



CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 135 • NUMBER 111 • 1st SESSION • 36th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, May 28, 1998

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, May 28, 1998

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INDUSTRY

Mr. Walt Lastewka (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Industry which was presented to the House yesterday was the wrong document. I seek the leave of the House to present the correct ninth report at this time.

The Deputy Speaker: I do not believe there is any need for leave. The hon. member is entitled to present the report and we are always glad to have the correct one.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN TRANSPORTATION ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION AND SAFETY BOARD ACT

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.) moved that Bill S-2, an act to amend the Canadian Transportation

Accident Investigation and Safety Board Act and to make a consequential amendment to another act, be read the first time.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

• (1010)

* * *

[*English*]

MAIN ESTIMATES

The Deputy Speaker: The following motion in the name of the hon. the Leader of the Opposition is deemed adopted:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 81(4)(a), consideration of Senate Vote 1 under Parliament in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1999, by the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Government Operations, be extended beyond May 31, 1998.

(Motion deemed adopted)

* * *

BILL C-410 AND BILL C-411

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to introduce a motion. I move:

That the bill, an act to change the name of certain electoral districts, on notice in the name of the member for Ottawa West—Nepean, and the bill, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act, on notice in the name of the member for Gander—Grand Falls, be now deemed to have been read a first time, ordered to have been printed, read a second time, referred to a committee of the whole and reported to the House without amendment, concurred in at the report stage and read the third time and passed.

I would like to provide for the assurance of the members involved the information that the act standing in my name has been amended editorially to reflect the incorrections identified by the member for Charlotte, the member for Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, the member for Kent—Essex, the member for Bruce—Grey and the member for Charleswood—Assiniboine.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. deputy government whip have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

The Deputy Speaker: Perhaps for the benefit of the House the member might explain briefly the purpose of the bills, since we are not hearing that on first reading.

Routine Proceedings

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, the first bill standing in the name of the member for Ottawa West—Nepean amends the names of certain ridings at the request of the members of parliament. In general it is to reflect more accurately certain community factors in terms of how the communities wish to be identified by name. That bill deals with changes to the names of 19 federal electoral districts.

The second bill standing in the name of the member for Gander—Grand Falls amends the Canada Elections Act to allow the Chief Electoral Officer to administratively handle certain minor changes to candidates' expense returns that now need to be handled through the courts.

The bill relates specifically to the fact that under the current provisions of the legislation, if a bill arrives in the hands of a member or a candidate following the election, if it was not received within the required time period in which a candidate or his or her official agent may pay the bill, the only process available now to the member to be able to pay that bill is to get a court order allowing that to happen.

• (1015)

This is clearly a cumbersome process currently affecting 172 members of parliament, the majority of the House of Commons, simply because somebody failed to send in a bill to their campaign in the required time period. It seems appropriate to allow the chief electoral officer to judge that this is an administrative problem that can be corrected with his approval.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for the explanation.

Mr. Joe Comuzzi: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the motion just presented by the deputy House leader, we are wondering whether the 19 new electoral names will be read in this House for the first time.

The Deputy Speaker: I can answer the question. The bills are not normally read. First reading of the bill is announced and we have dispensed with all of that. But even if that were the case, the provisions of the bill are not normally read out.

There are copies of the bill available at the table and the hon. member certainly can avail himself of the opportunity to browse through the draft bill which has now been adopted by the House.

Mr. Joe Comuzzi: Mr. Speaker, I understand that it has been adopted by the House, but I am wondering if I am now the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Superior North.

The Deputy Speaker: I think the hon. member knows that bills require adoption in the other place and royal assent before they

become law, so I am afraid the hon. member is stuck with Thunder Bay—Nipigon for the time being.

* * *

[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 ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[English]

Mr. Chuck Strahl: Mr. Speaker, I must have had my *écouteur* out of my ear because I did not hear you call for petitions. I wonder if we could revert to petitions for just a moment so I could present these petitions to the House, if there is unanimous consent.

The Deputy Speaker: Do we have unanimous consent to revert to petitions?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Chuck Strahl: Mr. Speaker, I will try to pay closer attention in the future.

* * *

PETITIONS

THE SENATE

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present today.

The first petition requests that parliament enact legislation to ensure that there is an elected Senate. I will leave it with the House for comment.

SOCIAL HOUSING

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, another petition calls upon parliament to allow federal government owned housing units to be utilized as low-cost housing for the needy of the community. This arises from a situation in my riding where several hundred government owned housing units on the former CFB Chilliwack are now basically empty and people would like them to be used for low-cost housing for the needy.

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the last and larger petition, containing another 400 names to be added to the several thousand names I have already presented, calls upon parliament to amend the Criminal Code of Canada to raise the age of consent for sexual activity between a young person and an adult from 14 to 16 years of age.

The Deputy Speaker: I am sure no hon. member would fault the opposition whip for diligence and I am sorry he did not hear me call petitions at the time.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

PARKS CANADA ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-29, an act to establish the Parks Canada Agency and to amend other Acts as a consequence, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: There are eight motions in amendment standing on the notice paper for the report stage of Bill C-29.

[English]

The motions will be grouped for debate as follows:

[Translation]

Group No. 1: Motions Nos. 1 to 5.

[English]

Group No. 2: Motion No. 6.

[Translation]

Group No. 3: Motions Nos. 7 and 8.

[English]

The voting patterns for the motions within each group are available at the table. The Chair will remind the House of each pattern at the time of voting.

[Translation]

I will now put Motions Nos. 1 to 5 to the House.

• (1020)

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-29, in Clause 6, be amended by adding after line 36 on page 5 the following:

“(1.1) When implementing policies of the Government of Canada, the Agency's priority shall be the conservation and the ecological, historic and cultural integrity of national parks, national historic sites and other protected heritage areas, and it shall reconcile this priority with the development of tourism and commercial activities.”

Hon. Martin Cauchon (for the Secretary of State (Parks)) moved:

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-29 be amended by adding after line 44 on page 6 the following new clause:

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“8.1(1) The Minister shall, at least once every two years, convene a round table of persons interested in matters for which the Agency is responsible to advise the Minister on the performance by the Agency of its responsibilities under section 6.

(2) The Minister shall respond within 180 days to any written recommendations submitted during a round table convened under subsection (1).”

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-29, in Clause 9, be amended

(a) by replacing line 1 on page 7 with the following:

“9. (1) Notwithstanding section 9 of the Depart-”

(b) by adding after line 8 on page 7 the following:

“(2) When the Agency procures goods and services, it shall comply with guidelines or rules established by Treasury Board on calls for tender.”

Hon. Martin Cauchon (for the Secretary of State (Parks)) moved:

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-29, in Clause 12, be amended by replacing lines 37 to 43 on page 7 and line 1 on page 8 with the following:

“(4) The Chief Executive Officer may dele-”

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-29, in Clause 12, be amended by adding after line 43 on page 7 the following:

“(4.1) Not later than 90 days following any consultation held by the Chief Executive Officer under subsection (4), the Chief Executive Officer shall make public any recommendations put forward during the consultation and the responses made by the Chief Executive Officer to any such recommendations.”

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to Bill C-29 at report stage and to present, in a group, Motions Nos. 1, 3 and 5 appearing in today's notice paper.

Motion No. 1 reads as follows:

(1.1) When implementing policies of the Government of Canada, the Agency's priority shall be the conservation and the ecological, historic and cultural integrity of national parks, national historic sites and other protected heritage areas, and it shall reconcile this priority with the development of tourism and commercial activities.

Several witnesses brought to our attention the fact that there could perhaps be a risk to parks if particular attention was not paid to the first part of this amendment.

Naturally, we are not opposed to there being a reasonable level of tourism and commercial activities within parks. However, we would not want to see a wish to realize large profits or make parks and historic sites cost effective result in so many people being

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admitted to parks and so many activities taking place that ecological integrity was compromised. It was this point in particular that people raised.

Neither, of course, should the historic and cultural aspect be allowed to suffer and tourism and commercial activities given the upper hand solely out of a desire to make parks cost effective.

Motion No. 3 addresses a very technical issue, suggesting that line 1 on page 7 be replaced with the following:

9.(1) Notwithstanding section 9 of the Depart-

We then suggest that the following be added after line 8 on page 7:

(2) When the Agency procures goods and services, it shall comply with guidelines or rules established by Treasury Board on calls for tender.

This was another concern of several witnesses who appeared before the committee or contacted it. Given that Parks Canada will become separate from the Department of Canadian Heritage and its management autonomous, we fear that the agency will use the reorganization of personnel and the powers delegated to the chief executive officer to subcontract many activities.

We want to make sure that, throughout Canada, Treasury Board rules are scrupulously followed, especially in calls for tender. Of course, under Treasury Board rules, certain minimum amounts do not require public calls for tender. When we talk about abiding by Treasury Board rules, that is implicit.

• (1025)

As regards calls for tenders, we want to be sure that, even if a park is located in a sparsely populated area, which is the case of many of our parks, the rules of Treasury Board will be followed.

According to a number of the witnesses we heard during committee hearings, it appears important to add the amendment set out in Motion No. 5. In a way, I am delighted to see that even the government is proposing an amendment, in Motion No. 2, which is quite similar to what I am proposing.

When we vote, if I have properly understood the Speaker's ruling, if Motion No. 2 is carried, my Motion No. 5 will automatically be lost. Members will understand that we will support Motion No. 2, because the minor difference with it concerns the time limit for the response. The difference can be fairly significant, but sometimes a response can be a while coming. We would have preferred a response within 90 days. The minister proposes 180 days for the response. Maybe we thought he could respond faster, but it is better to allow the time than to have no response at all.

If the problem raised by the forum or the consultations held were a matter of urgency, perhaps we should consider counting on the fact that the minister would recognize this and realize that a more

urgent response is required. We hope the time limit he sets will not be considered a minimum and that the 180 days will be considered the maximum. I think this is important. In any case, there has to be a response. This was what those who testified before us requested.

[English]

Mr. John Godfrey (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will attempt to address all five motions and deal with the various arguments put forward by my hon. colleague.

[Translation]

I begin with the first motion that was just proposed. We oppose this amendment, because we feel it is redundant. The proposed amendment reflects what is already contained in paragraph (1) and the new paragraph (m) in the preamble. More to the point, the intent behind the proposed amendment is already captured in clause 6.(1), which states, and I quote:

6.(1) The Agency is responsible for the implementation of policies of the Government of Canada that relate to national parks, national historic sites and other protected heritage areas and heritage protection programs.

