order to give the greatest economic benefit to the people of the maritime provinces?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I answered the hon. gentleman yesterday, the joint review panel has just filed its report with respect to socioeconomic issues and environmental issues. It made 46 recommendations. The government is in the process of considering those recommendations.

The hon. gentleman should know that this whole process has been conducted very strictly according to the regulatory rules that govern the situation. The government will follow those rules until a final conclusion is reached.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL TRADE TRIBUNAL

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in reply to my question concerning Shan swimwear, yesterday, the Minister of Finance said, and I quote:

> —the tribunal advised us that it had received additional information and it requested more time to review the situation.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. How could he give such a reply when, after checking with the tribunal, I was told that it had not received any new information, that it did not intend to review the decision, and that it had not received any request from the department? Whose interests is the minister protecting?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is well aware, the tribunal reports to the department and the decision is made by the Minister of Finance.

We received new information. We are reviewing it. We will discuss it with the tribunal and a decision will soon be made.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

For four consecutive days toxins have been reported in the news. We have seen stories of excluded Canadian technology, toxic waste sites and dumps, PCBs being bulldozed in the Arctic, contami-

nated ecosystems such as the Great Lakes, and Environment Canada PCB shipment warnings ignored by federal departments.

Does the minister accept the burial of PCBs in the Arctic and is she aware of shipments of PCBs to Swan Hills?

Hon. Christine Stewart (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the federal government, through the Department of the Environment, carefully regulates toxins such as PCBs. We were sending PCBs for destruction to Swan Hills, but we have put a stop to any such shipments until we are assured that that particular facility is operating safely for the environment and the health of Canadians.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, I want to repeat my question to the Minister of Finance about the use of economic instruments to help solve the problem of greenhouse gases.

A few minutes ago, the minister told me that the government was doing its job. Yet, a report released by a joint committee mandated by his government states that the committee did not receive the mandate to examine every available subsidy and instrument, and that its mandate was too narrow to review all economic instruments.

Did the government do its homework for the Kyoto summit, yes or no?

[*English*]

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

The people of Toronto and in particular the victims and the families of victims were outraged yesterday when a Toronto judge handed down an outrageously lenient sentence with respect to the sex abuse case at Maple Leaf Gardens.

• (1500)

Will the minister undertake a comprehensive review of the sexual assault provisions of the Criminal Code with a view to implementing minimum mandatory sentences?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot comment on a specific case in question. It is a matter that may be taken under appeal. That is a decision for the Attorney General of Ontario.

I would, however, remind the hon. member that my predecessor amended the Criminal Code. Section 718 makes the abuse of a position of trust or authority an aggravating circumstance in sentencing.

Therefore the principles in the code are there. They are sound. It is a matter of application of those principles.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

MACKENZIE VALLEY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-6, an act to provide for an integrated system of land and water management in the Mackenzie Valley, to establish certain boards for that purpose and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mrs. Michelle Dockrill (Bras d'Or, NDP): Madam Speaker, I stand today in support of Bill C-6. While understanding that there are different views of the legislation within the Northwest Territories from aboriginal organizations, industry and other public interests, we fully support the timely implementation of land claims legislation, the substance of this bill.

Parliament has been delivered a package resulting from extensive negotiations among the Gwich'in, Sahtu, federal and territorial governments but there are concerns about the adequacy of the involvement from other aboriginal organizations and the public.

This is a very important piece of legislation as it will change environmental management of the western Northwest Territories. The bodies that will be established under this legislation are institutions of public government and they represent a significant shift of power and management to a more local level, something we clearly support.

• (1505)

At the same time it is important to ensure that some of the significant gains made through legislation, like participant funding for review panels in the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, are reflected in the bill.

Consistent with the principles of participatory democracy, we will strongly urge the standing committee to hold public hearings in the north to hear the diversity of views on the bill. Getting such comprehensive negotiated packages in the House seriously limits the critical role of the member of Parliament to just acceptance of the package.

We believe that the committee should devote part of its attention to analyse the process which was implemented to develop this legislation. We are dealing with issues that, in virtue of a process, are in a fast track. To some extent the process of negotiations and consultations among the interested parties shut out Parliament from the decision making process.

We have an opportunity to assess one of the processes used to limit the role of Parliament. In this case we suggest that the committee travel to the north and act as an open forum for a detailed analysis of the bill but also of the process followed for the development of the legislation; the role of the bureaucracy, the acceptance of public input and the balance obtained among divergent sides, etc. This is an opportunity to decide if committees should be given more resources, more freedom to travel, to get in touch with the people of Canada and enhance the credibility of this House with the people of Canada.

There is also a fundamental value behind the implementation of this legislation. One of the major issues during the free trade agreement was the future of the water resources of this country. Canadians were extremely concerned that the policy implemented by the federal government was detrimental to the capacity of Canadians to manage one of the most abundant resources in this country, water. For Canadians engaged in the free trade agreement debate, Canadian water was not a commodity to be traded in a commercial market or just a resource to be exploited. In this bill we are doing justice not only to the aboriginal people but to those Canadians who fought for the prohibition of bulk export of Canadian water.

This legislation clearly recognized that for aboriginal people as well as for many other non-aboriginal Canadians land and water are not just economic commodities. This kind of co-management system makes it more likely that water will not be traded as a good. This bill also is a formal recognition by the Government of Canada that land and water are an inextricable part of aboriginal identity, deeply rooted in moral and spiritual values. In doing justice to aboriginal people, Parliament is indirectly recognizing those who took a similar approach to the water issue during the critical debate on the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

Different societies do have different views on property or resource rights. The views of the federal government and some provincial governments are of open access or indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources that can be bought and sold in a commercial market. Aboriginal people view land and other resources as their common property.

Different values and visions create different management styles that could led to conflict and confrontation. Bill C-6 creates conditions to eliminate or minimize cultural clashes and promote or return to aboriginal people their rights to take part in the governance and management of land and resources. It is clear that we are addressing a fundamental concern of aboriginal people, their role in the management over land and water as well as other resources critical to their goal of self-sufficiency and self-reliance.

The co-management approach will allow an optimal balance between the values and beliefs of aboriginal people with the values and beliefs of other segments of the Canadian population.

We are very pleased with the message being sent to the aboriginal communities of Canada through the implementation of this bill. The co-management created for the land and water resources in the Mackenzie Valley is a positive model for all of us. It indicates that co-operation and honest, transparent dialogue create condition for substantive changes in the relationships between first nations and the people of Canada.

More experiments in regional public government, shared jurisdiction and shared management of resources may be coming and we look forward to them.

● (1510)

We hope that certain segments of the department of Indian affairs will modify their attitude to aboriginal people and participate fully in the implementation of this new relationship with the aboriginal people of Canada.

In conclusion, we support the speedy passage of this legislation and we call on the Government of Canada to proceed as soon as possible with its response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and to include the Parliament of Canada in the overall process of policy decision making and evaluation in this new relationship with the aboriginal people of Canada.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak today on Bill B-6.

This was introduced first on September 26, 1997 and is the reincarnation of Bill C-80 from the last Parliament which was tabled in the House on December 12, 1996. Its intent is to establish management boards to co-ordinate environmental assessment and land and water regulations in the Mackenzie Valley of the Northwest Territories. It fulfils the requirements of the Gwich'in and Sahtu land claims agreement of the 34th Parliament.

Bill C-6 requires that 50% of the new board members be nominated from first nations and 50% from people from the Government of Canada and the Northwest Territories.

We cannot commend enough the action involving both aboriginal and non-aboriginal people working together toward a common goal, making a concerted effort to try to develop an intelligent way of managing the resources of the Northwest Territories, taking into consideration water and other environmental aspects.

The goal was supposed to be to build a single environmental impact assessment process that streamlines the process for obtain-

ing water licences and land use permits. We in the Reform Party would have absolutely no disagreement with that.

However, as often happens in this House, reality and fact do not bear up with what is happening in these bills, for the stated intent and the actual intent are two very different things indeed.

When we analyse this bill carefully, and I commend my colleagues from the Reform Party who have done a tremendous job on this, we see a very different situation brewing. Rather than having a single co-ordinated effective and responsible board, we see a situation mired in uncertainty, a situation where not one board is developing but three boards, a situation where there is not a lot of agreement but a lot of disagreement.

We oppose Bill C-6 because it is not doing what it is supposed to do. It is simply not going to develop this concerted co-ordinated effort. There are many people in the Northwest Territories who are saying much the same thing.

The chamber of mines in the Northwest Territories said the confusions, delays and cost of this new system have ground mineral exploration to a painful halt.

If the intent is to develop the resources of the Northwest Territories in a way that is going to be beneficial to aboriginal and non-aboriginal people, this bill is failing miserably. By this process grinding to a halt, it is compromising aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities that desperately need the work in the Northwest Territories.

If we look at the unemployment rate there and in aboriginal communities across this country it is absolutely horrendous. It is disgusting. The responsibility for this falls directly at the feet of this and every government we have had in the last 20 years.

Time and time again, from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples to auditor general reports to committee reports in this House, new ways to develop employment among aboriginal communities have been repeatedly sought. We had a golden opportunity with Bill C-6 to develop the incredible resources of the Northwest Territories in a sensitive and environmentally friendly manner. However that is simply not occurring.

● (1515)

By holding up this process with what the government has created it is grinding development and therefore employment to a slow and painful halt.

The system was far better defined and unified in other agreements. The lack of clarity in the process for selecting members of the board was also called into question as there is very little transparency in the system. As I mentioned before, rather than creating one board the government in its wisdom chose to create three boards. Why? No one knows.

Conversations with other industry representatives consulted by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development during the development of the predecessor to Bill C-6 confirms the understanding that a single review process which avoids duplication of time and effort is the most important issue. We in the Reform Party would gladly support Bill C-6 if that objective were to be fulfilled. In fact it is not.

The Northwest Territory Chamber of Mines has called for substantial amendments in two areas of the bill which we in this party support. A lack of clarity in the law and in the rules is likely to produce very uneven regulations across the region and from one applicant to the next, resulting in highly indigenous processes that will prevent development and in so doing prevent employment from occurring in the north. This situation is not only occurring in the Northwest Territories. This situation is occurring across the country.

The province of British Columbia through the current land claims process will be balkanized. It will be carved into a number of little fiefdoms, each of which will have its own rules and own regulations.

Let us imagine trying to do business in a situation like that. The situation that is carving out parts of my province will not only hurt non-aboriginal people. It will hurt aboriginal people more than anything. People simply cannot engage in business if they have to bypass rules and regulations throughout the province in many different areas. Development becomes almost impossible.

This is occurring all over the place. I wish the government would take the initiative to work with aboriginal people and with the non-aboriginal community to form together co-operatives and groups in which development could occur wherein both communities are taken into consideration.

One big fear in the process—and Bill C-6 is an example of it—is that the government is creating these little enclaves with different rules and regulations. It simply does not understand that in creating an absolute Pandora's box of rules and regulations it becomes virtually impossible for the left hand to know what the right hand is doing and for any co-ordinated development to occur. It becomes impossible for the private sector to develop these areas and in so doing the creation of jobs is prevented.

The Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce made another important point with respect to Bill C-6. It said the new system was seriously under-resourced, especially in its technical capacity, and would be at a disadvantage in dealing with the large workload created by transitional arrangements and changes to leasing and permits.

I do not understand how the government through the bill could actually create three underfunded and underequipped boards to

take on the extremely important task of developing the resources of the Northwest Territories in an environmentally sound manner.

Despite the situation we have to oppose Bill C-6 because it does not devolve jurisdiction of resource management to local territorial activities in an intelligent fashion. It makes no provision for the extra resources required to maintain the technical expertise to supplement the three boards being created.

● (1520)

I would like to make another point that is very important with respect to the situation and the way in which this government and previous governments have dealt with aboriginal people and employment. One goal of Bill C-6 is clearly to improve employment among aboriginal and non-aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories. This is very important and we in the Reform Party are fighting hard to ensure it occurs.

However that simply is not occurring. I will give one important example which gives an enormous insight into the utter, dismal and abysmal failure of the government in trying to create jobs among aboriginal people.

The government invested $1 billion in an economic development scheme for aboriginal people that came out of the department of Indian affairs. This is something we could approve of if it would make a difference. The proof in the pudding or the Litmus test lies in what happened to unemployment levels among aboriginal people.

What happened? Did the levels go down? No. Did they stay the same? No. They went up. The unemployment rate went up with an investment of over $1 billion in the economic development of aboriginal people.

What are the social outcome and social costs of the horrendous situation? On some reserves unemployment reaches over 50%. Under these circumstances I should refer to the legacy of this and previous governments to aboriginal people.

The situation is that the infant mortality rate is almost two times that of the rest of the population. The tuberculosis rate is almost eight times that of the rest of the population. Sexual abuse admitted by the aboriginal people themselves is at an epidemic proportion on some reserves.

After working in aboriginal communities as a physician I can say the situation is not getting better in many of them. It is getting worse. The cold hard reality on the floor, in the trenches, on the reserves is that people are suffering. There is blood on the hands of this government and previous governments. There is blood on their hands. The government is continuing to deal with the aboriginal people in exactly the same way as it has done before.

The only way that anything will change—and Bill C-6 had an opportunity to do that—is by putting responsibility and accountability into the hands of the aboriginal people. We must ensure we end separateness, the segregation that has occurred for decades. We should start to treat aboriginals as equals and march together to build a better and stronger country for both aboriginal and non-aboriginal people.

This can only happen where real jobs are created. This can only happen where an investment is made in aboriginal people to help them help themselves. This can only happen when the ties that bind the institutionalized welfare state end.

Unless we end the institutionalized welfare state, nothing will change on the streets. Aboriginal people are suffering on the streets of east Vancouver and downtown Toronto. Nothing will change on aboriginal reserves from Newfoundland to British Columbia.

We have to look at the issue in a new way. We must stop looking at the situation among aboriginal people that governments have created, that of a sacred cow which cannot be changed. We must look forward to working together with aboriginal people to empower them and help them to take care of and be responsible for their own lives.

We are different but the differences between us can be used to build bridges between us, to build harmony and to create co-operation.

This government and previous governments have used the differences as a lever, as a tool or as a wedge to create separate developments. The social costs are being borne by the people. We must stop separate development. We must work together for a united development and to build a stronger Canada for all people. Not only is it possible. It is a necessity. Not only is it imperative. It behoves us to take the initiative to work with people.

● (1525)

One great failing and sadness in working with aboriginal people in detox units, in emergency departments, on aboriginal reserves and in jails is the utter, abysmal failure of policies directed toward these people. It must not happen any more. We have to stop thinking that it is them and us. We have to think that we are all human beings. We must use our differences. There is much we can learn from each other. There is much beauty in the aboriginal cultures of our country that we can use.

I was utterly fascinated by the explanation of a wife of an aboriginal chief in my riding about their incredible abilities to use herbs to treat many medical illnesses. This is virtually unknown in the medical community. We know it is out there but how people actually do it is something we can benefit from.

In closing, aboriginal infant mortality rates are higher than that of any other group in the country. Their children suffer from poverty and malnutrition approaching that which occurs in third world countries. Alcohol and drug abuse are of epidemic proportions. I implore the government to work with the Reform Party and

aboriginal people to develop sound, constructive solutions to provide a better future for everyone.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

TABLING OF DOCUMENT

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I have been trying to get a hold of a document the solicitor general quoted from last Friday. I was assured that I would get a copy of that.

At this time I would like to formally request that the document he again referred to in question period today be tabled in the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The Chair realizes that the point of order was made on Friday and that the government said at that point that it would table the document. At this time the Chair has not heard anything, so we will ask the government to table the document.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wish to table a news release that was issued as a joint statement by the Union of Solicitor General Employees and Correctional Service Canada dated October 24.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

MACKENZIE VALLEY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-6, an act to provide for an integrated system of land and water management in the Mackenzie Valley, to establish certain boards for that purpose and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Bernard Patry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca for his speech. I have a few comments to make.