By and large, such policies are already addressed in Parks Canada's *Guiding Principles and Operational Policies*, a document that was tabled in Parliament and approved in 1994.

This document addresses Parks Canada's key responsibilities in terms of respecting ecological and commemorative—not cultural—integrity, and how these are addressed at the park and site level in concert with accommodating visitor use, tourism and park development.

We also oppose Motion No. 3 because we find it redundant as well. The Parks Canada Agency is defined as a departmental corporation under the Financial Administration Act. As such, it must comply with Treasury Board's contracting policies and with the Government Contracts Regulations. Contracting limits and procedures are clearly set out in these regulations.

• (1030)

It is to be noted that clause 9 merely allows the agency to procure, with the approval of the Treasury Board and the governor in council, goods and services from organizations other than the government's common service organizations, such as PWGSC, when this is beneficial from an economic point of view.

All the agency's contracting activities, whether with common service organizations or with other bodies, will still be subject to the government contract regulations.

[English]

As for the second motion, we are proposing that Bill C-29 be amended to reflect better the concerns of various people who

appeared as witnesses before us, that every two years the minister will convoke a round table of persons interested in matters for which the agency is responsible to advise the minister on the performance by the agency of its responsibilities under section 6 and that the minister must respond within 180 days to the comments made by the round table.

This section replaces former subsection 12(4). The change really means in ordinary language that this is no longer a forum convened by the chief executive officer of the new Parks Canada agency but by the minister. It provides certainty that a round table will occur at least every two years. It also says that the recommendations will be responded to in a timely fashion. We chose 180 days because that is to be found in other responses to environmental proposals.

That takes me to Motion No. 4 in which we are proposing:

That Bill C-29, clause 12, be amended by replacing lines 37 to 43 on page 7 and line 1 on page 8 with the following:

“(4) The Chief Executive Officer may dele-”

This is simply designed to delete subsection 12(4) in favour of the new clause which I just discussed in terms of convening round tables at least once every two years. That simply makes it possible.

Motion No. 5 is consistent with the two motions to which I have just spoken. As I mentioned earlier it means that there is a report back within 180 days which is consistent with the way we do things, for example, under the environment assessment act. I think that covers the group.

Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC): Mr. Speaker, this is my first time to speak to report stage. It is different from what I am used to. I find it quite interesting so please bear with me.

I support Motion No. 1 put forth by my hon. colleague from Rimouski—Mitis. It is very important that we not just concentrate on the economic benefits that a national park brings but also on the ecological and environmental issues that are part of the whole system. For this reason I support the motion.

On Motion No. 2 regarding consultation, many witnesses who came before the committee were adamant about the fact that it is important for consultations to take place. Consultation is only one aspect of it. Consultation and not taking action or recognizing that consultations took place amount to nothing other than grandstanding.

• (1035)

I hope the government when the round table discussions take place will take into consideration seriously the recommendations that are put forth. Therefore I agree with Motion No. 2.

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Motion No. 5 put forth by my hon. colleague for Rimouski—Mitis goes hand in hand with Motion No. 2. If we have a round table and people have the chance to put their views forth, by having to report within 90 days will more or less put on public record that the discussions took place. It will have a positive impact on the government taking some of those recommendations to heart. Therefore I support this motion as well.

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to Motion No. 1, this motion is unnecessary because the priorities already set in the preamble of the bill can be found in subclauses (f) to (m).

Motions Nos. 2 and 4 have been grouped together. I stand in opposition to those motions because as currently written in the bill consultations would be undertaken by the agency and so it should be. Changing that to consultations being undertaken by the minister will consolidate power further in the hands of cabinet. That is not wise. The direction the bill was taking in the first place was correct so the intent of Motions Nos. 2 and 4 is wrong. I oppose the motions.

The remaining motion in Group No. 1 is Motion No. 3. That motion is unnecessary because goods and services procured by the agency would already be on the recommendation of Treasury Board.

I support the intent of Motion No. 5. The idea of trying to promote openness and transparency with respect to public consultations by the agency is a good one. There is no existing requirement in the bill to do that.

Hopefully the House will have the wisdom to oppose Motions Nos. 2 and 4 so that we may vote in favour of Motion No. 5. Thereby public consultations will be done by the agency as they should be in an open and transparent fashion for the public.

I have covered all the motions in Group No. 1.

[*Translation*]

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 1. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 1 stands deferred.

[*English*]

The next question is on Motion No. 2. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

Some hon. members: On division.

• (1040)

The Deputy Speaker: Motion No. 2 was carried and accordingly Motion No. 4 is carried on division. The need for putting the question on Motion No. 5 is dispensed with by reason of the votes already taken.

[*Translation*]

The next question is on Motion No. 3. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 3 stands deferred.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: Mr. Speaker, I would just like a clarification because everything is going so quickly. In keeping with the decision of the Chair, I understood that the division on Motion No. 2 applied to Motion No. 5.

An hon. member: That is what he did.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: Our document refers to Motion No. 5. If Motion No. 2 were defeated, we would have to vote on Motion No. 4.

The Deputy Speaker: The document has been changed. A vote on Motion No. 2 applies to Motion No. 4. If Motion No. 2 had been defeated, there would have been a vote on Motion No. 5, but Motion No. 2 was adopted, so there is no vote on Motion No. 5.

There were separate divisions on Motions Nos. 1 and 3. We put these motions to a vote and the division was deferred in both cases.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: Mr. Speaker, we do not have the same documents. Yet, these are documents supplied by the Table. We did not rise earlier to call for a vote, and it was agreed to on division. If we had had the same documents as you, five members of the Bloc Québécois would have risen to call for a vote on Motion No. 2.

Given that we were not supplied with the right information, I would like the question on Motion No. 2 to be put again so that the Bloc Québécois may express its opinion and five members rise to demand a recorded division.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: Perhaps we could settle the matter this way. Could we agree the vote that was carried on division on Motion No. 2 be deemed to have been a vote demanded and the division deferred until a later time? Will that solve the problem for everybody?

Is there unanimous consent to treat it as having been put before the House, the division demanded and deferred?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: I think that will solve the problem.

[*Translation*]

Group No. 2 includes a motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Rimouski—Mitis.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-29, in Clause 23, be amended by adding after line 30 on page 13 the following:

“(3) When setting a fee under subsection (2), the Minister shall ensure that local residents enjoy a preferential fee.

(4) The Governor in Council may, by regulation, define the expression “local residents”.”

She said: Mr. Speaker, with the motions in Group No. 2, we are proposing that clause 23 be amended.

Clause 23 reads as follows:

23.(1) The Minister may, subject to any regulations that the Treasury Board may make for the purposes of this section, fix the fees or the manner of calculating the fees to be paid for a service or the use of a facility provided by the Agency.

(2) Fees for a service or the use of a facility that are fixed under subsection (1) may not exceed the cost to Her Majesty in right of Canada of providing the service or the use of the facility.

● (1045)

We discussed at length, in committee, pointing out that we think it extremely important that local residents be allowed access to parks and historic sites for a reasonable fee. We would therefore like the following added as a third paragraph:

(3) When setting a fee under subsection (2), the Minister shall ensure that local residents enjoy a preferential fee.

(4) The Governor in Council may, by regulation, define the expression "local residents".

A number of us are really very concerned. The government, of course, does not share our concern, but we are extremely worried that the government will add all sorts of hidden taxes and adopt a business mentality toward parks and historic sites, eventually wanting the agency to be self-funding. That way, it will receive more money for interfering in provincial jurisdictions, the way it has been doing so far with its budget surplus.

We want local residents to be taken into consideration, and to have access to their immediate environment. They used to get in for free. Since Parks Canada has invaded our environment, we are obliged to pay ever greater amounts to enjoy the beauty of nature.

We want consideration to be given to a preferential fee for local residents, so that the price they are charged for admission to our parks and historic sites is always kept to a minimum.

Mr. John Godfrey (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are against this amendment. We are, of course, in favour of involving local communities as users of the parks and sites of great value to Parks Canada. We certainly have nothing against local communities.

However, Parks Canada already offers incentives such as annual passes and early bird specials at many parks and sites. Such incentives usually benefit local people the most.

This approach reflects the intent of the proposed change without legalizing a discriminatory clause that would treat one group of Canadians differently from another.

Ms. Angela Vautour (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak today on these motions.

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As I have indicated on several occasions already, I am not a stranger to the parks issue. My first job was with Parks Canada. I was also working for Parks Canada in 1997 and had to quit after the election.

I am in a good position to talk about entrance fees. My job at the Kouchibouguac National Park was at the park entrance. I was the person who collected the fees from both tourists and locals who came to visit the park. These people used to live in the park.

We must look back at what was said to park residents who were expropriated to convince them to leave. We know it was not the money. My father was offered \$6,600 to leave his 50 or so acres of land in Kouchibouguac park. Money clearly was not what would make people leave. We were told that it would create jobs, well-paid jobs, protect this beautiful wilderness, this great land on which we lived, to ensure it would still be there hundreds of years from now for future generations to enjoy.

● (1050)

There are children today whose parents were expropriated from national parks across this country, including Kouchibouguac, from which I was expropriated. Those children have no chance to go to the beautiful beaches they were promised in 1969, nor to visit the historic sites, or to use the hiking and biking paths.

Today it costs a fortune to get into a park. One must wonder for whom the parks were created. The reason to have a park is to preserve and conserve nature. It must be realized also, however, that many national parks have been created in areas of very high unemployment. People were promised good jobs, and now we see the work being contracted out and people being paid less so they are forced to leave and give up their jobs.

When these people come to visit the parks, moreover, they have to turn around and go home. I have seen people doing just that when I worked at the entrance. Sometimes I paid their entrance fees out of my own pocket because I saw that there were little kids who were not going to be able to use the beach because their parents did not have enough money. I am not making this up—that is what I saw between 1981 and 1996, and the fees keep going up.

I must say as well that our parks are not as well maintained as they used to be, because the desire seems to be to make parks into industries, to make them revenue generated. Conservation is no longer the priority, making money is, because the government is cutting the funding allocated to the parks. Nature and conservation are therefore suffering.

We must step back and look at what is going on. Having an agency is not a bad idea, but what lies behind the idea of an agency is dangerous. Why are jobs guaranteed for only two years? The

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work has to be done, whether it is an agency or a department that is in charge. There is no reason to make our employees feel insecure.

The work has to be done. The park entry fees must not be raised any further and thought should be given to special fees for local residents. People expropriated to make room for the parks can no longer afford to go there. Others who were not expropriated when the park was created still live in the community and they have the same problem.

Tourism is all very well, it helps the economy, and I cannot dispute that. Hundreds of thousands of people come to visit our parks. This helps the economy and we want it to continue, but we must also look at the reality. Who has access to parks these days? As with just about any other government policy, the wealthy are the ones who continue to have access to services, whether we are talking about health care, education or national parks. For those who have money, things are just fine. Everything is there for them. But for people who have less money, it is harder to have access to health care, education, services for the elderly and parks.

I definitely support a motion that would look at the real situation in the villages located close to national parks. It is important that local people have access to the parks, and one of the agency's priorities should be to be fair to those who live close to the parks and those who lost their land to these parks. We must give back to these people the access that they enjoyed before. The problem is one of lost access. We must give to the communities that live close to national parks the access they used to enjoy.

• (1055)

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Gouk (West Kootenay—Okanagan, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is ironic that my riding name changed in 1997 because of changes to the electoral boundaries act. Now that you and your colleagues are getting used to this name we just passed a bill today that will change it again. We always like to keep a challenge for the Chair.

There is also a real challenge before us today with this bill, with this motion and with the process through which this place works. I believe there is some merit in this motion. I have some degree of sympathy for those neighbouring communities. It could be argued that we should support it or that we should not because it is not clear enough and that it should have been better clarified.

The real irony and the real shame of this House is that the government has already stood up to say that it does not support this motion. This is the way this place works. The government makes that decree through one government member who represents the appropriate ministry. Then all the rest of the sheep have to vote the same way. We have already seen this. That is one of the ironies of debate in this House.

We can stand up and pontificate on the need to do good things for the citizens of this country but if the government has already made up its mind not to do anything good for the people then that is the way it will be. That is really unfortunate. It is unfortunate that we cannot discuss things openly and meaningfully where the government can listen and say that it does not support something because it truly does not make sense or that it does make sense and it should look at it.

The British parliamentary system on which our system is based has done away with the confidence convention. We often see members from various parties voting across party lines because they truly want to support what is good for their constituents.

With regard to the specific amendment, until the riding name changed in 1997, part of my riding bordered one of our national parks. If you live in the middle a province that does not have a national park within hundreds of miles of your place, then you come and go and that is part of your normal routine life. If you live on the edge of a park, you are sometimes forced by your proximity to it to go frequently through that park. It penalizes those people for the government to make them pay for freedom of movement because of their proximity to a national park and because they will have all kinds of tourists driving by their doorsteps which sometimes has economic benefits and sometimes has drawbacks, in particular in terms of highway traffic and congestion. That is unfair.

Bloc Quebecois members were on the right track when they started talking about this issue. They should have done a little more work on it although there may not have been sufficient time to do that. There should have been more work that said these are the specific fees we are talking about, maybe they should pay for the use of a facility inside the park because they are getting the same benefit as people from elsewhere. But in terms of access into and through, there should definitely be a preferential low rate for those people who are forced by nature of their proximity to pay these high fees. It is unfortunate that the Bloc has not defined in its motion what a local person is or what the ratio of fee should be.

We already know the government is going to defeat the motion, so it does not matter how good of an argument we make. I believe there is some desire on the government side to be fair, so in the interest of fairness I hope government members listen to the arguments of the Bloc, to mine and those of others who speak to this motion, or of those who speak about the motion since I am not necessarily supporting it the way it is written.

I hope they recognize the need to be fair to those people who are forced, not who choose, to make frequent access to the park by nature of their proximity to it. I hope they try to recognize that something should be done. They are going to defeat the motion, fine, but they should recognize that something needs to be done. I hope they will take that into account and that they will try to find a way to ensure fairness is brought to those local residents.

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• (1100)

Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC): Madam Speaker, I would like to speak on Motion No. 6 put forth by my hon. colleague from Rimouski—Mitis.

National parks when established in a specific area might not take away but might prevent people who used the facilities without cost from going there. I think it is only fair that these people have access to the place. The reason I say this is these people are good ambassadors for the park because they will tell other people what is available because they have lived there all their lives.

Government members have already stated they would vote against this motion. I think they should look at different options to help make it fair for those individuals who live in those areas, who benefited from those areas in the past and can still benefit without having undue cost put on them.

I support this motion but I would like to see included a definition as to who are local residents and what are the costs local residents will incur.

I am asking government members, even though they have indicated they would vote against it, to consider something of this nature, clarify it and put it into effect.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Motion No. 6 which would do a couple of things which I do not think are positive development in whatever parks agency we may end up with.

I am thinking of the idea of using preferential fees for local residents especially when the term local residents is not defined. It is my belief that the national parks system is for the benefit of all Canadians and it does several things.

It preserves ecologically diverse areas of the country, perhaps not always in pristine wilderness but at least it does preserve that area for future generations for all time. If there is human activity in the parks, and inevitably there will be more and more of that, at least the area has been identified and set aside for this and future generations.

Although our national parks are a treasure for the world they are also a treasure for Canadians. I do not believe we want to start differentiating between local residents and distant residents since I think all Canadians in a national institution like a park should be treated equally.

Unless we are talking about something like transit fees through a park to get to a work site or something that is a very unique situation, fees associated with the parks system should be the same for all comers when they have a Canadian licence plate on their car and they are driving in. That is good enough for me. I think we want to be very careful when we start differentiating fees in one area from another.

I think to have a fee structure based on local versus distant, administratively this could be very difficult for the people employed within the parks system. To decide who is local and how local is local would be very difficult. It may be true that all politics is local, as the saying goes, but certainly for administration of a park we want to have all Canadians treated equally.

The vast majority of national parks are located in western Canada and one of the tremendous legacies of the west has been the ability to establish these parks in different areas.

• (1105)

That is a benefit not only for western Canadians but for all Canadians and is something we are very proud of in western Canada. It is a bit of wilderness spirit and an ability even from a large city to be back to nature and the wilderness, often within minutes. Often this takes place in a national or provincial park.

I oppose this motion unless without better clarification as to what these definitions were about local residents. I encourage others in the House to think twice before they pick differing fee structures for different Canadians based on their province of origin or how far away they are from the park site itself. I think that is an unwise motion and I would vote against it.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The question is on Motion No. 6. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Yes.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The recorded division on Motion No. 6 stands deferred.

We will now proceed to the motions in Group No. 3.

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.) moved:

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Motion No. 7

That Bill C-29 be amended by deleting Clause 36.1.

Mr. Jacques Saada (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.) moved:

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-29, in Clause 36, be amended by replacing lines 6 and 7 on page 17 with the following:

“36.1 For greater certainty, the Official Languages Act applies to the Agency and the Agency has the duty, under section 25 of that Act, to ensure that, where services are provided or made available by another person or organization on its behalf, any member of the public in Canada or elsewhere can communicate with and obtain those services from that person or organization in either official language, in any case where those services, if provided by the Agency, would be required under Part IV of the Official Languages Act to be provided in either official language.”

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Motions Nos. 7 and 8 are grouped together and will be debated at the same time.

• (1110)

[*English*]

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I assure you that my hon. colleague is quite correct. We did arrange for me to speak first because I have to be in committee.

I strongly support Motion No. 7. I want to take some time to explain to this House why. In the first place it should be known that this motion came about after the committee was warned not to deal with this motion, clause 36.1.

Members on the government side of the House in committee were warned by the justice minister and her officials. However, it was put into the bill anyway.

I want to explain the situation as it relates to Saskatchewan's newest national park, Grasslands National Park. It is situated entirely within the constituency of my colleague, the hon. member for Cyprus Hills—Grasslands. However, it is only about 30 miles outside of my constituency and I know the area well. My daughter and her family ranch right up against it.

This motion relates to subcontracting and the use of the Official Languages Act. I have often gone through state and national parks in the United States. When we get to the lower part of the United States, into Arizona, into Texas, there is no mandatory use of language. Wherever the second language is needed it is there. If we go to the post office and the second language is needed, it is there. If we go to the tendering process and the second language is needed, it is there. There is no gouging, there is no arbitrary decisions to irritate people in that country over language.

For example, at the western end of Grasslands National Park let us say we were going to tender and four sections of that park were to be fenced out with limited grazing for that period of time. With

the drought situation in that area right now, that may well become a factor.

To even tender in that part of Saskatchewan under the guise of the Official Languages Act, all that would do is irritate everybody within that whole area of Saskatchewan. First we would not get a contractor to come that distance who would qualify under this motion. We would eliminate all those people there who have all of the equipment, the post pounders, the wire stretchers and everything else. They would be eliminated because this has been injected into this bill.

What the government is doing by putting this in the bill is taking a peaceful group of farmers and ranchers and gouging them a little deeper and then maybe saying the rednecks show up a little more. Why do we do this? It is absolute nonsense.

Where it is necessary, let us follow the example. No one on this side of the House, no one in the Reform Party, objects to the application of the Official Languages Act. But when it gets to an area which would eliminate the local population totally, all the government is doing is putting more fuel on the fire and it is not calming anything in Saskatchewan or in areas where the one language dominates.

In this park, and I am using it as an example again, there are certain roads that have to be built. Not many roads are being built anywhere in Saskatchewan right now.

• (1115)

Imagine putting out a tender for a contractor to build so many kilometres of roads in that park but the contractor must have and make use of the stipulations under the Official Languages Act. They would not even get a contractor. Nobody would even apply because there are none there. What would they do? I suppose they would import one. I do not know where they would come from but in order to live up to this clause in the bill they might have to import a contractor from outside the province altogether. Why? This is why I strongly support my colleague's motion.

I think the government itself knows this is wrong. Where it is necessary, use it. Please do not let this motion die. Please support this for the sake of our national consciousness and for the sake of local people. I think there is enough common sense on both sides of the House to indeed support this motion. I certainly look forward to supporting it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Saada (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, why am I not surprised by my Reform colleague's opposition? If my colleague is irritated by the requirement to provide services in both official languages, I hope he is not looking to me for an apology.

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The Reform Party's opposition to the basic principles underlying the Official Languages Act is nothing new. In the rather simplistic view of things we have all seen outlined in their program—and I am summarizing it, of course—Quebec would be entirely francophone and the rest of Canada totally anglophone. That would fix everything.

I am sorry, but this is not the way this country was built. There are one million francophones outside Quebec, and anglophones make up 15% of Quebec's population. And they are just as Canadian as the members opposite.

I think talking about limiting the use of French in services provided by the Government of Canada or its representatives is entirely normal. Clause 36.1 or Motion No. 8, which we are proposing, is an amendment intended to reaffirm the spirit and the letter of the Official Languages Act. I think that questioning this is fanning the flames.