He was asking why we have three new boards. The first one is the planning board. It is quite simple. It is on the Gwich'in settlement claim. It is according to the law. This is why we have planning boards for them. It is similar to what we have in our own municipalities. We need to take care with the planning.

• (1530)

Concerning the rest of the member's comments, I had a problem deciding if he was more in favour of industry or the First Nations. My question is what does industry want? Industry is eager to see land claims settled, greater certainty for investment and fair and expeditious administration of application for land and water use. This stable regulatory regime with a single environmental process and clearly defined regulations and environmental assessment standards will provide a positive environment for development in the western Northwest Territories. We have had many consultations with the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, the Canadian Energy Pipeline Association and the Mining Association of Canada.

When the member talks about the First Nations I agree with him that a lot needs to be done. I have one simple question for my colleague from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca. If he is concerned about First Nations government, why did the Reform Party vote against self-government in the Yukon and against the Sahtu land claim?

Mr. Keith Martin: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. friend from the Liberal Party for his question. He actually asked three questions.

He mentioned the boards. People who have analysed this, including the Northwest Territories mines group and other groups, have clearly stated that it is not a problem to have one board. It is a problem to have three boards. People who are involved in this are asking why are we investing in three boards. This is bureaucracy running wild.

Instead of investing in three boards, we could invest in one and use the saved money in more useful ways to improve the socioeconomic situation for people in the north. Perhaps that would be a better investment of taxpayers' money. That is what we in the Reform Party would like the government to do. It has an opportunity to do this when amendments are put forth.

The member asked whether I am for industry or for aboriginal people. The reality is that we are for the people of the north who are going to use the industry of the north. We are for both. It is by having a co-operative relationship with both that both can benefit.

My friend asked about the situation with the land claims. Unfortunately what has been happening with many land claims is that the non-aboriginal communities are not being taken into consideration during their development. Negotiations are taking place only with aboriginal people often behind closed doors. We would like to develop a land claim situation where both aboriginal and non-aboriginal people can come together to discuss and debate

the situation and form an agreement for the utilization of the lands of the north where both communities are taken into consideration.

This government and the Government of British Columbia in many cases have excluded non-aboriginal people. You cannot get a workable agreement where one community is not taken into consideration. You cannot get a workable solution where the agreement is often negotiated behind closed doors, where there is a lack of transparency and a lack of accountability. These are the problems we have with many of the land claims situations.

We are completely in favour of aboriginal people becoming masters of their own destiny, as are all non-aboriginal people in this country. Part of the problem has been that aboriginal people have not had this. They have not been masters of their own destiny and have not had the responsibility and the power to do just that.

Aboriginal people deserve to be treated the same way as anybody else in this country. To do anything less is an insult to them and everybody else.

Mr. Jim Gouk (West Kootenay—Okanagan, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I have some questions and I will omit any preamble so the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca will have an opportunity to answer. These are questions many people have on their minds when they look at this bill.

• (1535)

The first of these questions is, is there anything about this bill which will serve to help keep mining in Canada and more importantly to keep mining dollars in Canada? Second, will it cause or create employment for Canadians, Canadians of all racial origins? Third, will it lead to economic self-sufficiency for northern residents no matter what their racial origin? Fourth, will it provide environmental protection in an efficient and cost-effective manner?

Mr. Keith Martin: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for his extremely succinct and pointed questions. In essence they are the questions that must be asked and answered if this bill is going to pass.

The first question related to whether this bill keeps mining in Canada. It does not. The mining groups have clearly stated that this bill rather than expediting mining in this country has done the exact opposite. It has ground the whole process of development to a sickening halt.

The other question asked ties into that and was on environmental protection. The resources in this bill are simply not there to provide for the adequate analysis of environmental protection for the Northwest Territories. Some government members are nodding their heads. What they ought to do is listen to the members from the Northwest Territories, the mining groups and the economic development groups from the Northwest Territories to understand that this bill does not have the resources to do what it must do, which is to develop the mining industry in the north in an environmentally sound fashion.

My friend also mentioned employment for aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples. As I said before, rather than creating employment, this bill has forced development to grind to a halt. In grinding development to a halt, it has ground the creation of jobs to a halt.

Does it lead to economic self-sufficiency? One hopes that it would. It has the potential to do that. I hope the government will take into consideration the intelligent suggestions that have been put forth by my colleagues in the Reform Party which will help to mould this bill into a situation that benefits both aboriginals and non-aboriginals, the people, the industry and the environment.

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I was particularly intrigued by the comments of my colleague when he said that a billion dollars has been placed in a fund for economic development for aboriginals. It is inconceivable to me that that amount of money would not in fact have improved the lot of our native brothers and sisters. I would like to ask him what happened. Where did the money go? Could he explain so that the Canadian public would know not to go down the same road again?

Mr. Keith Martin: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Macleod for a question that has to be answered in this House. The best person to answer it is the minister of Indian affairs.

We do know that the billion dollars did nothing to increase employment among aboriginal people. Rather than doing that, we know that the unemployment rate is increasing. What is interesting is that not only is it increasing but it is increasing at a rate higher than the rate of population growth of the aboriginal people. That is absolutely worse than we could possibly imagine.

We do not know where this money has gone but empirical evidence suggests that these moneys were misappropriated and did not go directly to the people in need. It belies one of the biggest problems in speaking to aboriginal people on and off reserve. Much of the money could go to them to do good things in terms of skills training, social programs and health care issues that need to be addressed. Instead of this money going directly to the people who need it, this money is being absolutely swallowed up by a bureaucracy that has run wild.

• (1540)

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in this historic place to speak on Bill C-6, an act to provide for an integrated system of land and water management in the Mackenzie Valley, to establish certain boards

for that purpose and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

As this is my maiden speech in the House, I would like to take a moment to express my gratitude to the voters of Calgary East. They are the reason I am here today and I assure them I will be their voice in this House over the next four years.

I would also like to thank the volunteers who so tirelessly worked on my campaign. Most important, I want to express my thanks to my family. My wife Neena, my daughters Priti and Kaajal, and my son Aman have stood by my side over the last few months and I realize the next four years will be trying ones but I want to express just how much they mean to me.

I would like to speak to several of the concerns that I and my party have with this bill.

Reform's main opposition to this bill evolves around the creation of yet another level of bureaucracy. In addition there are specific industry concerns that need to be addressed before this legislation comes into being. It would be much easier to iron out any wrinkles in the agreement prior to its taking effect than to introduce an amendment to legislation at a later date which only adds to the bureaucratic jungle and the backlog of legislation we currently face. Our time and energy as parliamentarians could be better spent elsewhere.

With that said, I do realize the validity of the goals of this legislation and in particular the need to implement past agreements made by the Government of Canada. It is also important to take steps to better manage and protect our lands for our children and our grandchildren.

We are dealing today with an agreement made by the Mulroney government. In 1994 under Bill C-16 a land claims agreement was made between the federal government, two First Nations bands and the Metis calling for an integrated system of land and water management to apply to the Mackenzie Valley through the creation of certain boards. The Reform Party opposed Bill C-16 due to its creation of an additional and unneeded level of bureaucracy and opposes Bill C-6 that we are debating today for the same reasons.

In 10 minutes I do not have the time to go into great detail on all the concerns. However, I would like to spend a moment or two on an issue that is of great concern to me, the establishment and management of the various boards that act as watchdogs over the use and development of the Mackenzie Valley.

These various boards will be partly comprised of individuals nominated by the First Nations involved and partly from the nominations of the territorial and federal governments. I have no real concerns over the appointment of individuals nominated from the territorial and First Nations groups involved. However, with this Liberal government's previous history of nominating its political pals from days gone by, I am concerned that this will be yet another political patronage ploy for the government.

One only needs to look at the government's appointments to the Senate since it was elected to power in 1993 to see that it would much rather appoint its political pals than the best suited individuals for the jobs. With its record I am left to wonder how the government will decide to choose who will sit on the various boards.

In particular I am concerned as to the technical expertise these individuals will bring to their positions on the board. As it deals with a very sensitive environmental area, I would ask the government to put aside its own political agenda, that is making sure all of their political pals are not put in place, and ensure that board members are put in place because they are the best individuals for the job.

Other involved parties have specific concerns with this legislation as it currently stands. The Northwest Territories Chamber of Mines, which speaks for some 600 groups and individuals, has serious concerns after the briefing it was provided by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development at the end of September. Specifically the Northwest Territories Chamber of Mines has four main concerns.

• (1545)

Not only does the bill provide new obstacles for resource development, it also raises several concerns about the possibility of litigation in the future. It also leaves the various parties open to the use of deliberate delaying tactics in the periodic environmental reviews that must occur under this bill. I have already expressed my concern over the election process of board members which the chamber also raises.

In each of its concerns there are several compounded and complex issues within each area of concern. I would like to take a moment or two to outline some of the complexities of these issues and hopefully someone from the government side will help to clarify any confusion that exists.

With respect to the obstacles for resource development, there is growing concern over the rights to compensation, the powers granted to the boards regarding permits and leases, and an enforcement policy which can best be described as confused. I believe that for effective management of the land and water resources in the Mackenzie Valley area there needs to be more specific policies set in place before this bill is passed into law. We need to be proactive in setting out specific guidelines, especially in the areas of jurisdiction of the boards. We cannot be making up the rules as we go along.

Second, several questions remain unanswered concerning the unresolved issues not addressed in this bill. The participants of the briefing session that DIAND held in Yellowknife at the end of September left with the understanding that such unanswered questions would only be resolved by the courts. Our current court

system is weighed down enough with litigation. It would take years before litigation arising from the flaws in this bill could be resolved. This should not and cannot happen.

With environmental concerns playing a fundamental role in how we approach matters regarding land and water management, the concern over various delaying tactics that groups can impose in ensuring that the periodic environmental reviews and assessments that must occur through the bill is real and must be dealt with. Although the government officials feel that these concerns are improbable, past experience suggests that these concerns are indeed justified.

Before I conclude, I would like to reiterate our concerns with the bill and why our party will be opposing it at second reading. There are too many unanswered questions as to how the land and water management will be structured. In my opinion the government is simply reacting to the commitments made by the past government without thinking about the environmental consequences of the bill.

We agree that the government should hold to its responsibilities even if they were made by previous governments. However, the question remains, at what cost? We should look more closely at what the consequences of this bill are.

Second reading deals with the principle of the bill. Without some major amendments at committee and at the report stage we feel that this bill will do more damage than it will do good. It will only cause a more confused bureaucracy with unclear regulations, regulated by a board or a series of boards that are appointed by the government.

Our environment should be first and foremost in our minds as we study this bill in more detail. I therefore urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this bill as it is.

● (1550)

Mr. Bernard Patry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a few comments for my colleague.

The Reform Party complains about having three boards. Effectively there are three boards but I would just like to mention that these boards are co-ordinated. I would like to explain the activities of the boards.

Although each board functions independently, the legislation provides for inter-related activities in relation to the planning, environmental assessment and regulations of developments on land or water in the Mackenzie Valley. Upon its receipt of a proposal, the regulatory authority assesses whether or not it is in conformity with the land use plan.

The land use planning board is involved only on referral or application when there is a dispute. A preliminary screening of the environmental impact of the proposed development is conducted by the regulatory authorities and government departments and agencies. This preliminary screening expedites the process whereby developments with little impact need not be assessed by the environmental impact review board, including those developments normally exempt from assessment.

If a development could have a significant impact or may be cause of public concern it must be assessed by the environmental impact review board.

The Reform Party also talks about having government's power to the people of the First Nations. He needs to understand that the Mackenzie Valley is one of the largest regions in the country. When one travels from Yellowknife to Inuvik it is far. The Mackenzie River is the longest river in the country. It is important that we have a water board which understands that when the river flows from Yellowknife going to the Arctic that it passes through all the regions of the Mackenzie Valley. Having these boards comply with the land claims decisions, we feel that the boards should be very close to the community and community based.

If we were only going to have one board it would cost much more because travelling from Inuvik to Yellowknife or the opposite costs a lot of money for the citizens.

This will be my last remark before my question. The Reform Party seems to be think this is a mining bill, not a resource management act. All it talks about is mining. However, it is more than a resource management act. The Reformers are asking for just one board, but the reality is that the First Nations, the Gwich'in and Sahtu, have requested their own boards. Does this mean that the Reform Party does not take into consideration the requests of the First Nations of the Mackenzie Valley to have their own planning boards?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Madam Speaker, let me tell the member what our real problem is. Our real problem is the level of bureaucracy the government is creating. We do not have much of a problem regarding the intent of the bill. We understand the intent of the bill but we have a problem in the way the government is going about doing it. It is creating another level of bureaucracy. It is fine to say that it has free votes on everything, but why does the federal government have a hand in it by appointing certain members to the board?

We know from past experience that the government is going to appoint to the board some Liberal MP who has been defeated or someone who may not have the proper expertise. Therefore, we definitely have a concern about this.

The member should listen to what the Reform Party has been saying. We have no problem with the intent of the bill. We have a

problem with the way the government is going about having the bill implemented and in the way it is set up. That is the problem we have with this bill.

● (1555)

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to comment on the last two speeches made by the hon. member for Calgary East and the hon. member for Okanagan—Shuswap.

It seems to me that what we need to understand is something which has not been mentioned.

The Mackenzie River Valley is one of the greatest river systems in the world. It ranks up there with the Amazon, with the Nile, with the Mississippi, with the Yangtze Kiang and with others. We could probably put the whole of the maritime provinces into the Mackenzie River Valley and have lots of space left over for some of the huge caribou herds that used to roam there.

My hon. colleagues seem to forget that we are not dealing with tightly knit southern Canada, a fully developed area; we are dealing with thousands of acres, thousands of hectares, and disparate people. Many people still live off the land, they eat food produced on that land and their wish is that the rivers continue to run cleanly and freshly. Their wish is to maintain that land as closely as they can to the way their great spirits left it to them.

I never saw the word mining in the bill when I was studying it. It never came up. If we allow the Chamber of Mines of the GNWT to tell us how to do it there may not be a Mackenzie River Valley worth talking about.

My friends say that there are too many boards. As the parliamentary secretary has already said, the Gwich'in want to have a board. They want to be represented. They want to have control over the large area in which they live. The Sahtu want to have a board. Depending on what agreements are made with the Dene and the Treaty 8 nations and the Deh Cho we might have six more boards. We might have three. We might have one. That is the way things are done. People's responsibility has to be allowed to work.

I would ask my colleagues whether they have considered that the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples spent $6 million over five years, or maybe it was $5 million over six years, to write many pages containing over 400 recommendations dealing with our fiduciary and our constitutional responsibilities to the aboriginal people of this country.

We are not going to solve the problem if we keep looking at this as ''this is not quite as efficient as it should be'' and ''the miners have not got full control'' and ''development will not occur because the investors will not put money in unless they can control everything'' and so on.

Time is running out. We have a report which some of us have studied and done some work on. I said it this morning and I will repeat it now. The report says that the solutions to our problems with respect to the aboriginal people becoming a functioning part of this country—and they were the original inhabitants—are four: recognition, respect, sharing and responsibility.

This Parliament has the total responsibility of seeing that we come to terms with this problem in our Constitution, with these people, who are the original inhabitants of this land.

I have heard nothing more than fine words. I have heard no practical ways to deal with this matter that are not at least suggested in the bill, such as boards that are local.

I want my hon. friend to tell me how things like these little enclaves or masters of their own destiny or an institutionalized welfare state are going to help the situation and how Bill C-6 is not going to help the situation.