[*English*]

Ms. Angela Vautour (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have to say for once I am on the same side as the government. I was part of that debate when the amendment was put forward regarding the parks.

Unfortunately, this really gives another opportunity to the Reform Party members to try to gain some political points. What they are coming out with and what that amendment is, is really not what it is.

I also sit on the official languages committee. We had the official languages commissioner before us this week. We checked with him what we had passed.

What it is really is where there is bilingual status for workers, if God forbid there was contracting out, it would stay the same. It is the same thing in an anglophone region where the jobs are anglophone. Again God forbid if the government contracted out, it would stay anglophone. It would stay francophone if it was a position in Quebec. It is not changing that. It is making sure that the anglophone regions will keep their anglophone jobs. That is what it means. It means the same thing for the francophone and bilingual positions.

Unfortunately the Reform Party members have decided to have another field day like they did with the flag. They are trying to gain points with it. It is unfortunate that Reformers do that but they do. Today it is on language. I wish they would put as much effort into the unity of this country as they do in trying to divide it which is what they do on a daily basis.

• (1120)

[*Translation*]

I certainly do not support the motion. I know that we in committee did not pass anything that will complicate the lives of

anglophones or francophones. We simply made sure that the official language legislation would continue to apply. That is all we did. We can come up with other things if we like, but I personally have better things to do than to try to compound the country's problems. We have enough problems already, we do not want to add to them.

I reiterate that the purpose of the amendments proposed by the government in committee is not to complicate the lives of anglophone, francophone or bilingual Canadians.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ): Madam Speaker, obviously, the Bloc Québécois will not support Motion No. 7 before us. This motion calls for the deletion of clause 36.1, which we discussed in committee, having examined the bill clause by clause, and which was added by the committee.

Naturally, we asked questions of the Department of Justice lawyer and departmental officials who came to explain the bill to us.

But some committee members disagreed with departmental officials, who claim that it is not required in the bill, because the law automatically applies, apparently. If the Official Languages Act automatically applies, it does not cost a lot to include it in the bill. Nothing is compromised by doing so.

We said that we thought it was very simple; clause 36.1, which had been added, stipulates that the Official Languages Act applies to the Agency and to its subcontractors. There was the situation with Air Canada, which claims that Air Alliance is not subject to the Official Languages Act.

Complaints were filed with the official languages commissioner on several occasions, not always politely, because the Official Languages Act was not applied in this very parliament. There was the example of the construction site workers. We even received a unilingual English document from the Department of Human Resources Development concerning members' insurance benefits—fortunately, the error was quickly corrected yesterday, and we were sent a letter in French.

It was pointed out, for instance, that all the proceedings in Nagano were in English. Not that long ago, when we had the Commonwealth ceremonies in the Speaker's chambers, the whole thing was conducted in English only.

Ever since we got here, we have not stopped fighting to ensure that the Official Languages Act is complied with. A few years ago, I visited some parks in the maritime provinces during the month of July. Wherever I went, I was told "Mrs. Tremblay, unfortunately the last francophone who came before you took the last French document that we had". I was told the same thing everywhere I went. It was probably thought that 10 French copies or so would do. I never even saw one. I do not even know whether they exist. I believed what I was told, and I concluded that so many franco-

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phones were visiting the maritimes and Newfoundland that they ran out of French leaflets. Quebecers cannot be accused of not being open, since they visit our national parks in such large numbers.

It appears that, after consulting officials, probably from the Department of Justice, a compromise was reached and Motion No. 8 was proposed. It reads as follows:

36.1 For greater certainty, the Official Languages Act applies to the Agency and the Agency has the duty, under section 25 of that Act, to ensure that, where services are provided or made available by another person or organization on its behalf, any member of the public in Canada or elsewhere can communicate with and obtain those services from that person or organization in either official language, in any case where those services, if provided by the Agency, would be required under Part IV of the Official Languages Act to be provided in either official language.

• (1125)

Motion No. 8, which seeks to replace clause 36.1 of the bill, is simply a reminder of what the Official Languages Act provides. With things being so clear, the agency can never claim not to know that it is subject to the Official Languages Act. This is merely a precaution. Like a double lock on the door of a hotel room, this motion provides added protection. We know that the Official Languages Act protects our rights, but we want to make sure the agency will never forget it.

I will conclude by saying that, since the Reform Party expressed two different opinions on the previous motion, I would like to see at least one of its members tell us that francophones have a right to exist in this country.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.): Madam Speaker, these are the simple facts of the matter. When this came before committee, the Minister of Justice of the governing party sent a four and a half page letter to the committee telling them in no uncertain terms to not insert the clause which would subject the Official Languages Act to contractors and subcontractors in national parks. There were four and a half pages explaining the reasons why.

Let me quote a few parts of that letter. "Wording of this amendment goes beyond the current application of the Official Languages Act." If any member has stood up here and said that it does not do this or that, it does. There is absolutely no question about it.

She goes on to say that because all parts of the Official Languages Act would apply to contractors and subcontractors of the agency as if they were federal institutions, this would have the effect of creating linguistic obligations for the contractors and subcontractors of the parks agency that do not currently exist under

the Official Languages Act for contractors and subcontractors of other federal institutions. How much more plain and simple can it be?

That was only an excerpt from one part of her letter, but the most significant part of the letter from the Minister of Justice to her own members of that committee appeared in the fourth last paragraph. She makes about five points there. I will summarize the effect of what she is saying.

First of all, non-governmental organizations or private business and holders of commercial leases would no longer be exempt from section 25 of the Official Languages Act. This means that someone holding a commercial lease or engaging in a private business that previously did not have to be subject to those obligations now would be. It means that all workers must be fluently bilingual, not just the ones responsible for supplying services directly to the public.

The point was made in committee that why would painters and garbage collectors or other people who have no engagement with the public whatsoever have to comply with those requirements of being fluently bilingual? It does not make any sense. In fact, officials from the justice department were at the committee, telling the committee in no uncertain terms do not insert this clause because of the effects it will have.

Also, contractors and subcontractors who would be under the application of the Official Languages Act that previously did not apply but now would, would not only have to have bilingual employees but that 50% of them would have to be French speaking, in other words French as their first language.

Further to that, they would have to undertake a commitment to the promotion of both official languages. I am not sure exactly what that would entail, but requiring fence painters to have a commitment to the promotion of both official languages in the conduct of their job which is painting the fence does not make any sense whatsoever.

Finally, non-compliance with these new requirements would be subject to court sanctions and orders of enforcement. In other words, if someone did obtain a contract to paint a fence agreeing they would do all these things and then in some fashion did not uphold that, they would be subject to court intervention. Absolute stupidity.

• (1130)

Despite the recommendations of the justice minister to her own committee, in its infinite wisdom the committee put it in anyway. Now we expose it and we explain why this is a bad idea, why it goes far beyond the intention of the Official Languages Act and

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why it would cause a lot of problems in national parks across our country. There is no arguing that and there is no denying it.

The most sensible thing is to simply delete the clause because, as was previously stated by the justice minister—and the lawyers from the justice department who were in committee knew this—it should be common sense to anyone that the Official Languages Act already applies to that federal institution. Subjecting contractors and subcontractors to it does not make any sense.

The committee members who voted in favour of it knew exactly what they were doing. They wanted to subject people to the Official Languages Act who were not previously subject to it. Clearly the hammer from the justice minister came down. She said that we were not going to go through with this. Not only was it unwise based on common sense, but obviously there would be a lot of political repercussions.

What did they do? Instead of simply deleting the clause, which is my amendment and makes perfect sense because now the Official Languages Act would apply anyway, as it always would have, there is no problem, they put in this wordy amendment that begins by saying “For greater certainty” and then it just repeats what the Official Languages Act says anyway.

There is no need to say “Although the Official Languages Act applies”, it applies. It is called trite law. It is poor legal draftsmanship. That is what we are getting from the Liberal government. That is the type of leadership we are getting.

We are going to have a bill with absolutely useless wording in it. The Liberals are doing it because they are in a jam. They want to save face for the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, who inserted the clause against the advice of all the justice officials and his own justice minister, and they want to save face for themselves, so they implemented this clause. Rather than pass a poorly drafted bill, they should have just admitted their mistake. But no, they are going to insert this wordy clause that means nothing and is, as I have said, trite law.

Let me explain for the Liberal members what that really means. It means that if you do not have to say it, do not say it. We do not have to be excessively redundant. The Official Languages Act already applies. Why write it in? They are writing it in because they are trying to save face because their committee members made a mistake. It is just political wrangling.

Canadians deserve better than that. If members opposite are going to form the governing party they should be at least obligated to draft legislation that is consistent with the laws and rules that apply to drafting legislation. They cannot even accept that. Instead, damage control tops their list and we are going to end up with a piece of legislation that is very poorly drafted. But that is the

manner in which the Liberal government tends to operate in all matters.

I think I have sufficiently explained the circumstances that surrounded what happened and how the Liberals are trying to get out of this jam. I certainly hope that Canadians see it for what it is.

Mr. John Godfrey (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, at the risk of driving the last member a bit crazy, I am going to agree, at least in part, with what he said.

There was a lack of clarity in the amendment, which we recognized and which we dealt with, but which does not seem to have been recognized by the members of the Reform Party who have spoken to it. That is to say, we are simply in this modified amendment restating the principles of the Official Languages Act because we are concerned when we hear from others that Parks Canada may be perceived as not following through on all of its obligations. We believe that Parks Canada is doing so, but for greater certainty we want to state that it is a commitment of the Government of Canada to provide services to its citizens, to the public, in both official languages.

The amendment concerns services which are involved in direct contact with the public. It does not cover painters. It does not cover garbage collectors. It does not cover ranch men and ranch women in Saskatchewan. It is simply those people who deal with the public who would be covered under the Official Languages Act as employees of Parks Canada.

• (1135)

If we subcontract to other people who deal with the public in the parks, the rules of the Official Languages Act apply. That is all it does. It provides greater certainty. It does not change anything, but it does make the point that Parks Canada is attentive and concerned about this issue.

Mr. Jim Gouk (West Kootenay—Okanagan, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is an interesting debate. It is not only interesting to hear the government's point of view, which I will get to in a few moments, but also to hear the views of the NDP and the Bloc Québécois.

I remember bills going through the transport committee in the last parliament and any time we said anything that suggested we were in any way infringing on the full, unfettered rights of people of Quebec, even though it was not fact, Bloc members would go ballistic. They do not seem to recognize what is practical and reasonable in this country.

My colleague from Souris—Moose Mountain talked about the idea of territorial bilingualism, of having services wherever they are necessary and practical.

I hope the Bloc will listen to this. In 1994 I invited a member of the Bloc Québécois to be my guest in my riding, which was then

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Kootenay—West Revelstoke, to see what that side of the country was like and to meet the people from that side of the country. This was at a time when they were talking about taking us on and disconnecting those people. I also invited him to explain to the constituents of my riding what the Bloc's movement was all about.

I took the opportunity to tour the member of parliament for Portneuf around my riding to show him bilingualism in effect. I took him down to the hospital in Castlegar to show him how everything is bilingual in that hospital. It is English and it is Russian. We have a very large number of Russian Doukhobor people whose heritage we celebrate. It does not create division. It makes our area richer because we work together.

I took him to the city park in Nelson to show him the bilingual signs, which are in English and in Japanese. The second language institutions in Nelson have made quite a business teaching English as a second language, particularly with the Asian connection.

He saw that we do not try to quash people being served in their most appropriate language. We go out of our way to celebrate, not kill the culture and heritage of others who can make us richer.

I listened to the government member speaking to the intention of the amendment relating to parks. Notwithstanding his statements, the intention of the amendment, as it has been put forward by the committee, would apply to fence painters and to garbage collectors. It would apply to everybody. He had better be careful when he says that it will not, because the minister has already said that it will.

There is a clause in the bill that is unacceptable. It is unacceptable to us. It is unacceptable to the government. Now we have two amendments. We have a Reform amendment which would take the offending clause out. We have government amendment which would tinker with it a bit, push it a bit here and push it around there.

I will read for the hon. member the government's motion. Maybe he has not read it clearly enough.

For greater certainty—to ensure that, where services are provided or made available by another person or organization on its behalf, any member of the public in Canada or elsewhere can communicate with and obtain those services from that person or organization in either official language, in any case where those services, if provided by the Agency, would be required under—the Official Languages Act—

The Official Languages Act is already there.

Now we are getting down to that grey area. We have somebody painting the fence. Along comes a person who asks "Which way do I go to get to the park?" Is that communication with the public? It is not part of their job, but the amendment says if they communicate with the public. The fact is that it could be interpreted that

way. Maybe the member who is chuckling over there thinks that would not happen. Maybe not, but it could.

• (1140)

We used to chastise insurance companies and other companies for writing contracts, agreements and policies in legalise which nobody could understand. In fact, it gets down to a point where lawyers dealing with a claim start battling over the interpretation. Some enlightened companies started putting out policies and contracts in plain language. A minimal amount is said and it is in the plainest language possible.

There is a clause that the minister instructed not be put in. It was put in anyway. The government recognized it was not good. Realistically, how should it be dealt with? If there is a clause that should not have been put in, should it be tinkered with and massaged so that it might be interpreted better, or should it simply be taken out? The logical answer is to take it out. Otherwise the bill becomes bigger and bigger. At some point there will be an amendment to clarify what the amendment meant. That amendment will impact on some other part of the bill, so another amendment will be brought forward.

Keep it as simple as possible. I know the government hates to do that because it likes everybody to think it is so important. It thinks people could not live without it and live without all the wild and wonderful interpretations in the great complex legislation it deals with. The fact of the matter is, the simpler the government keeps it the more respect it will command because finally it will be putting out something that makes sense.

If there is a clause which the minister says should not be in the bill, the solution is to take it out. We support taking it out. That is not knocking the people of Quebec.

The member from the Bloc Quebecois who harangued Reform for its position on this should recognize that, as it stands now, in a national park in Quebec, if they want someone to put a fence around some part of a path so people do not hurt themselves, they cannot hire a local francophone to do it. They can only hire a fully bilingual person to do it. Maybe it is so when you curse that you are an equal opportunity curser. I do not know. It simply does not make sense that somebody fixing a fence or picking up the garbage in Quebec has to speak English any more than it makes sense for someone doing those same tasks in British Columbia has to speak French.

We are not saying that they cannot speak French. We are not saying that somebody who is a francophone should not be able to bid on the contract. We are simply saying that for these jobs it should not be imperative that they be bilingual. It does not make sense. It is bureaucratic. Think of the costs. Did the government even stop to think of what the costs would be?

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My colleague for Souris—Moose Mountain mentioned that if a road has to be built, the local contractor should be able to do it at less expense than importing someone from Winnipeg where there is a large francophone population. Perhaps there is a road builder there where many people speak French. If not, I guess someone would have to be brought in from Quebec. Think of the costs that would be involved if local contractors could not meet the requirements and someone had to be brought in from another area. They would have to move their equipment, their manpower, lodgings and all the rest of it.

If the government wants to do what is sensible, do not tinker with it, remove it. It should not have been in there in the first place. The minister even said that. Simply do what the minister said in the first place. We do not always agree with the ministers, so when we finally come up with something we agree on we would hope that government would not turn around and disagree with the minister by not taking it out.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Madam Speaker, to continue on the general trend, in fact it is worse than that.

The member who just spoke actually summarized it very well.

There are a couple of things I would like to point out to the government side.

First, what the government is trying to do, and we all know it, is to try to save the reputation of a Liberal member who did a royal botch-up in committee. That is what we are debating today. There was a royal botch-up. It should not have happened. The minister came forward with four and a half pages saying "Whatever you do, don't do this". Now we are in the House at report stage trying to amend a royal botch-up in order to save the face of the member who brought the original amendment into committee.

• (1145)

The amendment should never have been brought in. The members opposite say for greater clarity they want to make sure the Official Languages Act applies to this agency. Why did they not say for greater clarity in the case of first degree murder that might occur in this park area we had better have a clause saying the Criminal Code applies? It would be greater clarity just to make sure everyone is not confused about that, so that people walking around do not say this is a new park, maybe they could murder somebody and get away with it. It is just silly.

Clauses are not put in for greater clarity when the other legislation already encompasses agencies under the federal jurisdiction. It is not needed. It is redundant. It is a waste of time. It is a face saving measure to try to save the political reputation of

someone who should never have brought it into committee to begin with. That is what that is.

I can think of a case that was as silly as this in the last parliament. The chairman of the official languages committee, Patrick Gagnon, was defeated in the last election. He brought forward the proposal that we have an investigation to see why there were not more French signs on Sparks Street in Ottawa. It was an excellent job for a committee of the House of Commons to determine why there was not more French on Sparks Street.

Even the Liberals said to Mr. Gagnon in a not so roundabout way what kind of bonehead idea is this. It is not the job of the committee to look at that. That was another silly, frivolous type of investigation. Are we going to bring the language police on to Sparks Street?

It was a silly thing and of course he lost his chairmanship of that committee, and he subsequently lost the election. It was an example of a Liberal member's bringing something forward that their own colleagues said was unnecessary, overkill and should be deleted. Unfortunately there was a big row about it until the Liberals killed the idea. That is of course what they are trying to do with this amendment today.

I would like to respond a bit to Bloc members' assertion about Reform's language policy. They do not like it but that can be taken for what it is worth. There is an anomaly that points out a bit of hypocrisy on their part.

The Reform Party has always advocated from the beginning of our party that where numbers warrant and where it makes obvious sense we should have bilingualism absolutely in place.

One of the places where we have always said this should be in place is in the House of Commons. There is no doubt about it that both French and English are spoken here in large numbers. The staff, the researchers, the proximity to Quebec, for all those reasons this place needs to be bilingual. That is why we have translators. That is why we have interpreters. That is why motions are put in both languages and so on. It is necessary because this is a bilingual institution, as the Reform Party has always said it should be. This is typical of a place that should be and is bilingual. It is bilingual so let us treat it that way and make sure it is handled that way.

But a strange thing happened. When the Reform Party became the official opposition a shuffling of offices took place within the centre block building. We moved from the fifth floor to the fourth which are the offices occupied by the official opposition. When we did that we made some subtle and some not so subtle changes. We put the Canadian flag outside the leader's office because it is the office of the leader of the official opposition of Canada.

There were other changes, not least of which was an attitudinal change. An interesting thing structurally happened on the fifth

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floor where the Bloc Québécois entrenched itself as the third party, our old suites upstairs.

• (1150)

When the Reform Party was there the signs on all our doors were bilingual. This being a bilingual institution, we always made sure all the signs were in both official languages because that is the way we believe it should be. But when the Bloc Québécois took over, it took down the bilingual signs on the doors of the fifth floor and put up French only signs. Why would it do that in a bilingual institution like parliament? Why would the leader of the third party take down the bilingual signs and put up French only signs in a bilingual institution?

That has been changed on the whole floor on which the Bloc Québécois is currently ensconced. I find that disappointing. Bloc members say in the House that we must have respect for both languages, which I also believe. It is disappointing when they get to a floor they call their own, although it is a part of this institution and we all must deal with things on that floor, that they take down the bilingual signs which the leader of the Reform Party had in place and put French only signs up. Why did they do that? Why would they try to put one language only? I would not do that in this institution. This is a bilingual institution. But they did it.

Bloc members are in favour of this Liberal amendment. However, their complaints ring pretty hollow when they say that they would like to see more French in our national parks. It is ironic that 90% of our national parks are in western Canada. I have seen that we provide services in many languages as need requires. I have seen tour guides speaking Japanese and Chinese. We host the nation in these parts. But when it comes to our own national institution, the House of Commons, they put French only on the doors, the one structural thing they have control of. That is too bad.

It is a sad commentary when we should be promoting and encouraging bilingualism and celebrating that diversity in this institution. It is a sad commentary where numbers warrant and where it is a national institution that they choose to go the other way. That is unfortunate. I hope they take the opportunity in the next few days to change that, to show that they respect the spirit of bilingualism in this kind of institution in their own offices. I hope they will but I will not hold my breath. Although they talk a good line for the national parks in my region, they will not practice what they preach even here in our national parliament, and that is too bad.

This is an amendment to fix a botched up amendment which the justice minister gave a four and a half page tongue lashing about, saying that it should never have been there. This tries to fix it in a poor management style in terms of legislation. Fixing bad amendments by amending them further is the worst way to create good legislation.

I am worried they are setting a precedent. What are we going to have? Is the Minister of National Revenue who is contemplating a national tax collection agency going to have to put this clause in his bill? It should never have been there. What about all the bills that do not include it because the Official Languages Act already covers it?

Here we have a bad amendment made worse, a precedent setting one at that, by including it in an agency development bill. As the government goes to other agencies, this amendment will now have to be pushed through on every one of them. That is too bad and unfortunate.