● (1600)

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: I thank the member for asking the question. We do not have a problem with the Mackenzie Valley. I think the member is right. It is nice clean water and all the rest. The First Nations have every right to take full advantage of it for their prosperity.

We have a problem with the record of this government, the government intervention through this bill, a creation of a level that we feel will not utilize fully the Mackenzie Valley. That is the problem we have and that is why we are saying let us look at it again so that we can clean out the bureaucracy level and make sure that the people of the First Nations take full benefit of the Mackenzie Valley.

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today for my first intervention in this Parliament addressing the House on this very important bill.

I would like to sincerely thank my constituents for once again sending me back to this House to represent them. I pledge to do my very best for them, to do the job that they expect of me.

I begin by reiterating what my colleague from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca so eloquently said a few minutes ago about the need for aboriginal and non-aboriginal people to work together in this country. Clearly that should be a very important motivation for all of us for the future.

On the surface this bill seems to work in that direction. It appears that it is going to get aboriginal and non-aboriginal people working together. The reality is that it will not really achieve that because participation on the environmental and resource management

boards is specifically tied and allotted to individuals based on membership in either the Gwich'in or Sahtu Dene bands. It is not because they are local to the area. It is not because they have a vested interest in the future of that area. It is because they are members of the Sahtu or the Gwich'in bands that they will receive membership on these boards.

I submit that when we single out groups in our society and assign them special rights based on distinguishing characteristics, we do them a disservice and we denigrate the fundamental principles of democracy. I will argue that undermining democratic principles is always harmful to society and in the instant issue will prove most harmful to those whom we most wish to help, aboriginal people.

Let us examine for a minute a world without democracy to better understand how human circumstances fare in such a world. Let us look at the history of this world going back several hundred years, going back actually more than a millennium where kings and feudal systems and fiefdoms were the order of the day, where there was no democracy.

Under those systems, who had rights? We all know how those rights were determined. Kings had all the power. Kings were not elected. When they came down the birth canal they were already elected to be king. They did not have to run for office. They did not need anybody's consent. They were going to be king or queen, whatever the case might be, because it was their birthright.

Under the kings there were others such as barons, earls and so on who had progressively less power but who were still above the lowly serfs. The serfs comprised the great majority of the population. They were people with absolutely no power, with absolutely no say. They were people who were virtually owned by the king. They were the property of the king. The king could do whatever he wanted with them. He did not need to ask permission. He was an absolute ruler and they were absolute servants to the king.

History evolved, thankfully for us who live in this day and age, with great thinkers like Plato and Aristotle and later Thomas Paine and Jean-Jacques Rousseau and others. They envisioned and refined a new social order, a new social contract which had at its foundation and core the rejection of elite special status in favour of equality of all people under the law.

● (1605)

The emergence of democracy was a very slow and painful process, first experienced in rudimentary forums in ancient Greece. Later the evolution of our modern democracy had its beginning in 1066 with the signing of the Magna Carta, a very important document. This document was hard won and began the slow process of stripping the kings of their immense power and devolving that power to the people.

Through the following nine centuries after the signing of the Magna Carta democracy became much more entrenched in Europe and North America. In fact I would argue that North America and later Canada and the United States became the apogee of democracy owing largely to the fact that the ties to the monarchy were less strong in North America than they were in Great Britain. As a matter of fact, the ties to the monarchy were severed completely by the United States in their War of Independence. Consequently it was very easy for the United States to adopt a truly modern democratic system without any ties to the monarchy whatsoever. North America, Canada and the United States have since become synonymous with democracy.

I would argue that the fundamental reason we as Canadians enjoy one of the highest living standards in the world is not an accident. It is not as a result of the fact that we live in a resource rich country, although it certainly helps. Look at the Soviet Union, a resource rich country. For the most part the people there live in dire circumstances. It is not an accident. Now we see some hopeful signs with the emergence of democracy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ghislain Fournier: Madam Speaker, some hon. members do not make it their duty to be in the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): We will do a count.

And the count having been taken:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Indeed, there is no quorum.

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): We now have a quorum. The hon. member for Skeena.

[*English*]

Mr. Mike Scott: Madam Speaker, as I was saying, the fact that we in North America enjoy one of the highest living standards in the world is not an accident. If we look at the resource rich country of the former Soviet Union, we can see very quickly that it did not fare nearly as well as we did. This is simply because it had a political system which did not allow human beings in that country to achieve their potential.

That system is democracy. It is a fundamental cornerstone upon which not only our country is based, but on which our economy is based. We cannot achieve without the freedom to achieve. We cannot achieve without the freedom of contract. We could not have achieved what we have in North America without democracy.

Let us compare that with the situation in the former Soviet Union. The system there said that government and not the people was the centre of all power, that the communist party was the only political party. There was no option or choice. If one were to belong to a political party it had to be the communist party. The communist party determined that it was going to own the means of production and dictate how the economy would run and dictate how people ran their lives. It was going to even dictate whether or not

there would be freedom of religion in the country and it determined that there could not be freedom of religion.

There were so many things about the former Soviet Union that I cannot reiterate them all in this short intervention. Suffice it to say that human liberty was suppressed to the point where the economy could not work. The economy crumbled in on itself and the people of that country during that time suffered a very low standard of living which resulted in a virtual collapse in 1990-91 when the Soviet regime finally ended.

● (1610)

Now we see the emergence of a democracy, albeit not a total democracy at this point, but it sure has come a long way from the days when I was a kid and I watched the news at night and saw what little there was coming out of the Soviet Union. Certainly there has been a lot of progress made there and we are very hopeful that is going to continue.

We have a democracy in North America. As I said earlier it is democracy that is responsible for giving us so much in this country. I would argue strenuously that without it we would not be where we are today and we could not be where we are today. If we abandon democracy, we do so at our peril because we will start slipping backward.

But the forgotten people in North America who have always been precluded from joining our democracy are the aboriginal people of this country. They have been precluded from becoming a part of this democracy from the beginning contact and colonization.

The system of governance in this country and successive governments in this country have ignored, belittled and marginalized these people from the beginning of Confederation. They have been largely Liberal administrations I might add, largely Liberal governments. I would ask any aboriginal people watching today to remember that. Liberal governments for the most part have dominated the House of Commons during this century. It is the Liberals who have constructed the welfare state and the dependency.

Native people in this country did not get the right to vote until 1960. How could we possibly consider that they were part of a democracy when for the first almost 100 years of this country they did not even have the right to vote let alone run for office? It is a small wonder that the level of anger and hostility and hopelessness is so pervasive and so high on aboriginal reserves in this country.

It is a small wonder that these people are bitter and angry and confused and are wondering what the future holds for them. They see this Canadian dream being lived all around them and they are not participating in it. They do not know why and they are angry and they are looking for answers. They are looking for some respect.

This government gives them the kind of respect as to set up these phoney baloney management boards and says ''Yeah, we are going to give you half the seats on the board''. What kind of respect is that to show to a human being? It is like ''You could not make it on your own, you could not do this unless we created this special situation for you so that you would have a chance to sit on these boards. If we do not do this, you cannot do it. You are not good enough to do it on your own''. I reject that 100% completely and totally.

Local control or local input into resource management can be a good thing but it should not be based on anything other than the fact that there are people who are local to the area and who have a vested interest in the decisions that may affect them and may affect the land they are living on. It should not be tied to membership in a native band. It should not be tied to membership in anything other than the community of interest that surrounds the area that could be affected by decisions that are made, environmental decisions, land use decisions and so on.

I will talk for a minute about the welfare state that has been built up around aboriginal people in this country. I am not sure if the House is aware that the dependency on welfare in this country by aboriginal people exceeds $1 billion at this time. It is growing faster than the rate of inflation and the rate of aboriginal population growth combined. That did not come from me, it came from the auditor general.

The auditor general also points out that over one four-year period the department spent an additional $1 billion over its regular spending for economic development. One billion dollars in addition to its regular spending because the department had this elite top down arrogant attitude that it could solve all the problems on reserves by micromanaging from Ottawa. Guess what happened.

● (1615)

That $1 billion expenditure translated into a progressive increase in the unemployment rate, the dependency rate and in the social assistance envelope that the department has to provide every year for social assistance on reserves. In other words, it had no affect. The auditor general said in his report that if it had any effect whatsoever, the affect would have been a negative one rather than a positive one. One billion dollars, it did not help the people it was designed to help and cost every taxpayer in this country a serious amount of money.

I want to talk about what the auditor general said in his most recent report to Parliament on aboriginal health care. The most revealing aspect of the report was that the Government of Canada and the Ministry of Health are so unconcerned about the fate and health of aboriginal people that over a 10 year period dependency

on prescription drugs was actually facilitated by the department to the point where in one three month period there were more than 700 people who had 50 prescriptions or more for mood altering drugs. The government has known about this problem for 10 years. The auditor general said so and has harshly criticized the government because it has done absolutely nothing about it.

I submit that the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is without accountability. The government is without accountability. What it is trying to do is window dress the whole affair by creating these so-called management boards and land claim agreements to try to give people the appearance that the government is actually concerned, that it is actually doing something. The reality is it sits on its hands and does nothing.

Look at the issue of the Stony reserve in Alberta. The people on the reserve had to cry out through the media. They lived under the threat of their houses being burned down before they could finally get the minister of Indian affairs, kicking and screaming, to agree a forensic audit of that band. Now we see, as a result of the forensic audit, charges are being laid. The truth is coming out. Hopefully the whole truth will come out. I still think there are still some people on that reserve who are concerned that the whole truth does come out.

Again this is the Liberal way. It is the way obfuscating what is really going on by creating the impression that something is being done about the very serious problems which exist on many Canadian reserves.

I was speaking with some aboriginal people yesterday who came from southern Ontario. While we agreed during the meeting that we would not agree on all points, at least we had some common ground. These people said they could not understand why a minister who had fiduciary responsibility to them was actually intervening in a court case and trying to undermine their position in that case. I will not get into the details of it. It is one more example of the Liberal way of speaking out of both sides of your mouth at the same time. It is one more example of creating an illusion for the benefit of your political numbers in the next poll that you are actually doing something when you really are not.

I believe that aboriginal people across the country have caught on to the system. I think they know the system better than the government. The aboriginal people of this country are not going to be satisfied with these kinds of initiatives in the future. I submit to the House and to the aboriginal people of this country that the way out of this mess is for them to be included as full and equal partners in this democracy, for them to be afforded every opportunity as any other Canadian. The way for the future in Canada is the equality of all Canadians, recognizing that aboriginal peoples have unique culture, unique characteristics and a unique language.

● (1620)

I think most Canadians embrace the notion of that. Most Canadians find that something to be proud of, that we have this kind of a culture within our nation's boundaries. We have a culture that people from other parts of the world, Japan, Germany and so on, come over here to see for themselves. I have people coming to my riding from Japan who want to see for themselves aboriginal culture, who want to see a display of aboriginal culture, who want to watch a dance, who want to tour a museum or who want to view aboriginal art. I think that is a great thing for our country.

I submit to the House and to the aboriginal people of this country that being a country that embraces the notion of expressing our culture and our diversity does not mean entrenching inequality and special rights within the laws of our land. I submit that is not the way of the future for this country.

That is principally why I oppose this bill. I believe it is undemocratic. I believe it does not reflect the true values of Canadians and, most of all, I believe in the long run it will do nothing to assist aboriginal people who really want to assist themselves at the present time, who really want to have a future for themselves and their families within this country, who really want accountability, who really want to have an opportunity to see themselves in the future with the same opportunities and with the same economic circumstances as every other Canadian. That is why I oppose this bill.

[*Translation*]

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 Kitchener—Waterloo, crime prevention; the hon. member for Vancouver East, health.

[*English*]

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Skeena for his speech. I have first of all a comment for the member for Calgary East, the previous speaker for the Reform Party.

We say in French he made une affirmation gratuite. I do not know how to translate it. It could be an unfounded assertion or misleading affirmation about the number of people sitting on the board, the next board and a future board. He talked about patronage. I want to let him know that on the planning board there will be five members for the Gwich'in and the Sahtu. There will be two members from the Gwich'in, there will be two members from the government, one coming from the federal government and the other one coming from the Northwest Territories government, and the four will name a president.

On the next one, the land and water board, there will be seventeen members. Of the seventeen members five will come from the Gwich'in, five will come from the Sahtu and three will be from the first nations, the Dogrib, the Deh Cho and the people from treaty No. 8 who are not part of the negotiations right now, and three other ones will be from governments, two from the federal government and one from the Northwest Territories government. That means we will have two members from the federal government and those sixteen will name a president.

On the environment impact assessment and review board, there will be eleven members, five from first nations, five from government and from the government there will be three from the federal government.

If we are looking at what this government has done as nomination for the Nunavik area we have named dozens and dozens of people for nomination there. If we named them it is because they are good people. They are dedicated people and competent people. All the nominations we have done for the Northwest Territories are very good nominations. What the member said before is really misleading the House.

The member for Skeena mentioned that he would like to have first nations as a full and equal partner. My question is very easy. Does he mean by full and equal partner that he and his party do not recognize the treaty signed between the first nations and the governments? Does he mean that equal and full partner means assimilation? Is this why the Reform Party is voting against the initiative to give aboriginal control over their future?

• (1625)

Mr. Mike Scott: Madam Speaker, when the member refers to treaties, in many cases in Canada treaties were signed more than 100 or 200 years ago. In the case of the Sahtu Dene and Metis and in the case of Gwich'in, those treaties were signed a very short while ago by this government in the last Parliament. These are not treaties the government was bound to 200, 300 or 400 years ago.

The government had a historic opportunity in negotiating with aboriginal peoples in Yukon and the Northwest Territories to change direction and say it was not going to go down the road it had been before because it did not work. We have seen the results and live with the results. It is not an accident that the aboriginal infant mortality rate is twice as high as for the rest of Canadians. It is not an accident that the social pathologies on reserves are so much worse than for other Canadians. It is not an accident that the suicide rate is six to seven times as high in reserve communities as it is elsewhere in Canada.

The Government of Canada has created welfare colonies right across this country, encouraged welfare colonies, built up a welfare dependency cycle around these people and put them in a position where it was very difficult, some would argue well nigh impossible, to break that welfare dependency cycle.

What is the government doing now? It is constructing more of the same. It is finding new and better ways to do the old thing which is separation and segregation rather than inclusion and equality. The people who pay the price every time, by far the highest price, are the aboriginal people who are signed into these treaties.

The government had a historic opportunity to do something different but it is so tunnel visioned and so caught up in the old ways. Here we are about to enter the 21st century and they are talking about 17th century thinking on that side. I cannot believe this.

I cannot believe these people do not understand democracy and democratic principles and that the fundamental principle of democracy is the equality of all people before the law. When those principles are violated there are consequences. The consequences in this case are going to be paid mostly by the aboriginal people who are affected by these agreements.

When the member looks at me and asks if I recognize that these people have rights, they have human rights and democratic rights. They ought to have the same rights as I. They have never been afforded these rights and it has been largely Liberal governments that have denied them those rights.

I would ask the hon. member not to look at me. There was no Reform Party 20, 30, 50, 100 or 200 years ago but there was a Liberal Party and that is where it came from.

Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to share a perspective of developmental boards, management boards of resources, our lands, our rivers and our waters throughout Canada.

If the government, in its wisdom, had to recognize aboriginal peoples on the vision of the future of all peoples on this land, aboriginal people would be a majority in this House of Commons. Aboriginal people would be a majority in the Senate. Aboriginal people would be a majority on the Supreme Court of Canada, at the infancy stage of this country. We were the majority of the population of Canada.

Today, in hindsight, government is preparing to acknowledge that aboriginal people can have a say on the land use policies and resource use policies of this country and in the regions of Yukon and Northwest Territories.