The government would be wiser to cut its losses and to cut this clause. It is unnecessary, vexatious and strictly a political statement that tries to cover up a very bad mistake made in committee.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I address the motion by the member for Ottawa—Vanier. His original amendment would have had the Official Languages Act apply to contractors and subcontractors operating in Canada's national parks.

• (1155)

As members are well aware, the Official Languages Act already applies to personnel employed in the national parks who must deal with the public. It was never intended to apply to people who did not have a public presence in those parks which is only logical.

In western Canada it is very difficult for people to acquire a second language given the circumstances in the location. To expect that somehow we are going to be able to supply bilingual people for these positions on a regular basis is really hoping for too much.

The position that we have taken on this bill is one which has been supported by the Minister of Justice. I would like to read a letter into the record which she sent to the Secretary of State for Parks. It very clearly expresses the concerns that we have on this issue. The fact that it is a letter written by the Minister of Justice should add some substance and credibility to our position:

I understand that, during review of Bill C-29 (*Canada Parks Agency Act*) in the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, questions have been raised about the application of the *Official Languages Act (OLA)* to the proposed Agency and to its contractors and subcontractors. I am writing to confirm the position of the Department of Justice on this matter, namely that:

1. Assuming that Bill C-29 is enacted in its current form, the Agency would be a "federal institution" under the *Official Languages Act* and, consequently, would be subject to all linguistic obligations set out in that Act.

Under Bill C-29, the agency would be considered as an agent of Her Majesty in right of Canada. Section 3 of Bill C-29 states that "there is hereby established a body

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corporate to be called the Canada Parks Agency, that may exercise powers and perform duties and functions only as an agent of Her Majesty in right of Canada” [we underline]. In view of s. 3(1)(h) of the *OLA* which states that “any other body that is specified by an Act of Parliament to be an agent of Her Majesty in right of Canada (—)” is a federal institution, the Agency would clearly be considered as a federal institution and consequently, the *OLA* would fully apply to the Agency.

Furthermore, Bill C-29 also states in s. 4(1), that the “Minister is responsible for and has the overall direction of the Agency” and, at s. 4(2), that “the Agency shall comply with any general or special direction given by the Minister” [we underline]. This requirement is also referred to in the second part of s. 3(1)(h) of the *OLA* where it is stated that a federal institution is also “any other body that is (—) to be subject to the direction of (—) a Minister of Crown”. As a consequence, the Agency would also meet this other criteria and, therefore, be clearly contemplated as a federal institution under the *OLA*.

In addition, section 50 of the Bill C-29 states that “Schedule II of the *Federal Administrative Act, [FAA]* is amended by adding the following in alphabetical order: (—) Canadian Parks Agency”. This schedule identifies the “departmental corporations” under the *FAA*, and under s. 2 of the *FAA*, the departmental corporations are considered to be “department[s]” (we underline).

Under s. 3 of the *OLA*, the definition of “federal institution” includes “department[s] of the Government of Canada”. The Agency would thus be considered a “department” under s. 3 of the *OLA* and s. 2 of the *FAA*, and would consequently also be subject to the obligations and duties of the *OLA* because of that status.

In summary, in view of the definition of federal institutions as described in s. 3(1)(f) and (h) of the *OLA*, our position is that the Agency would be a federal institution under that Act because it is (i) an agent of Her Majesty, (ii) under the direction of a Minister of the Crown, and (iii) a department of the Government of Canada. As a result, it would be subject to the full linguistic duties and obligations of the *OLA*.

II. If the Agency were to contract-out services to the public which, under the *Official Languages Act*, have to be provided in both official languages, section 25 of that Act would require the Agency to ensure that the services provided on its behalf continue to be offered in both official languages.

Section 25 of the *OLA* was enacted to ensure that federal institutions would not circumvent their duties under Part IV of the *OLA* (and *a fortiori*, under s. 20 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*) when contracting out their services to third parties. S. 25 can only apply if we conclude that, in a given circumstance, the third party providing services to the public is acting on behalf of a federal institution. In every situation, the issue of whether a third party is acting on behalf of a federal institution must be determined on a case-by-case approach, on the basis of the circumstances and particularities of the arrangement between the federal institution and the third party.

In their usual meaning, the words “on behalf of” refer to the idea that one party is undertaking to do something for the benefit and as a representative of another party, generally at the request of the latter: “Behalf: 1 in the interest of (a person, principle, etc.). 2 as representative of (acting on behalf of my client”, in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 8th ed., p. 99.

In our view some types of arrangements will clearly fall under the purview of s. 25, for instance if a federal institution is legally responsible—i.e., on the basis of an Act of Parliament, a contract or any rule of law—for the administration or undertaking of a particular activity or for the provision of services or communications to the public. In the event that the federal institution decides to contract out these services to a third party, the latter would be acting on behalf of the federal institution. As a consequence, s. 25 would apply and the federal institution would have to ensure that the third party providing the services and communications does so in compliance with the linguistic requirements of Part IV of the *OLA*.

Another type of arrangement which, in our view, would also be covered by s. 25 is the contract of *mandat* (or mandate) in civil law and of “agency” at common law. The rules of the *mandat* are based on the idea of representation: “[l]e mandataire [—]n’agit—” At common law, the power, vested in the hands of the agent, “is a power to affect his principal’s position by doing acts on his behalf” (*Chitty on Contracts*, Volume II, p. 22—we underline). Agency normally requires that the agent represent the principal. Indeed, the purpose and effect of the agency relationship are to transfer to the agent the authority of the principal to act, thereby enabling the agent to affect the principal’s legal relations with third parties (C.E.D.(Ont.) 3rd ed., p. 49). As a consequence, in cases where the contract between the federal institution and the third party is considered to be a *mandat* or an agency relationship, the third party would be acting on behalf of the federal institution and s. 25 would require that its services and communications to the public be available in both official languages, in compliance with Part IV of the *OLA*.

That being said, the term “on behalf” should not necessarily be limited only to the types of arrangements described above, as a too narrow interpretation of s. 25—

● (1200)

The justice minister in No. III talks about the insertion of a linguistic clause in Bill C-29 not being advisable. She points out:

—the—wording of this amendment goes beyond the current application of the *Official Languages Act* since it seems to suggest that all parts of the *OLA* would apply to contractors and subcontractors of the Agency, as if they were federal institutions. This would have the effect of creating linguistic obligations for the contractors and subcontractors of the Parks Agency that do not currently exist under the *OLA* for contractors and subcontractors of other federal institutions.

● (1205)

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the question of how these bills are drafted, how they come before the House, their intent, what the Canadian public perceives as the correct way to do our business and the final result of that business has a lot to do with the credibility of our final product.

In reviewing what we are doing here today, talking about these motions with regard to the National Parks Act, the member for Ottawa—Vanier in committee apparently put forward the idea that subcontractors are required to provide bilingual services to get a contract for work in our national parks.

The whole question of bilingualism in my province of Manitoba has been debated over the years in many aspects from schooling to services, to government services and to courts. I personally think that is a very important question.

I support the province of Manitoba and its bilingual policies. The whole Reform Party supports those policies and our laws, including educating our children in both languages as they so wish. However the province of Manitoba in its wisdom has not seen fit to have bilingualism in every little aspect of an individual’s life.

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In essence what was attempted here was to have official bilingualism used for a purpose that was never intended by parliament. As a result I am certainly here today to speak in favour of Motion No. 7 of the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt to delete the amendment that came out of committee.

Instead of admitting to the Canadian public that what was done in committee was not right and standing up on the other side and voting in favour of our motion to correct the error made in committee, the Liberal government tells the Canadian public about how it has to bring in another motion and that the Official Languages Act still applies and will be interpreted properly.

Canadians want straightforward discussions. They want straightforward action from parliament. Straightforward action would be simply to vote yes to Motion No. 7 and delete it. Instead there is subterfuge, confusion and an attempt to deceive the public about what is going on here. It should admit what it is wrong and correct it in the easiest manner.

In wrapping up, we should vote yea to the motion of the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt and do the common sense thing.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The question is on Motion No. 7. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): A recorded division on Motion No. 7 stands deferred.

• (1210)

The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at report stage of the bill.

Motion No. 7 was grouped with Motion No. 8 but before proceeding with Motion No. 8 we need to know the result of the vote on Motion No. 7.

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The vote is deferred until the end of the day on Monday.

* * *

NUNAVUT ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-39, an act to amend the Nunavut Act and the Constitution Act, 1867, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

Hon. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

• (1215)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Patry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to address the House today on Bill C-39, an act to amend the Nunavut Act and the Constitution Act, 1867. I have the privilege of starting the third and final reading debate on this bill following a comprehensive review by the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

First off, I want to thank the standing committee for reviewing Bill C-39 carefully. Our government believes, and so do I, that members on both sides of the House have seen two very clear messages emerge from the committee proceedings.

First, there was overwhelming support for the proposed legislation in the north. Virtually everyone commended the bill for being balanced and thorough.

Second, time is of essence. Each day that goes by brings us closer to April 1, 1999, when the division will take place and Nunavut will be established.

If passed now, the amendments contained in Bill C-39 will provide for a climate of greater certainty in the early days of Nunavut. Elected leaders will be in office from the start, and the funding of essential services and programs will be secured. These amendments will also prevent any mix-up in the judicial system and administrative process.

Such a situation is unacceptable to this government, the people of Nunavut and all Canadians. By supporting Bill C-39 at third reading, this House can take the necessary steps to ensure that the early days of Nunavut will be characterized by a spirit of trust and celebration.

Creating Nunavut is a constitutional obligation of this government as the result of the Nunavut land claims agreement. For this reason alone, the bill warrants the support of this House.

However, honouring past commitments is only a small part of the importance of the creation of Nunavut to the Inuit of the eastern Arctic. Nunavut draws not on the past but on the future. Its creation is an expression of Canadians' recognition of the Inuit's right to self-government on their ancestral lands as true partners within the Canadian federation.

[*English*]

Nunavut will have a form of public government similar to those in Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Yet this government will be elected by a population that is 85% Inuit. In that sense, it will be a government unlike any other in Canada.

Anyone who had the opportunity to attend the standing committee hearings on April 29 will recall Alex Campbell's impassioned comments to the committee. Mr. Campbell is the executive director of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, a non-profit corporation established to represent the Inuit under the land claims agreement. He had this to say about his vision of Nunavut:

In a mere 336 days, the most recent corner piece of the puzzle called Canada will be snugly set in place. Nunavut will have a long awaited representative government. Nunavut will have a growing representative workforce conducting territorial government business through a decentralized government across 11 of the Nunavut communities. Nunavut will promote, protect and preserve the language and culture in the workplace, in our laws and amongst our citizenship through the delivery of programs and services. As always, Nunavut will draw from previous lessons to make Nunavut a better place to live. That is the will and the desire of Inuit in Nunavut.

Making Nunavut a better place to live is a goal that can be shared by hon. members on both sides of the House. It is certainly a goal of this government, as stated very clearly in "Gathering Strength—Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan", our response to the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

"Gathering Strength" reaffirmed our commitment to establish an effective decentralized government in Nunavut and to have Inuit fill 50% of the positions at all levels of Nunavut's public service.

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This will contribute to the government's broad goals of building strong northern communities, people and economies.

The main vehicle for establishing the new territory is the Nunavut Act which became law in June 1993. However, the task of creating a new territory is more complex than anyone imagined five years ago. As a result we are now faced with several transitional issues that need to be addressed through amendments to the Nunavut Act.

• (1220)

First and foremost is the need for an early election in Nunavut so that a duly elected territorial government can convene on April 1, 1999. This amendment was requested by political leaders in Nunavut. If a vote is to be held in early 1999, planning must begin in earnest within the next few weeks.

Bill C-39 also clarifies some existing provisions of the Nunavut Act. For example, it will provide greater legal certainty regarding the grandfathering of Northwest Territories laws and public institutions in Nunavut. It also ensures the creation of a court system that is similar to that of the Northwest Territories and clarifies how pending administrative and judicial actions will be dealt with.

[*Translation*]

The interim commissioner has to play a prominent role in the creation of Nunavut, but the powers conferred on him must be clear and strengthened. Bill C-39 accomplishes this. For example, the amendments in this bill will clarify the powers of the interim commissioner to negotiate agreements with the government of the Northwest Territories on the distribution of assets and liabilities.

This distribution of assets is a vital matter, because the government of Nunavut will have to have immediate access to financing and will soon have to acquire vehicles, office furniture, computers and other administrative equipment.

If the interim commissioner does not manage to negotiate agreements by April 1, 1999, Bill C-39 will give the Governor in Council the powers necessary to guarantee the new territorial government the assets it requires to carry on business.

Bill C-39 also introduces consequential amendments to other acts. The most important is an amendment to the Constitution Act, 1867, to give Nunavut representation in the House of Commons and the Senate.

A similar amendment was passed in 1975 to give Yukon and the Northwest Territories seats in parliament.

As I mentioned at the start, Bill C-39 enjoys huge support. Everyone agrees that it must achieve the objectives set for it and that we must act quickly.

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Bill C-39 enjoys such support because it is the result of a process of consultation involving all the stakeholders.

Representatives of the governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories, of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, of the Nunavut Implementation Commission and the office of the interim commissioner met more than 20 times to discuss the bill. The spirit of the discussions was conciliatory and one of mutual respect, and I would congratulate all the participants.

[*English*]

I believe John Amagoalik, chief commissioner of the Nunavut Implementation Commission expressed it best when he described the bill as “a workable and sensible compromise of competing interests”. In his appearance before the standing committee, Mr. Amagoalik praised what he called the spirit of frank disclosure and fulsome discussion that shaped Bill C-39. “The commission believes that this process of consultation has been a very useful one,” said Mr. Amagoalik, “and has contributed in no small way to the strength of the bill”.

Alex Campbell, who as I mentioned earlier is executive director of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, has expressed his organization’s unqualified support for the amendments. “We must ensure that the amendments are supported and passed as quickly as possible,” Mr. Campbell told the standing committee. “Nunavut’s interim commissioner requires the direction and confirmation to proceed. This must happen for Nunavut to succeed”.

The executive director of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada has also spoken in favour of the proposed amendments. Alan Braidek reminded the standing committee that the establishment of the territory of Nunavut was one of his organization’s original goals. Again, I am quoting directly from his remarks to the committee. “We are very satisfied with the process and with the establishment of the territory, and we see it as a very positive thing for all Inuit of Canada to see the recognition of the Inuit of Nunavut in an appropriate place within Confederation”.

• (1225)

Deputy Premier Arlooktoo of the Northwest Territories also appeared before the standing committee. Mr. Arlooktoo acknowledged that the federal government had made many changes to Bill C-39 to address the concerns of the Northwest Territories government and expressed a willingness to move forward with the proposed amendments.

These comments to the standing committee serve to underline the strong support for this bill and the need for quick action. It now falls to this House to respond accordingly. The creation of a new territory in the eastern Arctic has been a goal of the Inuit for more than two decades. Division has also been endorsed by other residents of the current Northwest Territories.

Bill C-39 is the final piece of the legislative framework needed to achieve this goal. I urge hon. members to join me in supporting this legislation so that it can be sent quickly to the other place.

Mr. Derrek Konrad (Prince Albert, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House today and address Bill C-39, the amendments to the Nunavut Act.

Prior to addressing the proposed legislation, I want to again extend my best wishes to the residents of Nunavut. I just returned from a trip to Iqaluit with other members of the standing committee for the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. I enjoyed the hospitality of the people and listened to their proposals for increasing their economic self-reliance. I saw their pride in their new creation, the territory of Nunavut. There was much talk about improving their government and the delivery of services. We certainly wish them well in their endeavours.

Turning to the legislation, before my speech is over I hope to show why the members opposite should have adopted a reasonable and democratic amendment to this bill which was proposed by the Reform Party, the purpose of which was to improve the Nunavut Act. Certainly the purpose of the act as proposed is to improve the previous legislation. By adopting the Reform Party’s amendments that legislation could have been improved.

We feel that sending this legislation now to the non-elected, unaccountable and therefore ineffective Senate will simply add the meaningless seal of approval to a bill that will not aid in the cause of democracy. I will be proposing an amendment at the end of my speech which I do not like putting forward but it is necessary given the government’s stand on the whole issue of democracy.

The original legislation creating Nunavut territory was introduced and rushed through parliament by the Progressive Conservative government with little time for comprehensive study by members of parliament at that time. It contained numerous flaws such as this act is proposing to amend.

There were errors in the description even of the boundaries. I was interested as a land surveyor to read the errors that the description of the boundaries contained. There were gores and overlaps all along the boundaries. There are unanswered questions with the James Bay Cree as to the status of the islands off the shore of James Bay.

The deficiencies and errors in the act are meant to be corrected by the legislation before the House. There is one glaring oversight which the Leader of the Official Opposition spoke about. That is the matter of how the senator for the territory is to be selected.

We on this side of the House together with many Canadians realize that when the legislation was drafted for many years there had not been any innovative thinking in this House on how

government should be constructed or how it should be delivered. It was only after the Reform Party came to parliament that anyone even spoke about how democracy in this country might be enhanced by having the taxpaying public have a say in the selection of their senators.

• (1230)

The election of Senator Stan Waters, a Reformer, was the people's choice in the only Senate election ever held in the history of this nation. Depriving the Liberal Prime Minister of his number one patronage plum signals the end of civilization in the eyes of this government, but the election of Senator Stan Waters by ordinary Canadians did not bring about the apocalypse predicted by the government. Instead, Canadians for once had the person they chose for the Senate. This one senator, and only this one, was accountable only to the people who put him there rather than to the Prime Minister of the day and his political machine. His independence meant that he was free to promote and protect the interests of the people who put him there. Is that not the way it should be?

There are members of the Senate who have been there through seven or eight governments and five prime ministers. We realize we need a sense of history in this House but we do not need to bring the artefacts right into government at the Prime Minister's wish and then leave them there until they have long forgotten the current issues of this country.

The creation of a new territory was a perfect opportunity for this government to give the gift of fuller democracy both to the territory itself and to the rest of this country. An elected senator would have been a generous gesture to the people of Nunavut that would signal the government's commitment to reducing the member's list for club Chrétien. Failure to adopt that measure means a continuation of stale and outdated policies regarding the Senate and appointments to it and its increasingly ineffective role in defending regional interests.

The Senate as currently constituted is anathema to many Canadians, and calls for its democratization or outright abolition will only grow more strident as time goes on. Is it not about time the government listened to the voices of those who are calling for democratic reform? It is not as if there were no interest in the matter, as the Liberals would have us believe. Alberta is planning to push ahead with elections for the people's choice for candidates to be appointed to the Senate. This type of thing will only increase in frequency and will spread to other provinces.

I believe the Prime Minister and the government really have only two options. The first is really twofold. They could have been at the front of the parade and shown some real leadership on this issue by first allowing the people of Nunavut to democratically elect their first senator and they could have made a commitment to the rest of

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Canada that the Prime Minister is willing to appoint the provincially elected candidates for senators in accordance with voter wishes. By rejecting this reasonable option, the Liberals risk being in the history books as the party that denied Canadians a democratic voice in the selection of those they desire to govern them.

Hope springs eternal in the human heart. It is spring now and as life and colour return to the earth there is the promise of a new crop as seeds are planted. The seeds of some new and democratic ideas have been planted here today, seeds of hope for Canadians weary of paying taxes to support an outmoded and deficient arm of government. It has long fallen behind the needs and expectations of the people of Canada and the purposes for which it was created. In its present form it is an anachronism, a fossil remnant of the important institution it was meant to be.

We had hoped the government of the day would act on the amendment which was previously proposed. However, I now propose on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition and other Reform members the following amendment:

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

"this House declines to give third reading to Bill C-39, an act to amend the Nunavut Act and the Constitution Act, 1867, since the principle of the bill does not guarantee that the government will select senators who have been lawfully elected in a territorial Senate election".

• (1235)

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair finds the amendment to be in order. The Debate is on the amendment.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this is a great amendment and very timely.

The standing orders allow us only so many opportunities to speak of the other place, the Senate. Normally we leave the Senate to do its own thing and we do the House of Commons things here and never the twain shall meet.

On occasion there are bills that mention the Senate, in this case the appointment of a senator and the process that should apply. This bill gives us an opportunity to point out to Canadians that the way senators are appointed does not have to be done as it is done now. This amendment says that the appointment process has so discredited the other place over the years because of friends of the Prime Minister being appointed ad nauseam who are expected to be loyal to him until death do us part or age 75, whichever comes first. That process has been going on now for the life of the nation, far too long.

It is interesting that a recent poll indicates that some 43% of Canadians think the Senate should be elected. A further 41% say it should be abolished. They have given up on the place. I understand where they are coming from when they say the place is a

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boondoggle. The place is a waste of money, a patronage infested place based on protocol, geritol and alcohol and they do not want to have anything to do with it. So 41% of the people say they do not want anything to do with it. They would like to abolish the Senate.