• (1630)

It is a step in the right direction. I welcome that in my own constituency with regard to the Athabasca lakes and the uranium mining that takes place there. We do not have resource development boards to govern or to look at the future of the environmental, economic and social impact the hon. member is so concerned about.

Resources are the wealth of the country. Without income there would be no economic cycle. To create new wealth the resources are being tapped away. If we include aboriginal people at this level it is a start. It may not be the answer for all, but the Dene, Innu and Cree all have a vested interest in investing their traditional lifestyle of time immemorial in the future development of the entire country.

I challenge the Reform member who boldly stated the country was going in the wrong direction, or had a history of making mistakes, to share with us the vision of the Reform Party for a brighter future for aboriginal people.

The aboriginal people signed treaties in recognition of the British and French nations along with the Dene, the Mohawk and the Haida, all nations of North America. They were willing to recognize the power of the country and the resources that need to be developed for the betterment of all but in co-operation and with respect for each other.

The management boards are a step in the right direction. I ask for his analysis of the new millennium and the relationship between Canada and the aboriginal people.

Mr. Mike Scott: Madam Speaker, I will try to respond very succinctly.

I thank the hon. member for his intervention. I disagree with him on one point he made. He said that resources were the wealth of the country. I beg to differ. People are the wealth of the country and resources are the tools. I submit the bill being debated today provides no vision for the future.

The very best we could do for aboriginal people is to treat them as equals and with respect, the same respect we have for everybody else.

There are areas with high populations of aboriginal people. There are concerns about land use. There are concerns about resource extraction. This is not because of the aboriginal people but because they have a vested interest in the land. They live there. They are local to the area. I certainly believe they ought to have the right to exercise some control over the decision making but not on the basis of being aboriginal.

Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is an honour for me to address the House for the first time. I would ask for a little latitude to mention a few things before talking about Bill C-6.

It is certainly an honour to be in the House to represent the good people of Dewdney—Alouette. May I begin by acknowledging the people who chose me to represent them in parliament.

The riding of Dewdney—Alouette encompasses a number of diverse communities which stretch from Pitt Meadows in the west to Mission, to Harrison Hot Springs and to Agassiz in the east. It is a diverse mix of urban and rural settings. For many people in the riding it is the last frontier of affordable housing so that they can work in Vancouver.

The forestry and fishing industries are vital to the economic make-up of the area. I salute the people of those communities involved in that work. It is certainly a beautiful place to visit. I would say it is the most beautiful riding in Canada.

I acknowledge a few of my constituents, in particular a few who live in Mission and those who live right in my house. Those are the most important constituents, my wife Wendy and my children Jordana, Reanne, Kaelin and Graedon. It is this support, as it is for all of us who sit in the House, that make it possible to make this commitment to our country. I thank them personally for that. Family is a very important part of my life. We all make sacrifices to be in the House. Members of all parties appreciate those who are at home supporting us. Family is the life of our country.

• (1635)

It is time for those who have been silent for a long time to get involved. I talked to a number who were disillusioned with the governance of the country. Apathy is at an all time high. People are disillusioned. I believe it is time we restored the commitment of the House to the people of the country.

I am proud to be a member of a party committed to restoring the confidence of people in their government through real structural parliamentary reform. That is where Bill C-6 can be addressed. While it is well intended it does not deal with real structural reforms needed to address the concerns of the Mackenzie Valley.

My own riding has eight bands represented, the Sto:lo nation being the largest in the area. Several bands are part of the Sto:lo nation: the Chehalis, the Douglas, the Katzie, the Lakahahmen, the Samahquam, the Scowlitz, the people of Seabird Island and the people of Skookum Chuck.

As my colleagues have mentioned before when talking about the bill, we recognize the validity of the goals of the legislation and the need to implement commitments made by Canada under land claims agreements. Land and water management and protection of the environment in the Mackenzie Valley are issues of importance both to the residents of the region and to Canadians in general.

Our objection and what I would like to focus on is the creation of another level of bureaucracy as was mentioned earlier by some of my colleagues. I received a phone call during the election campaign from one of my own constituents, a member of the aboriginal community. As my hon. colleague from Skeena mentioned, a co-dependency relationship seems to have been established between the federal government and many aboriginal peoples.

The young lady phoned me and said ''I am really tired of the process I have been through. I just want to be a Canadian. I just want to be someone who is treated the same as all other people in Canada''.

Our party's focus on equality and the establishment of equality for aboriginal peoples and all peoples of Canada strikes at the heart of this young lady's comments and a need for real structural change.

When people bring forward legislation they have an idea of what they are doing, at least we hope they do. We argue that the level of bureaucracy to be created would not serve the people of the area well. It would hinder true economic development of the area and the needs of the people there. It is certainly something that needs to be addressed and examined.

Members on this side would like to focus on a new relationship with the aboriginal peoples of Canada, one that focuses on the equality of all Canadians including aboriginal peoples. We have seen and heard from a number of a constituents in ridings across the country of terrible things that have happened in their personal lives. We think about the fact that real people are affected by legislation. We see the effects of legislation on many people in our aboriginal communities and the co-dependent relationship which seems to have developed over the last several decades.

I have spoken with people from aboriginal communities, the rank and file people on different reserves in my riding. People are looking for involvement at the grassroots level and at the governing structure of reserves.

• (1640)

Because the rights of each individual on the reserves are not the same we all know of different stories of people who have been abused. Those are things that need to be addressed. The best way to address them is with fundamental changes, structural changes to the system, the implementation of programs and the implementation of an aboriginal affairs policy that addresses all people of all communities and has a primary function of equality.

Members on this side fully support honouring treaties according to their original intent and court decisions. We also support that aboriginal people be part of the process. We see some trouble with the bill as was mentioned by some of my colleagues before. The levels of bureaucracy would hinder the involvement of rank and file individual people of the Mackenzie Valley. We see the principle of the implementation of the boards as a problem.

The structure of the proposed legislation does not address the real concerns of changing the system to address the needs of individual people. That is where our objections would lie. Many times people will say different things about different groups of people. We fully support aboriginal people.

We look at different people who have come to our offices with troubling circumstances. We shake our heads and wonder how it could have happened. We want to focus on helping all Canadians to achieve equality and to add to this great country.

We support aboriginal people, rank and file individuals who often tend not to have a real voice in their own communities. We see leadership in some bands—not all of course—that does not fully recognize the contributions of all members of the local community.

We object to Bill C-6 on the basis of a number of principles that were mentioned earlier. We look forward to being able to see real parliamentary reform and structural reform in our aboriginal communities to give them a real say at the local level.

As my colleague from Skeena mentioned earlier in his analogy of kingdoms and fiefdoms, the power structure disables the people at the rank and file level from being involved. In essence it shuts down the ability for real involvement by people. It was a very good analogy. We on this side of the House would like to work with the government toward looking at fundamental structural changes for the good of our aboriginal people. The equality of all Canadians is important.

Another person I did not mention or thank at the beginning of my speech whom I would like to thank now is not with us. It is my father. He was a veteran. He served the country and fought in World War II. He really instilled a sense of democracy in me personally. We had many debates about freedoms and democracies. I saw the scars and the pain he carried with him from the horrors of war, the things he saw and had to endure. In fact he lost many of his friends. Even 50 years after the fact tears would well up in his eyes as he thought back to the friends and mates he had lost in the war.

The battles fought by our veterans were for the equality of all Canadians, so that all people would have a say. That is the principle for which he and his colleagues fought.

• (1645)

We would like to see that implemented. We would like to see expressed equality for all Canadians and our aboriginal people who have not had that full opportunity, the full rights and privileges as all other citizens of Canada have had.

I will close by restating our concern for the aboriginal communities and the fact that in Canada we would like to see equality for all people, to bring about a healing, to bring about concern for all people, to help solve the injustices of the past which previous structural policies have put in place. It is time for a change, as my hon. colleague mentioned, not a time to go down the same road. It is time to address these factors of equality and that all Canadians are equal before the law.

The Mackenzie Valley is a great area, part of a great country. While legislation can be well intended, we see structural problems with the implementation of these boards. We need to have that in place in order for it to work well and it needs to be right before implementing it. That is where my main objection lies.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for listening intently to my comments. It is an honour and a privilege to be here and I hope I have many opportunities to speak on different bills.

Mr. Bernard Patry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague from the riding of Dewdney—Alouette and I listened to my colleagues from the Reform Party and to their contradictions and misunderstandings about this bill.

One member stated that these new boards will have no power and will be an empty shell. A number of members from the Reform Party stated the opposite, that they will have too many powers. Some are scared about the cost.

The Mackenzie River is long and the area is huge. The Mackenzie River is 4,000 kilometres long. What we are doing right now is transferring power from DIAND to the people of the Mackenzie Valley.

The Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board, the Regional Land Use Planning Board and the Environmental Impact Review Board will be transferred from DIAND to them. Right now we have many senior employees from DIAND travelling weekly to the Northwest Territories. That costs a lot of money because it is a very large area. They do not move from Yellowknife to Inuvik just like that. It is impossible. We are transferring the power to the people of the First Nations.

I have one question for my friend. How could the Reform Party say this bill is no good for aboriginal people knowing that the elected majority in the legislature of the Northwest Territories is made up of aboriginal people, knowing that the Premier of the Northwest Territories is Metis, knowing that the Minister of Renewable Resources in the Northwest Territories is Metis, knowing that the Gwich'in Council is in favour of this bill, knowing that the Sahtu Council is also in favour of this bill? How could he state that this bill is not good for the First Nations when all the First Nations people in this region are in favour of it?

Mr. Grant McNally: I thank the hon. member for his question.

First, I would look at the leadership versus rank and file aboriginal peoples. We are focusing on the relationship between the two and the fact that while the elected leadership of the area may be in favour of this bill we are looking at the actual process, the actual implementation.

• (1650)

My colleague opposite mentioned returning power to the aboriginal people in the area. We would question, then, why this great bureaucracy, this great number of people involved on the boards from the federal government side? Perhaps we should be turning it over to the local people, with accountability and responsibility being placed on the people within that area, similar to a municipal type of government. That is what my response would be.

It is basically the process we are talking about. The power structure and the implementation of the plan are what we are concerned about. We are not concerned about the intent of the bill. We are concerned about its implementation and its practicality to the people of the area.

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to compliment my colleague from Dewdney—Alouette on his maiden speech and his characterization of his riding. I am sure we all remember when we said equally glowing things. I appreciate that because it makes us remember why we are here.

I worked with the previous member for Churchill, Elijah Harper. He is a Cree Indian. I remember an exchange with the Reform Party in the last House when Elijah was dealing with a bill much like the bill which is before the House today. It was a bill which gave powers to a group of aboriginal people, a unified people. Reform members were saying that it would be far too expensive and that if we carried on that way British Columbia would end up as a native community and all the other people would have to leave and that sort of nonsense.

Elijah stood and he said ''My colleagues in the Reform Party, you just do not get it, do you? You do not have the foggiest notion of what I am talking about. I am talking about my people, my ancestors, the people who have inhabited this land for some 10,000 to 15,000 years. They lived here without the benefit of gasoline, internal combustion engines, high powered rifles, airplanes, helicopters and a lot of other things''. I am glad Elijah is not dead. He would be rolling in his grave if he had heard the speech today.

The member used a very poor analogy. He suggested that perhaps the native people were not democratic. Surely my colleague knows that one of the problems is that the 625 First Nations consider themselves to be independent, individual First Nations. They have a system of government and a way of operating.

Before we came along they traded right across the country, from California to Nova Scotia, from Alaska to Florida. They worked out things together. They had regions. They did a little fighting now and then and took a few prisoners. They took a scalp or two, but most of the time they settled their differences at councils, by talking. We have to learn that.

Then there is this nonsense about them all wanting to have equality. That is a very hard term to get hold of. My friends in the Reform Party use it without due consideration. What they mean is, we throw the native people in with everybody else to follow the same rules. If they are in B.C., they will follow the rules of B.C. If they are in Vancouver, they will follow the rules of Vancouver. If they are somewhere else, they will follow those rules. That is not what they want at all. That is not why we have spent a long time trying to redress the balance.

Yes, former governments and people thought we could assimilate the natives. They were not educated. They were savages. They did not have a system of government because we trampled on it. We did not pay much attention to it.

Some of the early treaties, yes, we have read about them. They sat, said nice things to one another and they welcomed them to share this country. That is what they want to do again. That is what this is bill is aiming toward. It is going to take time, goodwill. It is going to take some knowledge of history and some knowledge of what is involved. I do not hear much of that on the other side. I hear catch words and buzzwords.

• (1655)

If my colleague is so concerned about his native people, maybe he would tell us why his party opposed the Nisga'a agreement? Why are Reformers afraid that these terrible native people are going to take over the whole country and throw us out?

Mr. Grant McNally: Madam Speaker, it is an honour to address the comments of my hon. colleague. I thank him for the compliments at the beginning of his comments. I do not thank him for his comments after.

I do not see Mr. Harper today. I guess he was not supported by his people in a re-election bid. The hon. member talked about ramblings and he actually called aboriginals savages. We would have nothing to do with that kind of comment.

He talked about power structures and abuses of former governments. We agree with that. We are looking for a change in the balance. We are listening to rank and file aboriginal people. There are people that are concerned with power structures within their reserves. Not to acknowledge that is to ignore the facts and needs to be addressed. Equality is not a buzzword here. It is something we believe in and it is something we are moving and working toward. That is where our policy lies.

We have treaty advisory committees in British Columbia. I had an opportunity to talk to all the mayors in my riding and they have great concern about the process. Their great concern is because they have a minor part. The municipalities are living hand in hand with the aboriginal communities but they do not have an opportunity to sit down at the table with each other. The process is structured so that they have observer status but not participatory status. They are concerned about that.

When the federal government leaves, the people of both communities are left to work out the relationship between them. We would like to see that addressed so that they would have an opportunity to work together.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the debate on this bill is not about the degree of respect for aboriginal people held on one side of the House or the other. I know the Liberals would like to make it a debate on that and go into their usual rants about how they see themselves as being the purest of the pure as far as having the best of motives and everyone else's motives are rotten and suspect. That is nonsense.

Members need to examine some of these measures on their merits. They need to get away from some of the rhetoric and some of the emotionally buzzwords that are used, unfortunately, by government, I hope not to obscure clear headed debate on the merits of these proposals. Certainly it should not deter people who are examining these bills in the public domain.

Bill C-6 is called the Mackenzie Valley land and water management act. I assume this is what this bill is about. It is about good management of the resources on the land and the water resources of a huge, beautiful valuable area of our country. It is rightly said that the people who live in that area should have the biggest say in the way the area is managed. That is the principle that we have tried to use right across Canada. Unfortunately we get made in Ottawa solutions that do not benefit the people in a particular area or region of Canada. We have been pretty blunt about pointing that out when it happens. We have just seen in B.C. how the mismanagement by Ottawa of our salmon stocks has erupted into a huge concern and fight with real economic consequences. It is not just people in one or another area of the country who suffer under bad management from this government and I think we need to point that out.

• (1700)

Let us examine the kind of management structure that is being put into place by this bill. First, the bill creates four new boards. It creates a land use planning board in the Gwich'in settlement area. It also creates a land use planning board in the Sahtu settlement area. Then it sets up a Mackenzie Valley land and water board with a regional panel in each of those two settlement areas and it sets up an environmental impact review board for the entire Mackenzie Valley.

The Mackenzie Valley land and water board can create panels besides the two that are set up in the Gwich'in settlement area and the Sahtu settlement area, and of course as other land claims are settled there are other settlement areas and presumably other land use planning boards and land and water boards.

And so we have a proliferation of boards. This is nice. It gives a lot of people involvement and a say in what happens but the simple question is does this lead to power or to gridlock. We can say this scheme is wonderful, we are going to include everybody, we are going to give everybody we can a say and they can sit around the table and give their opinion and make a decision about how this happens. Then a little ways away another group will do the same thing.

Is not the whole purpose of this to properly manage the land and water resources of a very valuable region, to manage them for the benefit of the people there? Just to say that everyone gets a shot at this and is this not wonderful is simply nonsense.

The stated purpose of the bill is to provide an integrated system of land and water management in the Mackenzie Valley. That is a nice purpose. Integrated sounds very nice. That means coming together, meshing, working harmoniously and smoothly together for the protection of the environment and resources that are so important to people of any region, whether it be fish in British Columbia, whether it be hydroelectric power in Newfoundland and Labrador or whatever it is that people are very concerned about the management of land and water resources.

Is this system integrated? By any normal, rational, intelligent definition I cannot see any reason to suppose that this is going to be integrated. There are separate boards and panels being set up in each of the settlement areas and there is a total absence of any logical, coherent framework for doing this. It does not say how the members of these boards are to be selected. It does not give any criteria for eligibility. It has no process for the appointment. It does not lay out who is responsible for what.

There are no guidelines as to how a board decides what is allowable and what is not. It does not say that if a development affects both regions or in future maybe multi-settlement regions if one board decides one thing and then another board has a different viewpoint who sorts all this out.

Are these projects supposed to be sorted out by the courts at enormous expense, enormous delays, enormous frustration where with the resources everyone throws up their hands, as they are starting to do in Voisey's Bay in Labrador, and wishes they had never started the whole thing? Then the potential benefits for the people in the region are completely lost.

I heard the rant by the previous questioner of the last speaker about this wonderful heritage of aboriginal people. The Liberals are not the only ones who know and love, have worked with or have family members who are aboriginal people. They want the same advantages, the same educational opportunities, the same goods and services, the same security and employment opportunities as any other Canadian.

• (1705)

The resources of a particular region are there to be developed to give that quality of life to the people who live there. We must have a way to make sure that there is a logical, well thought out and workable solution so that the people of a region can decide how to protect, enhance and properly develop the resources, but not in such a hodge-podge, mish-mash way that no coherent decision is ever possible.

This decision making process is under resource. It takes a great deal of technical expertise to do environmental impact assessments and all other assessments that have to be made. The development companies will say if they bring in this development or do this or that, it will be great. However, when those kinds of proposals are being evaluated there must be the same kind of technical expertise.

However, there is no indication in this bill that the technical resources will be available to the decision makers who are being put in place. To just put people in place and tell them to go for it and decide without giving them the resources to make well informed decisions is nonsense. Again, the bill does not allow that.

I was in the last Parliament when Reform opposed some of the measures that were brought forward on these settlements. It was on the basis that if we are to set up power, authority, responsible decision making structures, it must be done in a way which will benefit the people involved. We cannot have chaos and expect anyone to benefit.

I challenge the government to clarify the structure of these multi-boards it is putting place. By the way, this is not the only decision making structure in that area. There is the territorial government and the councils of the people. There will be these levels of decision makers, government and authorities. Human nature being what it is, there will also be competing interests and viewpoints.

I have not seen anything in the bill that would reassure me as a legislator, as someone who has the responsibility to examine the structure to see whether it does serve the interests of the people who will be affected. I am not at all convinced that this structure is workable.

To say that it includes aboriginal people in the decision making and therefore it must be wonderful and good and anyone who says it is not must have some sinister motive is complete nonsense. It would be absolutely irresponsible to accept the bill and its structure simply on that soft, fuzzy, mushy basis.

The people who will be affected are looking to us to put in place a workable structure, one they can operate under. In the House we have standing orders, procedure in committees, rules of procedure and Beauchesne. Even then to your sorrow, Mr. Speaker, sometimes order and coherence do not always carry the day. That is the way institutions and organizations and decision making bodies operate. They have to be structured and under some kind of

regulatory process which is clearly laid out so that people know what their responsibilities and jurisdictions are and what is allowable and what is not.

Just to say that this is going to happen by magic is like blowing up a print shop and saying you are going to get a complete novel from the debris.

● (1710)

We in the House and this government have a responsibility when we put in structures and make regulatory changes. The goal is laudable. I do not think anybody in this House would say that we should not have environmental protection for the northern regions or good management of land and water resources. Nobody here is saying that.

What we and the opposition are saying to the government is that instead of putting our hands over our hearts and saying we are being inclusive and allowing people to have a say, let us put a structure in place where we have a say in a way that is going to get some results.

If we in this House could just get up and shout at each other and say whatever we wanted whenever we wanted with no structure, no regulations and no standing orders, we would not be able to carry on the business of this country. It is the same with any organization or decision making body that is put into place. There must be some clearly developed lines of how this is going to work. This is entirely missing in this bill. Maybe the parliamentary secretary can reassure us that there are some regulations that are going to be put into place that will remedy this defect. I have not seen them but if they are not there they sure should be.

At this point I think it would be completely irresponsible to foist on the people of a huge, important and valuable region of this country this kind of a hodge-podge management system. I urge members of this House to either see the government rectify these defects or to vote down this bill until these defects are rectified.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague across the way. There were some key words, that it is not workable, we have to examine the structure. She also said that it was irresponsible. The responsibility is not in the bill, the responsibility is standing up on one's feet and criticizing something by saying it is not workable, it is not this and it is not that.

If my colleague across the way has some great ideas that she wants to bring forward I am sure this side will be interested in listening. However, let us not call something irresponsible when it is not. The responsibility here is criticizing something and not putting something down on the table. That is the way the Reform Party has always been. If it wants to call a spade a spade, let us not say the sky is falling. Responsibility is being elected to this place.

If the government does not see its way and the great party across the way has some sense in where it wants us to go, put it on the table. Do not just stand and criticize. If it has some constructive ideas, bring them forward instead of criticizing.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy: Mr. Speaker, I guess the hon. member was not part of the Liberal contingent when it was in opposition because as an observer of the political scene I almost never saw it bring forth anything constructive. The criticisms of the rat pack were a big example of the order of the day. It seemed to be its specialty.

Unlike the Liberal opposition, the Reform opposition has been very careful to bring forth constructive alternatives on major issues where it disagrees with government. We were the first opposition, for example, to propose an alternative budget. We were the first opposition to propose substantial changes to the Canada pension plan which we knew was not working even before the Liberals finally admitted it. In area after area we have brought forth constructive alternatives.

If the government does not have the resources or the brain power to figure out how to bring forward a workable, logical and constructive framework for the management of resources then it probably should resign and let somebody in who can do it.

However, if it is going to get on with the job then the principles it should go on is that there should be clearly defined jurisdiction, responsibility and a line of authority and decision making that is identified, laid out and that people can refer to when these matters go forward.

● (1715)

Mr. Bernard Patry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I first of all thank my colleague for his speech.

My first comment is that I am sure he did not read the bill. He is talking about the criteria for naming the people to the board. There is just one criteria for naming people to boards, and that is competence. I hope by raising this question in the House he does not feel it means the First Nations are not competent.

Second, the member talks about court, about delay and about frustration. We are just replacing what we are doing now. We are devolving. We are giving back to the people living in the Mackenzie Valley what they should have had long ago.

The member said that the boards are not integrated. It is totally the opposite. This system is integrated because the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board and the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board will end those issues relating to the valley. It is integrated, totally integrated. One thing is that the

GNWT supports this bill because it is integrated valley wide. It is for the people living there.

My question is quite simple. Why does the member of the Reform Party want to impose her view and not take into consideration the remarks, the views of the people, the wishes of the people living in that area?

We told that to the premier of the Northwest Territories and he agreed. The bands living there agree. The minister of renewable resources agrees. The people and the Government of the Northwest Territories agree.

Why does the member not take this into consideration? Why does she always want to impose her view and not take the views of the First Nations?

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy: Mr. Speaker, my view is very simple. That is whatever regulatory and management scheme is put into place must be clear and workable. I would challenge the parliamentary secretary to find anybody who would disagree with that view, including the aboriginal people themselves who are most affected by this scheme. That is the whole point. They deserve the very best. I think it is repugnant to suggest that somehow competence is related to one's view of aboriginal people.

Those are the kinds of tactics that the Liberals continually use when you criticize them. If you criticize something the Liberals do, then you are criticizing the people who might be involved. If you criticize some kind of social program that the Liberals set up, then you are criticizing the people who are accessing the program. This is complete nonsense. I think the Liberals need to get away from those kinds of tactics and on to some valuable, logical and proper examination of what they are doing.

If the criterion is competence, then what is competence? There are all kinds of people who are competent but competent in different things. What kind of competence do we need for people who are managing land and water resources? What kind of background do they need? What kind of knowledge do they need? What kind of perspective of the area do they need? Those are the kinds of things that need to be spelled out.

If the best that the parliamentary secretary can come up with is the bare word competence, then surely we are in bigger trouble than I even thought we were.

I can well imagine that the people of the area are in total agreement that they themselves should have the decision making authority and the authority to manage the resources in their own area. If the management scheme, which is the only point I am making, will lead to gridlock, confusion and disarray instead of to clear, proper and effective decision making, then nobody is well served, whether they are competent or not.

I would ask this government to show a little competence and realistically address the very serious issues that I am raising, that the opposition is raising, instead of indulging in cheap shots and getting away from the real issues that are so important to the future of this area.

● (1720)

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, what I find so interesting about what has gone on in this debate is that none of us would be debating this if it had not been for the excesses of the Mulroney era. All of the legislation from which flowed this current bill was legislation that was initiated during the Mulroney era. These very Liberals in government who are now defending every aspect of every agreement are basically defending the excesses of the Mulroney era.

In those heady days before there was effective opposition in this Parliament to talk about some of the potential downstream problems associated with some of the legislation in the north, we ended up with agreements that were constitutionally entrenched. This led to commitments being made in the north which are now leading to a circumstance where this government is attempting to cover up the cracks and deal with some very problematic circumstances in terms of resource development, how to operate the bureaucracy and how to operate governance in the north.

We had a circumstance here where a member asked why we did not come up with some constructive solutions. Last January I presented a paper on the very subject of how the governance of the western arctic could operate the western Northwest Territories after the creation of Nunavut which we all know is coming and very quickly it will be upon us, the creation of a new territory in the eastern arctic that is a province in everything but name with new governance. We already have the contiguous territory of the Yukon. Left between those two circumstances is a territory that many people are calling the western Northwest Territories. Some people are calling it the western arctic.

Presently the whole seat of government for the Northwest Territories resides in Yellowknife which contains half the population of the residual territory after the creation of Nunavut. Several land claims agreements were initiated and legislated in the last Parliament but they all began during the Tory regime. There are competing interests between tribal groupings, Metis and non-natives. They are often at odds as to what the future arrangement should be in the western arctic.

So it is ridiculous to assert that there is a made in the north solution when it comes to this Mackenzie Valley land and water management act that is singular. It is certainly anything but singular. Bringing this whole arrangement into a workable fashion is turning out to be a very complicated arrangement indeed.

As we know, in terms of resource development the north is a warehouse resources. We need to generate interest and debate in

southern Canada on the fate of what goes on in the north. We do not get enough opportunity to debate this very important issue.

Half the people who live in the western territory which wholly contains the Mackenzie Valley live in Yellowknife. We went through a constitutional proposal to try to figure out a way to govern that territory, given all of the aboriginal settlements that have already occurred and those that are likely to occur to try to tie all the community arrangements into that.

● (1725)

After a very lengthy study, my ultimate conclusion was that the best solution would be to carry out the essential housekeeping changes to the current Northwest Territories Act which are necessary to take into account the upcoming division. The western Northwest Territories could readily continue to operate under the amended Northwest Territories Act for the foreseeable future.

The Government of the Northwest Territories putting more service and program delivery responsibilities into the hands of the communities should continue to be encouraged. That is what has been happening because of the reduction in federal transfers during the last Parliament.

When we look at practical and pragmatic ways to deal with resource management in the Mackenzie Valley we have to remember that we have constitutionally entrenched commitments which flow from the agreements already in place. However there is a better way.

There are some laudable goals in the bill. It is not so much the goals that we are concerned about. It is the actual provisions within the bill.

It is important to note that the Northwest Territories is 90% dependent on federal funding. In order to move away from that, the main industry that can accomplish it is mining. There is a warehouse of resources and it is mostly mining oriented.

The BHP mine proposal which will be a major stimulus to the economy of Yellowknife and the western Northwest Territories would not have occurred if it had not been proposed by a large corporation with patience and if the deposit had not occurred outside of one of the litigious land claims settlement proposals. There are lots of warnings from the mining sector that what is being put in place has all of the pitfalls of leading us into the circumstance where those kinds of developments will be very much put at risk.

The mining sector has a world full of experience. We know that most of the large mining concerns and many of the small ones, and more and more Canadians are operating in an international theatre. They view some of the concerns in several ways.

There are new obstacles to resource development in what has been considered by many to be a friendly environment. There are concerns about everything from the staking of mineral claims to a confused enforcement policy.

The reliance on litigation to solve problems when it comes to the way this new board will operate came out clearly in an information session held by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in the north. Concerns were raised about the vulnerability of this new process to delay tactics by certain parties. Then there is the lack of clarity in the process for selecting members.

I certainly have not gone through the full list, but what is clear is that the substantial amendments presented by the Northwest Territories Chamber of Mines revolved around two things. One was the lack of clarity in the law and the rules, and the other was that the new system is seriously under-resourced. Those concerns need to be dealt with in a very clear way in this legislation. There should be amendments made to that effect. We would certainly support them.

It concerns me that we do not recognize the complexity of the legislation which we are dealing with.

● (1730)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): If the hon. member for Vancouver Island North would forgive me, it now being 5.30 p.m. we must interrupt the proceedings. I understand that the hon. member will have the remainder of his time when this bill comes up next.

It being 5.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the several deferred recorded divisions.

Call in the members.

● (1750)

Before the taking of the vote:

The Speaker: I have been approached by a few members and I want to clarify something. Most of the House will know this already. When we are taking votes may I please encourage you not to leave your seats. We have to keep track of everyone. If you are going to be here for the vote, please stay in your seats.

* * *

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—CANADIAN FISHING INDUSTRY

The House resumed from October 23 consideration of the motion and the amendment.

The Speaker: The first recorded division is on the amendment relating to the Business of Supply, pursuant to order made Thursday, October 23.

● (1805)

(The House divided on the amendment, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 17*)

YEAS

Members

Adams
Alcock
Anderson
Assadourian
Augustine
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Baker
Bakopanos
Barnes
Beaumier
Bélair
Bélanger
Bellemare
Bennett
Bertrand
Bevilacqua
Blondin-Andrew
Bonin
Bonwick
Boudria
Bradshaw
Brown
Bryden
Bulte
Byrne
Caccia
Calder
Cannis
Caplan
Carroll
Catterall
Cauchon
Chamberlain
Chan
Charbonneau
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Clouthier
Coderre
Cohen
Collenette
Comuzzi
Copps
Cullen
DeVillers
Dhaliwal
Dion
Discepola
Dromisky
Drouin
Duhamel
Easter
Eggleton
Finestone
Finlay
Folco
Fontana
Fry
Gagliano
Gallaway
Godfrey
Goodale
Graham
Gray (Windsor West)
Grose
Harb
Harvard
Hubbard
Ianno
Iftody
Jackson
Jennings
Jordan
Karetak-Lindell
Karygiannis
Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson
Lastewka
Lavigne
Lee
Leung
Lincoln
Longfield
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
Manley
Marchi
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Massé
McCormick
McGuire
McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan (Edmonton West)
McTeague
McWhinney
Mifflin
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Minna
Mitchell
Murray
Myers
Nault
Normand
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly
Pagtakhan
Paradis
Parrish
Patry
Peric
Peterson
Pettigrew
Phinney
Pickard (Kent—Essex)
Pillitteri
Pratt
Proud
Provenzano
Redman
Reed
Richardson
Robillard
Rock
Saada
Scott (Fredericton)
Serré
Shepherd
Speller
St. Denis
Steckle
Stewart (Brant)
Stewart (Northumberland)
St-Julien
Szabo
Telegdi
Thibeault
Torsney
Ur
Valeri
Vanclief
Volpe
Wappel
Whelan
Wilfert
Wood—148

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Ablonczy
Alarie
Anders
Asselin
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar)
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bailey
Bellehumeur
Benoit
Bergeron
Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)
Bigras
Blaikie
Borotsik
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brien
Brison
Cadman
Canuel
Casey
Casson
Charest
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)
Crête
Cummins
Dalphond-Guiral
Davies
de Savoye
Debien
Desjarlais
Desrochers
Dockrill
Doyle
Dubé (Lévis)
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)
Duceppe
Duncan
Earle
Elley
Epp
Forseth
Fournier
Gagnon
Gauthier
Girard-Bujold
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Godin (Châteauguay)
Goldring
Gouk
Grewal
Grey (Edmonton North)
Guay
Guimond
Hanger
Hardy
Harris
Hart
Harvey
Herron
Hill (Macleod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom
Hoeppner
Jaffer
Johnston
Jones
Keddy (South Shore)
Kenney (Calgary-Sud-Est)
Kerpan
Konrad
Laliberte
Lalonde
Laurin
Lebel
Lefebvre
Loubier
Lowther
Lunn
Mancini
Manning
Marceau
Marchand
Mark
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Matthews
Mayfield
McDonough
McNally
Ménard
Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)
Morrison
Muise
Nunziata
Nystrom
Obhrai
Pankiw
Penson
Perron
Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon
Power
Price
Proctor
Ramsay
Reynolds
Riis
Ritz
Robinson
Rocheleau
Sauvageau
Schmidt
Scott (Skeena)
Solberg
Solomon
Stinson
Stoffer
Strahl
Thompson (Charlotte)
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)
Turp
Vautour
Vellacott
Venne
Wasylycia-Leis
Wayne
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Williams—132

PAIRED MEMBERS

Dumas
Malhi
Marleau
Mercier
Milliken
St-Hilaire

The Speaker: I declare the amendment carried.

The next question is on the main motion, as amended. The question is as follows: Mr. Charest, seconded by Mrs. Wayne, moved:

That this House recognize the urgent need for action—

Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: No.

The Speaker: Did I hear a no?

An hon. member: Yes.

The Speaker:

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 continue the implementation of 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.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion, as amended?

Mr. Bob Kilger: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. If the House would agree I would propose that you seek unanimous consent that members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting yea.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Chuck Strahl: Mr. Speaker, Reform Party members present will vote no.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Quebecois will vote against this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. John Solomon: Mr. Speaker, NDP members present this evening will vote no on this matter.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Harvey: No. The proposal—

[*English*]

Mr. John Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the residents of York South-Weston I will be voting no.

The Speaker: We did not hear the way the Conservative Party was voting.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Harvey: Mr. Speaker, given the substantial changes to the main motion, we will vote nay on this motion.

[*English*]

[*Editor's Note: See list under Division 017*]

The Speaker: I declare the motion, as amended, carried.

On a point of order, the hon. member.

Mr. Jim Gouk: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal vote was the same as the previous vote yet I see an empty desk on the Liberal side that was not empty when the previous vote came in.

Is that number for the Liberals correct?

The Speaker: Do you withdraw?

* * *

● (1810)

CUSTOMS TARIFF

The House resumed from October 24, consideration of the motion that 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, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The next recorded division is on the motion at the second reading stage of Bill C-11.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bob Kilger: Mr. Speaker, you will find unanimous consent that members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting yea.

[*English*]

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House?

Mr. Chuck Strahl: Mr. Speaker, Reform Party members present will vote yes unless instructed otherwise by their constituents.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Quebecois will vote in favour of this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. John Solomon: Mr. Speaker, NDP members present this evening will vote no on this motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Harvey: Mr. Speaker, we will vote in favour of this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. John Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the residents of York South—Weston I will be voting with the government on this matter.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 18*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Adams
Alcock
Anderson
Asselin
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Baker
Barnes
Bélair
Bellehumeur
Bennett
Bergeron
Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)
Bevilacqua
Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick
Boudria
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Brien
Brown
Bulte
Caccia
Calder
Canuel
Carroll
Casson
Cauchon
Chan
Charest
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Coderre
Collenette
Copps
Cullen
Dalphond-Guiral
Debien
DeVillers
Dion
Doyle
Drouin
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)
Duhamel
Easter
Elley
Finestone
Folco
Forseth
Fry
Gagnon
Gauthier
Godfrey
Goldring
Gouk
Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Edmonton North)
Guay
Hanger
Ablonczy
Alarie
Anders
Assadourian
Augustine
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bailey
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bélanger
Bellemare
Benoit
Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—
Bertrand
Bigras
Bonin
Borotsik
Bradshaw
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brison
Bryden
Byrne
Cadman
Cannis
Caplan
Casey
Catterall
Chamberlain
Charbonneau
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)
Clouthier
Cohen
Comuzzi
Crête
Cummins
de Savoye
Desrochers
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Dromisky
Dubé (Lévis)
Duceppe
Duncan
Eggleton
Epp
Finlay
Fontana
Fournier
Gagliano
Gallaway
Girard-Bujold
Godin (Châteauguay)
Goodale
Graham
Grewal
Grose
Guimond
Harb
Harris
Harvard
Herron
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoeppner
Ianno
Jackson
Jennings
Jones
Karetak-Lindell
Keddy (South Shore)
Kerpan
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Knutson
Lalonde
Laurin
Lebel
Lefebvre
Lincoln
Loubier
Lunn
Mahoney
Manley
Marceau
Marchi
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Massé
Mayfield
McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton West)
McTeague
Ménard
Mifflin
Mills (Red Deer)
Mitchell
Muise
Myers
Normand
Obhrai
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Pagtakhan
Paradis
Patry
Peric
Peterson
Phinney
Pickard (Kent—Essex)
Plamondon
Pratt
Proud
Ramsay
Reed
Richardson
Robillard
Rock
Sauvageau
Scott (Fredericton)
Serré
Solberg
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Stinson
Strahl
Telegdi
Thompson (Charlotte)
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Turp
Valeri
Vellacott
Volpe
Wayne
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Williams
Hart
Harvey
Hill (Macleod)
Hilstrom
Hubbard
Iftody
Jaffer
Johnston
Jordan
Karygiannis
Kenney (Calgary-Sud-Est)
Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Konrad
Lastewka
Lavigne
Lee
Leung
Longfield
Lowther
MacAulay
Maloney
Manning
Marchand
Mark
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
McNally
McWhinney
Meredith
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Minna
Morrison
Murray
Nault
Nunziata
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Pankiw
Parrish
Penson
Perron
Pettigrew
Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri
Power
Price
Provenzano
Redman
Reynolds
Ritz
Rocheleau
Saada
Schmidt
Scott (Skeena)
Shepherd
Speller
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
St-Julien
Szabo
Thibeault
Torsney
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)
Ur
Vanclief
Venne
Wappel
Whelan
Wilfert
Wood—261

NAYS

Members

Axworthy (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar)
Davies
Blaikie
Desjarlais

Dockrill	Earle
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Hardy
Laliberte	Mancini
McDonough	Nystrom
Proctor	Riis
Robinson	Solomon
Stoffer	Vautour
Wasylycia-Leis —19	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Dumas	Malhi
Marleau	Mercier
Milliken	St-Hilaire

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Industry.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

NEWFOUNDLAND SCHOOL SYSTEM

The House resumed from October 27 consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

The Speaker: The next recorded division is on the amendment to Government Business No. 5 pursuant to order made Monday, October 27, 1997.

The question is as follows: Mr. Dion, seconded by Mrs. Stewart (Northumberland) moved:

That a Special Joint Committee of the House—

Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Dispense.

The Speaker: Mr. Manning, seconded by Miss Grey (Edmonton North) moved the following amendment:

That the motion be amended—

Shall I dispense?

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. While I recognize the importance of dispensing with the necessity of reading the entire amendment and the motion, there are many people who are watching the proceedings of the House of Commons who may not be aware of exactly what we are voting on.

I would ask the Chair, in perhaps a sentence or two, to simply indicate to the public exactly what we are voting on this afternoon with respect to this matter.

The Speaker: With respect, the Chair is empowered to read the motion as it is or not to read it to the House. So if you would like everything read I will read it and, if not, I will proceed from there.

Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: No.

The Speaker: Mr. Manning, seconded by Miss Grey (Edmonton North), moved the following amendment:

That the motion be amended

(a) by replacing the words: ''Special Join Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons'' in the first paragraph with the words: ''Special Committee of the House of Commons'';

(b) by adding immediately after the words: ''concerning the Newfoundland school system;'' the following: ''more specifically, the matter of applying the following three tests for such a proposed constitutional amendment:

1. The Test of Democratic Consent,

2. The Test of Canadian National Interest, and

3. The Test of the Rule of Law;''

(c) by deleting the words: ''and seven Members of the Senate'' in the second paragraph;

(d) by inserting after the word ''Committee'' in the sixth paragraph the words: ''be directed and authorized to hold hearings in Newfoundland and'';

(e) by replacing all the words in the eighth paragraph with the following: ''That the quorum of the committee be nine members whenever a vote, resolution or other decision is taken, and that the Chairperson be authorized to hold meetings, to receive evidence and authorize the printing thereof, whenever six members are present;'';

(f) by deleting the words ''Senate and'' in the ninth paragraph;

(g) by replacing all the words in the twelfth paragraph with the following: ''That, notwithstanding usual practices, if the House is not sitting when the final report of the committee is completed, the report may be deposited with the Clerk of the House, and the report shall thereupon be deemed to have been presented to the House;''; and

(h) by deleting all the words in the last paragraph.

The question is on the amendment.

● (1815)

Mr. Bob Kilger: Mr. Speaker, I propose that you seek unanimous consent that members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting nay.

The Speaker: Is there the unanimous consent of the House?

Mr. Chuck Strahl: Mr. Speaker, Reform Party members present vote yes on the amendment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Quebecois will vote against this amendment.

[*English*]

Mr. John Solomon: Mr. Speaker, NDP members present will vote yes on the amendment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Harvey: Mr. Speaker, the members of our party will be voting against the amendment.

[*English*]

Mr. John Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the residents of York South—Weston I would like to indicate for the record that I am fundamentally opposed to amending term 17. However, with respect to this amendment I will be voting in favour.

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:)

(*Division No. 19*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Anders
Bailey
Blaikie
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Casson
Davies
Dockrill
Earle
Epp
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Gouk
Grey (Edmonton North)
Hardy
Hart
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoeppner
Johnston
Kerpan
Laliberte
Lunn
Manning
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McDonough
Meredith
Morrison
Nystrom
Pankiw
Proctor
Reynolds
Ritz
Schmidt
Solberg
Stinson
Strahl
Vellacott
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Ablonczy
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar)
Benoit
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Cadman
Cummins
Desjarlais
Duncan
Elley
Forseth
Goldring
Grewal
Hanger
Harris
Hill (Macleod)
Hilstrom
Jaffer
Kenney (Calgary-Sud-Est)
Konrad
Lowther
Mancini
Mark
Mayfield
McNally
Mills (Red Deer)
Nunziata
Obhrai
Penson
Ramsay
Riis
Robinson
Scott (Skeena)
Solomon
Stoffer
Vautour
Wasylycia-Leis
Williams—74

NAYS

Members

Adams
Alcock
Assadourian
Augustine
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Baker
Barnes
Bélair
Bellehumeur
Bennett
Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)
Bertrand
Bigras
Bonin
Borotsik
Bradshaw
Brison
Bryden
Byrne
Calder
Canuel
Carroll
Catterall
Chamberlain
Charbonneau
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)
Clouthier
Cohen
Comuzzi
Crête
Dalphond-Guiral
Debien
DeVillers
Dion
Doyle
Drouin
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)
Duhamel
Eggleton
Finlay
Fontana
Fry
Gagnon
Gauthier
Godfrey
Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)
Guay
Harb
Harvey
Hubbard
Iftody
Jennings
Jordan
Karygiannis
Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Lalonde
Laurin
Lebel
Lefebvre
Lincoln
Loubier
Mahoney
Manley
Marchand
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews
McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton West)
McWhinney
Mifflin
Minna
Muise
Myers
Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Peric
Peterson
Alarie
Anderson
Asselin
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bélanger
Bellemare
Bergeron
Bevilacqua
Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick
Boudria
Brien
Brown
Bulte
Caccia
Cannis
Caplan
Casey
Cauchon
Chan
Charest
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Coderre
Collenette
Copps
Cullen
de Savoye
Desrochers
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Dromisky
Dubé (Lévis)
Duceppe
Easter
Finestone
Folco
Fournier
Gagliano
Gallaway
Girard-Bujold
Godin (Châteauguay)
Graham
Grose
Guimond
Harvard
Herron
Ianno
Jackson
Jones
Karetak-Lindell
Keddy (South Shore)
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Knutson
Lastewka
Lavigne
Lee
Leung
Longfield
MacAulay
Maloney
Marceau
Marchi
Massé
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Ménard
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mitchell
Murray
Nault
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Paradis
Patry
Perron

Pettigrew
Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri
Power
Price
Provenzano
Reed
Robillard
Rock
Sauvageau
Serré
Speller
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Szabo
Thibeault
Torsney
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)
Ur
Vanclief
Volpe
Wayne
Wilfert
Phinney
Pickard (Kent—Essex)
Plamondon
Pratt
Proud
Redman
Richardson
Rocheleau
Saada
Scott (Fredericton)
Shepherd
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
St-Julien
Telegdi
Thompson (Charlotte)
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Turp
Valeri
Venne
Wappel
Whelan
Wood—206

PAIRED MEMBERS

Dumas
Marleau
Milliken
Malhi
Mercier
St-Hilaire

The Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated. The next question is on the main motion.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: On division.

The Speaker: On division.

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, we were waiting for you to say all those in favour of the motion, all those against, and to declare who you thought had it. Then we would see if we would have a standing vote because that is the way you do it.

The Speaker: You are right, that is the way you do it. All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

• (1820)

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

Mr. Bob Kilger: Mr. Speaker, I propose that you seek unanimous consent that members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting yea.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Mr. Chuck Strahl: Mr. Speaker, Reform Party members present will vote no, unless instructed otherwise by their constituents.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Quebecois will vote in favour of the motion.

[*English*]

Mr. John Solomon: Mr. Speaker, members of the New Democratic Party vote in favour of this motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Harvey: Mr. Speaker, we will be voting in favour of the motion.

[*English*]

Mr. John Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the residents of York South—Weston I will be voting in favour of the motion.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 20*)

YEAS

Members

Adams
Alcock
Assadourian
Augustine
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bélanger
Bellemare
Bergeron
Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Bonin
Borotsik
Bradshaw
Brison
Bryden
Byrne
Calder
Canuel
Carroll
Catterall
Chamberlain
Charbonneau
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)
Clouthier
Cohen
Comuzzi
Crête
Dalphond-Guiral
de Savoye
Desjarlais
DeVillers
Dion
Dockrill
Dromisky
Dubé (Lévis)
Duceppe
Earle
Eggleton
Finlay
Fontana
Fry
Gagnon
Gauthier
Godfrey
Godin (Châteauguay)
Graham
Grose
Guimond
Hardy
Harvey
Hubbard
Alarie
Anderson
Asselin
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar)
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Baker
Barnes
Bélair
Bellehumeur
Bennett
Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—
Bertrand
Bigras
Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick
Boudria
Brien
Brown
Bulte
Caccia
Cannis
Caplan
Casey
Cauchon
Chan
Charest
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Coderre
Collenette
Copps
Cullen
Davies
Debien
Desrochers
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Doyle
Drouin
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)
Duhamel
Easter
Finestone
Folco
Fournier
Gagliano
Gallaway
Girard-Bujold
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)
Guay
Harb
Harvard
Herron

Ianno
Jackson
Jones
Karetak-Lindell
Keddy (South Shore)
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Knutson
Lalonde
Laurin
Lebel
Lefebvre
Lincoln
Loubier
Mahoney
Mancini
Marceau
Marchi
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews
McDonough
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Ménard
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mitchell
Murray
Nault
Nunziata
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Paradis
Patry
Perron
Pettigrew
Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri
Power
Price
Proud
Redman
Richardson
Robillard
Rocheleau
Saada
Scott (Fredericton)
Shepherd
Speller
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Stoffer
Telegdi
Thompson (Charlotte)
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Turp
Valeri
Vautour
Volpe
Wasylycia-Leis
Whelan
Wood —227

Iftody
Jennings
Jordan
Karygiannis
Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Laliberte
Lastewka
Lavigne
Lee
Leung
Longfield
MacAulay
Maloney
Manley
Marchand
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Massé
McCormick
McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton West)
McWhinney
Mifflin
Minna
Muise
Myers
Normand
Nystrom
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Peric
Peterson
Phinney
Pickard (Kent—Essex)
Plamondon
Pratt
Proctor
Provenzano
Reed
Riis
Robinson
Rock
Sauvageau
Serré
Solomon
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
St-Julien
Szabo
Thibeault
Torsney
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)
Ur
Vanclief
Venne
Wappel
Wayne
Wilfert

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Anders
Benoit
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Casson
Duncan
Epp
Goldring
Grewal
Hanger
Hart

Ablonczy
Bailey
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Cadman
Cummins
Elley
Forseth
Gouk
Grey (Edmonton North)
Harris
Hill (Macleod)

Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoeppner
Johnston
Kerpan
Lowther
Manning
Mayfield
Meredith
Morrison
Pankiw
Ramsay
Ritz
Scott (Skeena)
Stinson
Vellacott
Williams—53

Hilstrom
Jaffer
Kenney (Calgary-Sud-Est)
Konrad
Lunn
Mark
McNally
Mills (Red Deer)
Obhrai
Penson
Reynolds
Schmidt
Solberg
Strahl
White (Langley—Abbotsford)

PAIRED MEMBERS

Dumas
Marleau
Milliken

Malhi
Mercier
St-Hilaire

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the constituents of Esquimalt—Juan du Fuca, I am voting in favour of the motion.

The Speaker: *Hansard* will show the way the member voted.

It being 6.25 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

FAIR WAGES AND HOURS OF LABOUR ACT

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should not reinstate the wage schedules under the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act, but allow the provincial wages and hours to prevail.

● (1825)

He said: Madam Speaker, in 1935 the Parliament of Canada passed the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act. It applied only to private sector contractors working for the federal government on construction projects. An example would be a new post office or some federal government public works project.

In those depression era days, when jobs were scarce and the labour market was plentiful, such legislation may have been justified to some extent to ensure that labourers were not exploited and underpaid for the work performed.

In 1983 Canada was in the midst of another depression, probably the worst one since the dirty thirties. Since the legislation did not stipulate that wages and hours of work schedules were mandatory, the Liberal government of the day suspended all activity relating to schedules for construction projects on federal sites. Those we will remember as the days of six and five, the wage and price control

program the Liberals told Canadians they would never implement but did.

It seems the Liberal government has a long history of broken promises.

Schedules were frozen at 1982 levels so contracts would remain within this six and five range. When the Liberals were defeated in 1984 the new government re-evaluated the need for these schedules.

This evaluation revealed that the legislation was largely irrelevant and affected only a small segment of the construction sector, approximately 3%, and that the wages, hours of work and overtime problems it was designed to address in 1935 were being dealt with quite adequately under provincial legislation through collective agreements and by the marketplace.

Wage schedules and the survey on which they were based were found to be expensive to administer and statistically unsound. In 1987 the government officially suspended the issuing of schedules for a three year trial period. That trial period found that the introduction of wage schedules would likely increase so-called fair wage compliant levels only marginally. However, the cost to the department of those schedules was estimated to be approximately $270,000.

We know these approximations are just that and generally they tend to run a lot higher than originally set out. It was felt this high administration cost did not warrant a continuation of the practice of maintaining wage schedules.

Fast forward the VCR to April 24, 1997. The prime minister was just a few days from calling a federal election, and the government's olive branch, Bill C-66, otherwise known as amendments to the Canada Labour Code, was in the process of going down in flames in the other place.

• (1830)

The Liberals, it seems, were in a bit of a panic mode. The Reform Party was gaining momentum. The Liberals feared that their reign was in danger of collapse and that one of the wise things to do was to dispatch the Minister of Labour to Hamilton, the centre of the universe, of course, and home of the former deputy prime minister.

In an attempt to curry favour with the left and secure the Hamilton area seats, the minister announced the reinstatement of those expensive, outdated, unneeded, unnecessary schedules. This was the same government that, only months before, announced with much fanfare that it would no longer set minimum wage rates.

Almost exactly a year ago, on October 30, 1996, the House passed Bill C-35, which aligned the federal minimum wage with the general minimum wage rates established by the provinces and territories.

The rate paid to an employee is based on the employee's province or territory of employment. That is a concept that the Reform Party agrees with, that the going rate in Alberta, British Columbia or even in areas of Alberta or British Columbia or Ontario should be the going minimum rate.

However, the portion of Bill C-35 that Reformers did not agree with was that, if the governor in council did not agree with the rate in the provinces, it could interfere. We say, hands off. If it is good enough for private enterprise and if it is good enough for the provincial governments, then it should be good enough for the federal government as well.

The government showed that it had at least a reasonable amount of faith in the ability of the provinces to set minimum wage, therefore we have to wonder why it would take the opposite approach on wage rates and hours of work in the construction industry.

If the provincial minimum wages are satisfactory, why are the provincial laws governing construction wages and hours not adequate? In other words, if someone is a contractor and had a job in Ontario working for the provincial government doing a public works project, then the federal government would not interfere. It would be a deal between the contractor and the wage earner, the trades people or the labourers.

If someone had a job in the private sector in Ontario—same contractor, now—then the marketplace would determine what those people were paid for their services. However, the minister is suggesting that if that same contractor had a job working for the federal government in the same province with the same crew, it would be subject to the fair wages and hours of work schedules.

I really cannot get a grip on this because what is the rationale? We have been led to believe that not only will the reinstatement of these schedules cost the government the bare minimum, $270,000, and very likely more dollars in administrative costs, estimates are that implementation of the wage schedules will add 2% to 5% to the tab for all construction projects.

That is at a time when the country can ill afford increased contract prices. Why are the contractors going to do this? They are simply going to hedge their contracts. They are going to build this in. They are going to say, it is possible that the federal government is going to impose something on us later so we are going to have to build in something to protect ourselves.

They simply cannot, as a contractor, as an employer, take on a contract for *x* dollars and then have the person who they are working for, in this case the federal government, come back and

say that it has decided because of a complaint that as contractor you did not live up to the schedules and it will cost *x* dollars. The end result is that these contractors are going to build that extra price into the contract right up front.

• (1835)

If we are to believe the things that the finance minister says about not embarking on a spending spree, and we would like to give him the benefit of the doubt on that, higher costs brought on by the implementation of this outdated practice will mean fewer projects and fewer jobs everywhere but in the labour program of Human Resources Development Canada. We can expect to have more bureaucrats as a result of these schedules.

Let us look back into history a bit more. In 1996, the average hourly construction wage for union and non-union workers in Alberta was higher than what the government was paying its trades people. That hardly seems to be rationale for bringing in schedules called fair wages and hours of work, when the construction industry is already exceeding what the federal government is paying its trades people. There is no rationale there.

I believe this is a blatant attempt by the government to interfere in the marketplace. It will cost taxpayers millions of dollars in unnecessary costs and ultimately, lost wages and lost jobs.

Perhaps a lot of workers complained about unfair wages so let us take a look at that. In 1990 an evaluation revealed that during the three-year trial from 1987 to 1990, six complaints were registered involving fair wages. Two of these were in Newfoundland and Labrador where further investigation turned up that these people were in compliance. In other words, there was no basis for the complaint. Four were in Yukon where violations were found and arrears were collected. During this period, the Department of Public Works awarded 4,622 contracts with a greater value of $30,000 per contract for a total value of $1.428 billion. The fair wage arrears amounted to $31,401, an amount that is .00002% of the $1.428 billion total of other contracts.

I am told that over the last three and a half years in Alberta and the Northwest Territories there have been a total of 26 complaints involving this legislation, virtually all concerning overtime and a few concerning wages. Of these 26 complaints, six were said to involve so-called fair wages and two violations were found. One violation involved wages in the amount of 40¢ an hour and the second is said to involve wages of less than $2 an hour.

Are you confused yet, Madam Speaker? Because this is rather confusing to me. Here are examples of workers who say they are not being remunerated fairly. They make their complaints and in the last three and a half years, 26 of them were in Alberta and in two cases it was found that they were not coming up to the rates. These two cases are out of all the contracts that are awarded by the federal government.

If this process can be put in place, why is it that we need to implement these schedules? This is more than I can comprehend. This sort of rationale escapes me.

• (1840)

In a letter to the Minister of Labour, the president of Merit Contractors stated:

> Two fair wage violations over a three and a half year period, involving millions of dollars of work, present a strong case for not using additional resources or mechanisms such as schedules to address the matter that is not problematic.

I would like to have seen this motion as a votable item. However, it is not. The only thing I have at my disposal now is to urge the Minister of Labour to reconsider this rather unnecessary, expensive consideration.

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise this evening to speak to Motion M-9, a motion put forward by the member for Wetaskiwin.

The member is urging the federal government not to reinstate wage schedules under the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act. He also wants provincial wages and hours to prevail. My hon. friend is a keen and intelligent observer of matters related to the work force. Very often he has interesting things to say. I do not usually find myself agreeing with his point, however, I do respect his dedication, commitment and knowledge of workplace issues.

With respect to this motion, I understand the reasoning behind it, but I do not support it for a number of reasons.

Let me begin by describing for the members of the House what Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act is exactly. The Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act began as a policy resolution of Parliament many years ago. It was in 1900. The act first emerged in 1935. It was passed to provide that every contract with the Government of Canada for the building, remodelling, repair or demolition of any construction project must contain obligations covering the payment of fair wages, hours of labour and other working conditions.

The objective here, which I sure the member supports, is to ensure that the expenditure of public funds does not result in the exploitation of labour. Because there is a Fair Wage and Hours of Labour Act every construction contract made with the federal government includes provisions requiring the contractor to pay the employees fair wages and to observe specified labour standards.

One effect of the legislation is to remove wages as an element in the tendering process. In other words all contractors who wish to tender on a federal government construction project will know in advance what rates they will be expected to pay for the labour

component of their costs. A very good thing for contractors to know.

In the past the wage component of the act was administered by attachments of schedules of wage rates to the construction contract signed with contractors on federal construction projects. These schedules contain details pertaining to the classification of workers who were involved in the project and the fair wage rate for each classification in a particular geographic area. The fair wage rates were determined by wage surveys prepared by the federal Department of Labour. Another very good fair transparent way.

The process was discontinued in 1982, at least in part, because the cost of conducting the surveys was very high. As a result the obligation to pay the fair wage remained. It was left to the contractor to determine what that fair wage was. There are some obvious problems with that approach.

During recent consultation, interested parties told officials of the department that the act could not accomplish its legislative purpose without the publication of fair wage schedules. Even those who advocate the repeal of the act expressed the opinion that, should the act remain, then fair wage schedules would have to be published in order for the legislation to be effective.

● (1845)

An example of the problem associated with maintaining the act but not publishing the schedule is this. A complaint could lead to a decision during or after the completion of the project that the contractor was not paying a fair wage and must pay more retroactive to the beginning of the work. That kind of liability could obviously be disastrous to a contractor and I do not think there is anybody in this Chamber who would want that to happen.

Last April, after almost a year of consultations with stakeholders in the construction industry it was announced that the wage schedules would be reinstated. However, the announcement included the fact that a new process would be put in place for determining the schedules.

It is very important that we understand this new process. The idea is that the construction and labour relations associations which are employer groups located in every province will meet with the building and construction unions and also with the non-union contractor associations in each province and try to find a consensus on a range of fair wages for every trade.

With the new mechanisms all the stakeholders will have the chance to take part directly in the decision making of fair wages. If the schedules worked out by the stakeholders are consistent with the intent of the legislation then they will be adopted by government, but only then.

We believe in consultation and we believe that is a very important part of this legislation.

This method would seem to be a reasonable compromise. However, any compromise, any agreement as to what is fair is not always easy to achieve. While we believe the reinstatement of wage schedules is in everybody's interest because of the certainty it would bring to employees and employers, we are not 100% certain the process will work.

That is why we have a pilot project in the member's home province of Alberta to find out. This debate is very important and I thank the hon. member for bringing the subject forward. We are all concerned that we do the right thing.

It is unfortunate that the decision in this discussion is a bit premature. The fact is we will have better information once we have the results of the pilot project in Alberta and we should enter into that really gladly, because to find information, to find consultation should really be a goal of all members of Parliament.

Finally, let me turn to the other part of the member's motion which contemplates replacing federal wage schedules with provincial schedules. That idea fails to take into account that only five provinces and one territory have legislation similar to the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act. What would the member propose for the other jurisdictions?

The member has put a lot of thought into his motion. I congratulate him on beginning this important debate, but we are at the beginning. I believe we must wait for the results of the pilot project in Alberta before we debate the matter further.

The publishing of fair wage schedules after a transparent and open process leading to the establishment of those fair wages would allow workers and contractors to know what they will be receiving and what wages they will have to pay. There would be no surprises for anyone.

Certainly it would be premature at best to cancel a program which has every success, all partners, before this pilot project has even begun. I believe the member's motion must be defeated.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of my party, the Bloc Quebecois, and as its labour critic, to comment on the motion by my Reform Party colleague from Wetaskiwin, Motion M-9, which reads as follows:

> That, in the opinion of this House, the government should not reinstate the wage schedules under the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act, but allow the provincial wages and hours to prevail.

● (1850)

The purpose of the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act is to set standards for salaries and hours of work for people employed in

federal construction projects. More specifically, it provides that all construction contracts concluded by the Government of Canada must contain provisions requiring contractors to pay fair wages and to comply with the standards on hours of work and on overtime defined in the act.

It is a clear and noble purpose. It also aims at removing the wage element from the tender process so that public funds are not used to exploit workers. This Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act, which came into effect in 1935, was vigorously enforced until 1982, with pay grids or wage schedules designed in co-operation with employer and employee associations across the country.

These grids were attached to contracts dealing with government works, and this was done by agreement between the parties. But in 1982, all this stopped because it was established that the federal government intended to stop conducting the investigations that served as a basis for establishing the grids used to set fair wages and hours of labour.

Starting in 1983, investigations were no longer conducted, which leaves us with a kind of vacuum that the Reform Party would fill by saying that such a grid should not be reinstated. Except that, as it happens, on April 24, just three days before the election was called, the then Minister of Labour announced in Hamilton that, if re-elected, the Liberal Party would reinstate the said grids.

After analyzing and holding consultations on the situation, we have come to the conclusion that it is in the public interest not to drop these grids, as suggested in the motion put forward by our colleague from the Reform Party, but to reinstate them at a future date, in the interest of the workers concerned.

Two points were of particular concern to us, the first one being that restoring these grids would work against the mechanisms that Quebec has set up in labour relations and on labour issues, namely Quebec's minimum wage act and everything to be found in collective agreements in Quebec in the area of construction.

We found the answer to our concerns in a 1979 court ruling in Quebec by Mr. Justice Beetz, in the case of Construction Montcalm Incorporé v la Commission du salaire minimum, where the judge comments on an argument put forward by the defendant to the effect that the area is regulated by the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act; the judge made a ruling, on which we base our position in relation to Quebec. The ruling states:

> The purpose of these clauses is to ensure a minimum wage for all persons working for contractors who have been awarded a contract by the Government of Canada for the construction, restoration, repair or demolition of a structure. However, the act does not prevent the crown from signing a contract with a contractor who pays his employees an amount greater than the minimum wage. Furthermore, the act does not prevent enforcement of a provincial act providing for payment of a minimum wage or of an actual wage that is equal to or greater than the minimum wage provided under federal law.

● (1855)

You will understand that, consequently, the fears or concerns we might have had have been dispelled by this judgment, which clearly states that federal law does not contravene Quebec legislation or prerogatives.

Our second concern, and I will conclude with this, is to wonder what, in this situation, the fate of the workers concerned, the construction workers on federal projects, will be. Getting back to the bill, its intended purpose is to remove the wage aspect from the bidding process, so that cut-rate wages will not be paid in order to get a better chance at a federal contract. The intention in removing pay from the bidding process is to prevent public funds from being used to exploit workers.

Are we to understand that there is a sort of vacuum at this time, and that contractors can bid at cut rates for federal contracts? If so, we know that the government commitment dates back to April 24, and now it is October 28. The matter has dragged on for a good six months, with a federal commitment in place. There has been a loophole since 1984, a sort of laissez-faire approach, perhaps a dangerous laxity, bowing to the laws of the marketplace when the livelihoods of thousands upon thousands of workers in Canada are at stake.

I therefore consider that the government's commitment ought to be met, and met as soon as possible. I do not know if the foot dragging is at the Department of Labour or with the Department of Human Resources Development, but either the government was serious and must move on it, or the Minister of Labour of the time just said any old thing. That would perhaps not be surprising for this government, because it has changed its mind so often over the years.

Let us think back to Mr. Trudeau in 1978, with the 18 cents a gallon promise—back in the days when we had gallons. and Mr. Clark's promise at the time, probably responsibly made, for he was the Prime Minister. Mr. Trudeau made fun of him. I personally remember hearing the radio spots as they are called, telling farmers that they would have to stop ploughing halfway down the row because gas would cost too much under the Conservative government. Over the years, the Liberals perhaps increased the price from 18 cents to 35 cents a gallon, with never an apology, the same as with the promises about wage controls that the Liberals back then said they would never bring in. And the GST recently. Liberals would never bring in wage controls, Liberals would never change the GST. The Liberals would never renew the helicopter contract.

We know how these folks blow with the wind. We perhaps have a good example in Mr. Trudeau, who was the defender of social democracy, of the just society, who never kept a promise either. So I am worried.

I oppose the Reform Party motion, and I am in favour of the government's plans, but I am very worried about how serious and responsible they are, when they say things on April 24 and on October 28, there is still no news. Although I asked, I could find no up-to-date document regarding the restriction or the government's intentions. We received the press release on April 24. That shows how serious this government is.

We could wonder where it is headed, apart from operating on a day to day, ad hoc basis, without ever, it must be said, keeping its promises. We therefore oppose the motion by our Reform Party colleague and fervently hope that the government will assume its responsibilities and keep its promises.

[*English*]

Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on Motion No. 9 and in so doing I say shame on the member and shame on the Reform Party for introducing this motion.

The Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act was initially crafted in 1935 to protect employees from substandard wages and to create a level playing field for contractors bidding on federal contracts. The government then stopped posting fair wages in 1987. On April 24 of this year the concept of the fair wages schedule was restored.

• (1900)

Tomorrow in Edmonton all of the major players in the construction industry in that province will be sitting down to work out a fair wages schedule for federal construction work for that province. They will look at all of the classifications of the workers involved, the fair wage rates for those classifications and the geographic areas they apply to.

This Reform motion is an attack on the taxpayer. It is an attack on fairness and an attack on youth employment opportunities. I will tell the House why.

The underground construction economy costs taxpayers billions of dollars. This issue of fair wage schedules is an issue of quality, of ensuring that the taxpayer gets full value for the dollar. It is an issue of honesty, accountability and fair play. What does the hon. member fear about fairness and about ensuring quality control over the use of taxpayers' dollars?

This motion sets out to scuttle a process that is just gearing up, a process aimed at establishing a level playing field for all contractors. Without establishing these wages, there would not be a level playing field for contractors.

This motion supports the underground economy in the construction industry. This is where fair-minded contractors lose out. This is where Canadians simply wanting a fair and decent wage for their work lose out. This is where the taxpayer loses. With cash paid for the job at the bottom of the subcontracting ladder, tax revenues are lost, EI contributions are lost and CPP contributions go unpaid.

The timing of this motion seeks to subvert an important set of negotiations occurring this week. It seeks to subvert similar negotiations that will follow in months to come in other provinces.

Keeping federal construction contracts above aboard helps ensure taxpayers' dollars are not misused. It helps to get the best value out of every dollar spent. It helps to support fair-minded contractors. It works toward the health and safety of all Canadian construction workers.

I know that my colleague the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre wants it on record that the NDP will be watching these negotiations very closely, not only the ones in Alberta this week, but in other provinces over the months to come to ensure that fairness and just wages triumph.

This motion deserves to be soundly defeated. In fact the government should go one step further and ensure that in all federally tendered contract documents the following language is put in place: ''Contractors must hire qualified journey persons and indentured apprentices only''. This language would go a long way to ensure that fair wages are paid, that improved health and safety is the practice and not the exception, and that youth are supported through apprenticeship programs.

If the Department of Public Works and Government Services were to ensure that all contracts had this language, it would go a long way to supporting good, solid apprenticeships for youth, job opportunities for young Canadians, support for those who support this invaluable education and skills training for young workers.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Resuming debate. Does the hon. member understand that if he chooses to exercise his right of five minutes it will close the debate?

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.): Yes, Madam Speaker.

There are so many places to start I hardly know where to begin. My colleague the parliamentary secretary implies that employees are now not being paid a fair wage. She says she would like to see that and so would I.

However I would put to my hon. colleague that people are being paid fair wages. Evidence of that is in my talk where I say that there have been very few complaints made. Of the complaints made, a lot of them have been found to have no basis. There is quite conclusive proof that people are being paid fair wages at the time.

• (1905)

The parliamentary secretary further says that there is no 100% guarantee that the system they are considering will work. I propose that the system now is working. Case in point, there are .00002% of the cases where it is not working. That is so close to 100% I do not see how the parliamentary secretary could possibly argue.

On the matter of overtime, these schedules we are talking about would restrict workers to work eight hours a day. Any time after that would have to be overtime. I realize that my friends in the more socialist parties would say that is great, that it is a good thing.

However a lot of contracts now are negotiated by the employer and the union to allow trades people and labourers to work four 10-hour days rather than five 8-hour days. The result of that is when they are working away from home, as in the construction business, most of the time they can work their 40 hours in four days rather than five days and have a long weekend every weekend. They would have actually more time to spend with their families.

If we come in with wage schedules that say that it cannot be done, then we will deny these people time spent with their families. I am positive my colleagues would not want to have these people spending more time on the job and less time with their families.

I thought I had done such a good job of delivering information, unbiased of course, to my colleague from the Bloc that he would certainly support this. I was very surprised to see that he would say ''yes, yes, I think it is a good idea that the federal government would interfere with the wage schedules and hours of work in my province of Quebec''. I was amazed.

I thought all along that the Bloc among other things, stood for more autonomy of the provinces, more devolution of power to the provinces, more made in the province solutions rather than top down things from the federal government, a paternal type of government. I guess I was wrong.

My colleague from the Bloc talked about a vacuum. There is no vacuum. The area that he claims to be a vacuum is filled by people who are getting fair wages. The case for that again is 99.888% of the contracts now are being paid fair wages.

I want to close on this note. I think my time is pretty well up. I think that any time I am admonished by the NDP, my constituents leap up and say ''yahoo, that guy is on the right track''.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): As no other member wishes to speak, and the motion has not been made a votable item, the time provided for consideration of Members' Business has now expired and the item is dropped from the Order Paper.

Adjournment Debate

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

CRIME PREVENTION

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, certainly the issue I am speaking to is something I am quite excited about.

All members had a life before they come to Parliament. The area I worked in was community justice and how a community deals with people who cause problems in the community.

There is no question that crime has been with us ever since civilization started and it will be with us for a long time to come. The fact of the matter is that we are taking steps to empower local communities to start dealing with some of the issues of crime at the local level.

• (1910)

Too often in the past we have passed laws in Ottawa and in provincial capitals and we have not paid enough attention to what the local community can do in the whole area of crime prevention.

In the 35th Parliament I had the pleasure of tabling the justice committee report on young offenders. It was on the final sitting day of the last Parliament.

One recommendation that came out in the report related to the whole issue of crime prevention. Strongly underlying crime prevention, we in the justice committee recognized that it was imperative to allow local communities to take ownership in trying to deal with some of the difficult problems. How can we prevent crime from occurring? How can we make a safer and more secure community?

Clearly justice at the community level belongs to the whole community. It belongs to the schools, the churches, the families, the service clubs, the organizations, the police and the courts. However it has to be done in partnership. For far too long we have not supported efforts at the community level to combat crime and to build safer communities.

I am very pleased to tell the House that on April 16 the 20th justice dinner is going to be hosted in the Waterloo region. That is where members of the community come together, the police, the crown, the judiciary, victims groups and service clubs. They come together to try to see how they can better play a role in building a safer community. There is no question that the whole issue of diversion and prevention is much better than the one of apprehension and spending more and more money on reacting to crime.

I am very pleased that we have a program of crime prevention which will be directed at the local communities where they can take ownership.

I was very heartened when I put that question to the Minister of Justice because it is of critical importance. The program will succeed if the local communities take leadership and the federal and provincial governments provide back-up assistance.

Ms. Eleni Bakopanos (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first I would like to commend the hon. member for raising the question and most important for the leadership role he has played in his own riding to establish a comprehensive and collaborative crime prevention approach through partnership in his community.

The best way to reduce crime in Canada is to prevent it. Crime prevention is a priority for this government, for the minister and indeed for all Canadians. A recent poll stated that over 80% of Canadians consider that the government has an important role to play in crime prevention.

[*Translation*]

We believe that crime prevention starts with understanding the various problems faced by the different communities, helping them identify their needs and involving them in finding solutions.

[*English*]

Unlike our friends on the right and some of the opposition members I might point out we believe that to reduce crime we must support measures that alleviate the underlying risk factors that contribute to criminal behaviour, factors such as poverty and unemployment.

As promised in the Speech from the Throne, the government is developing a new initiative that builds on the work of the National Crime Prevention Council which this government established. This initiative will target community level prevention projects, as the hon. member stated, getting money into the hands of those who know what the problems are and how to best deal with them.

[*Translation*]

The program will obtain resources for activities based in the communities or initiated by them. To help communities develop programs, we will provide them with material resources and promote crime prevention measures. We will also ensure they get the training they need and we will support innovative projects.

• (1915)

[*English*]

Effective crime prevention operates at the local level but requires partnership at all levels. The government and the minister intend to pursue this initiative in co-operation with other orders of government, the private sector and other partners in social development and a justice system. I thank the member for his question.

HEALTH

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, the health crisis in the downtown east side community of Vancouver continues. This community is facing an epidemic characterized by the highest incidence of HIV infection of intravenous drug users in the western world. It is reported that there is a 50% infection rate of an estimated 6,000-plus intravenous drug users who frequent the area and now this crisis is spreading to other areas as well.

As reported today, HIV infected drug users are showing up in larger numbers in the Kamloops and Kootenay regions. On September 25 the Vancouver and Richmond regional health board declared a public health emergency because of this issue. On October 23 the board brought forward an action plan to respond to this crisis.

There is a desperate need for leadership from all levels of government to combat this health crisis, to save lives, to protect the community and to reduce harm associated with obtaining drugs on the street. So far the province of British Columbia, the regional health board and even the municipal government have responded, but not the federal government.

The question being increasingly asked is where is the Minister of Health.

Since this summer I have raised this issue many times. I wrote to the minister in July, in September and in October not only to make the minister aware of the extent of this health emergency and its devastating impact on people and the community of Vancouver East but also to request a meeting so this issue could be discussed further. There has been no response and no action.

Why is the minister ignoring the national action plan on HIV, AIDS and injection drug use published in May and produced by the national task force? Why is the minister not participating with other interested parties across the country in the 10th annual B.C. conference on AIDS taking place in Vancouver this very week?

At that conference the chair of the national task force, Dr. Hankins, charged yesterday that politicians are afraid to take the lead on this issue.

When it comes to the political will shown by the federal government, I would agree with her on that assessment. In the Vancouver *Sun* recently the Minister of Health was quoted as saying that the HIV injection drug crisis in Vancouver East is a justice issue, but when the Minister of Health was the justice minister in 1995 he told the then minister of health of British Columbia, when discussing the Cain report, that this was a health issue.

It is time to stop passing the buck because lives hang in the balance. How many more people have to die before this government takes action? When will the federal Minister of Health show leadership as called for in the national task force report and make it clear that he will acknowledge this epidemic as the health crisis it is and take action?

If the minister does not, in ten years can we expect a royal commission posing the same questions that the Krever commission has already posed such as why when we had the chance to act did the government do nothing, or why did lives have to be lost because the political will was lacking?

I call on the minister to act now or he may find himself the first witness called to task if his inaction and the government's inaction result in even more lives lost and devastated communities.

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member is quite right to place her concern where it is. Unfortunately her assessment of what the minister and the department have been doing is completely off base. Health Canada is acutely aware of the situation in British Columbia and recognizes the seriousness of the issue from both regional and national perspectives.

● (1920)

Vancouver's HIV epidemic among injection drug users is an emergency health crisis. It is a multifaceted health crisis that brings into play other illnesses such as hepatitis C, tuberculosis, alcohol and drug addiction and mental health as well as other factors like poverty, housing, transportation and access to services.

[*Translation*]

Health Canada will work in close co-operation with the Minister of Health of British Columbia and with the Minister of Child and Family Welfare Minister of that province, and also with other federal departments that are in continuous contact with the Vancouver—Richmond Health Council.

Health Canada is presently working on the creation of an interinstitutional task force including federal departments and various regional and national organizations, in order to implement measures to deal with the health crisis.

These groups will develop and implement a federal plan identifying the complete range of health determinants that are responsible for this crisis.

[*English*]

Based on discussions with provincial and local governments the federal response could include a range of activities such as developing new and innovative methods for delivering services and programs for populations at risk. I include among them aboriginal peoples, women, people with mental illnesses and youth.

It could include activities to broaden community support for HIV intervention and care issues including interest in and compassion for injection drug users and, finally, improving the co-ordination of services in areas such as addictions, mental health, social services, housing and medical care.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.22 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Tuesday, October 28, 1997

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

MAIL POSTE
Canada Post Corporation/Société canadienne des postes
Postage paid Port payé
Lettermail Poste–lettre
03159442
Ottawa

If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:
Canadian Government Publishing,
45 Sacré–Coeur Boulevard,
Hull, Québec, Canada, K1A 0S9

En cas de non–livraison,
retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à:
Les Éditions du gouvernement du Canada,
45 boulevard Sacré–Coeur,
Hull, Québec, Canada, K1A 0S9

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

Also available on the Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire at the following address:
Aussi disponible sur le réseau électronique «Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire» à l'adresse suivante :
http://www.parl.gc.ca