That is unwise and I hope to talk to the 41% during these brief remarks. A Senate that was elected and is accountable to the electorate and not to the Prime Minister who sent him or her into that exalted office would be able to represent the concerns of their region or province in a regional manner that the House of Commons does not reflect. The House of Commons is by necessity and must remain by and large representation by population.

I accept the principle that the larger provinces have the larger sway in this place. There are 103 members from Ontario. That is as it should be. There is a big population in Ontario that will for the foreseeable future dominate the House of Commons in representation, not necessarily in the quality of presentations but at least in numbers, as it should be.

What about the more sparsely populated regions of the country? Who looks after their interests in this place? You can do your best as a representative of a smaller province population wise, a province like Prince Edward Island or Saskatchewan, provinces that do not have a burgeoning population or any prospects of that happening soon. But three or four or half a dozen voices in a sea of three hundred and one seats are almost voices in the wilderness.

A Senate accountable to the voters of Saskatchewan or of P.E.I., not the Prime Minister, would allow those senators to have a strengthened role in the upper place to review legislation and to have a serious sober second thought on legislation. They would be able to represent regional interests and disparities that this place does not do a perfect job of.

• (1240)

They could be given enhanced roles on everything from the selection of supreme court justices to the review of that sort of thing and review of other government appointments. They could serve an excellent role being a check and balance on the ever increasing powers of the Prime Minister and his office. That would be a wonderful thing.

In the Nunavut bill we have a provision that says the old system is the good system. It says the senator should be appointed and he should come from among the cadre of the Prime Minister's friends, answerable to him and his party.

I have heard the Prime Minister say in this House that he would appoint a senator into that other place and he will do the work of the Liberal Party. That is his or her job. What a sad thing as we

approach the 21st century that we are still living in the days of the House of Lords where depending on who you knew rather than on the confidence of the people, you got a position in an exalted place. It used to be an exalted place. That is really unfortunate.

Now is the perfect time to initiate change. The amendment says let us give the people of Nunavut an opportunity to elect their senator into the other place. Nunavut by and large is inhabited by aboriginal people. I do not know the percentage but they populate a very high proportion of the Nunavut region. I think they have an opportunity to send someone they have confidence in, someone they are friends with, associated with or have respect for at least.

That person may or may not be of any political stripe, they may be Liberal, Tory, NDP, Reform. I do not really even care because if they had the confidence of the people of Nunavut what an opportunity for those people to lead the way for the nation. They would be able to say they are electing a representative to the upper house who would represent the Nunavut region, not the Prime Minister.

Every time an issue comes up dealing with the Arctic, dealing with aboriginal issues, an Arctic conference which now takes place from time to time, every time there are land claims or anything happening in the region, a mine, a caribou herd, whatever it might be they will be there to represent their people.

What a concept. The senator would not be there to represent the Prime Minister, not to ensure anything going speedily through the Senate, if anything can be done speedily in the Senate, but to ensure the people of that region are properly represented. Would that not be a good and healthy step toward democratizing the other place? I think it would be a grand and wonderful step.

It would be a wonderful thing to give that ability to this area north of 60 that is in a fledgling manner feeling its way toward a democratic system under which it is to be governed. It is actually building the structures there right now.

What an opportunity for those people to say during the fledgling and expanding part of their democracy that they are going to be the pace setters and lead the way. That would be a wonderful thing for the people up north to be able to say, that they are leading the way in Senate reform.

Eighty-four per cent of people say either elect the senators or get rid of them, one or the other. This would allow those people to say let us see if it makes a difference. Here is a tiny first step. There is only one but there is one. One person can make a difference not only in setting a trend but in just showing that it can work better. It did happen before in the Senate selection process in Alberta a few

years ago. Senator Stan Waters became the first person elected in a provincial senatorial selection.

• (1245)

The prime minister of the day said that while it is his privilege under our constitution to appoint senators, recognizing the wisdom of placing into the Senate the person who was duly elected, Mr. Mulroney said that makes democratic sense. He said that it made sense and he appointed Stan Waters even though Stan Waters was a Reformer.

Mr. Waters went to the Senate. Those of us in the Reform Party often remember his call to arms about keep on marching. He was a very self-disciplined man. He gave the keep on marching orders as he went into the Senate. Unfortunately he passed away all too soon. Perhaps the long term impact of his presence was not felt as it could have been had he been there longer.

This amendment would do more than any other single thing to restore the faith of those 84% who have given up on the Senate.

Other things can be done with the Senate. For example, there is a person on Parliament Hill in one of the parliamentary buildings who is no longer a senator but who still gets accommodations. He has a suite of offices. He has access to the phones. He has facilities paid for by the taxpayer and he is not even a senator. He is a retired senator. He has been out of office for a couple of years already.

When senators have finished their job, when they are 75 years old, it is time to get out and write their memoirs, smoke their pipes at the beach, gaze out over the ocean and start writing. There is a maximum age in the other place. It is the rule. The rule on retirement at 75 seems to be a reasonable one. The ex-senator, past senator or whatever he is should move on.

If we were to elect a senator from Nunavut, perhaps he could even use that same suite of offices. He could move right in and say that this was the way it used to be where the senator kind of moved in. If they were the friend of the prime minister they got the seat and not only that, they got the offices even after their job was finished.

We could do something very symbolic and say he moves in and takes either that office or Senator Thompson's old digs. That of course is an option as well, since Senator Thompson is as they say in the funeral parlour business, no longer with us. His offices are available. Either one of those offices would be very symbolic in saying that is what is wrong with the Senate and this fresh new face, this elected person is what is right with the new Senate.

There is no doubt we would hear the cheering in Ottawa from the people of Nunavut who would say "Ah, my senator, my guy, my woman is down there right now holding to the fire the feet of the

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Liberal government and the opposition. In fact, they are doing their job representing my region". That is what those people are going to say, if and only if the person is elected.

If the person is appointed, unfortunately there will be 41% saying to abolish the Senate and 43% saying to elect it. And there will be another .5% saying "Look at that, another boondoggle. The prime minister picked somebody who raised money for him, who campaigned for him, who golfs with him, who helped him with his investments or who knows what all. He or she gets an appointment in the Senate. Thanks for nothing". That is what they are going to say. "I thought I was sending somebody down there and paying his or her wages to represent me and my area, my region. Instead I hear from the prime minister that he or she is there to represent the prime minister and the Liberal Party". That is just not good enough.

To the people of Nunavut, I suggest it could be done in a dozen different ways. A poll could be done. There could be a questionnaire but that is not even necessary. Eighty-five per cent of them will say "Let me send the senator from among us, not from among the Liberal Party".

What a glorious opportunity we have in this House to change the course of Canadian history. Maybe it has to be one at a time. Alberta is going to hold a similar election this fall to select people. It will then ask the prime minister to appoint them to the other place as a halfway step to reforming the Senate.

• (1250)

If the people of Nunavut could lead the way it would be a great opportunity for them to say they championed a cause and were in the forefront of positive change in the House of Commons. That would be a wonderful thing for them and this institution. It would be a wonderful thing for the Senate which I think is clamouring for some direction and a positive role. It needs something positive in that place.

It would set a precedent. Alberta could be next and then B.C. which also has a Senate electoral act in place. Maybe even Saskatchewan would follow because it is now considering a Senate electoral act. And so on and so on until the other place is elected and effective. Then we could work toward the third goal of rejigging the numbers in the other place, but at least with people who are standing up on a public podium telling the people what they stand for and what they will do for their region if they are elected. Their responsibility would then be to the people and not to the prime minister.

As they say in other circles, what a glorious day it will be when we have an elected Senate instead of the patronage trough that the other place unfortunately has become.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

Mr. Ghislain Fournier (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on Bill C-39 at third reading.

I am all the more pleased because of the seven native communities that are located in my riding of Manicouagan. The act to create the territory of Nunavut and to organize its government became law on June 10, 1993. It sealed the land claims agreement and set out the legal and political framework for the new territory of Nunavut.

As we know, when Bill C-39 comes into effect, it will modify the map of the Canadian north by creating the territory of Nunavut, which is scheduled to come into being on April 1, 1999. This will be the first time the borders of Canada have been changed since Newfoundland joined the federation in 1949. I know that the Inuit, who make up 80% of the population of Nunavut, 17,500 out of a total 22,000, see this legislation as highly significant.

It will allow them, along with the 20% non-aboriginal population, to administer the 1.9 million square kilometres of their land via a legislative assembly duly elected by universal suffrage.

Nunavut means "our land" in Inuktitut, the language of the Inuit. Their land is immense, representing one-fifth of the continental mass of Canada's 9,970,610 square kilometres.

The territory of Nunavut is made up of three regions and includes 28 Inuit communities. From a geographical point of view, Nunavut is situated in the centre and east of the Northwest Territories, in the far north of Canada, that is north of the 60th parallel. Labrador borders it on the extreme southeast. It is also bordered by various bodies of water: the Arctic Ocean to the north, Baffin Bay to the east, separating it from Greenland, and Hudson's Bay and Ungava Bay to the south.

• (1255)

Bill C-39 establishing Nunavut will divide the Northwest Territories into two distinct entities, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.

This bill provides for a harmonious devolution of powers from the federal and territorial governments to Nunavut.

It refers to the 1993 legislation, which was amended to include the recommendations of the Nunavut Commission. The commission was set up in 1993 with the mandate to advise the governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories, as well as Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., the three parties concerned by the establishment of Nunavut.

Made up of nine members representing the federal and territorial governments as well as Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., the commission considered the administrative and political issues relating to the

establishment of Nunavut. These issues are: the transfer of services from the Government of Northwest Territories to that of Nunavut, as well as the timeframe; the funding and development of training programs needed to create a public service for Nunavut made up mostly of Inuit; the planning of the first election of a Nunavut government, and the needs in terms of infrastructure.

The 1993 Nunavut Act stipulated that a general election to choose the members of the new Nunavut Assembly would be held after the new territory was established.

Under Bill C-39, the first general election for the legislative assembly of Nunavut will be held before the new territory is established on April 1, 1999 to allow the legislature to be operational as soon as the establishment occurs.

The legislative assembly will include 19 members, which means that the territory will be divided into 19 electoral districts. This first general election in Nunavut will be based on the current electoral legislation of the Northwest Territories.

Bill C-39 also amends the Northwest Territories Act to adjust the number of seats required in the Northwest Territories legislature.

Finally, Bill C-39 amends the Constitution Act, 1867, to provide for Senate and House of Commons representation for Nunavut. This representation will be similar to that of Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

It is also worth mentioning that, when Nunavut is officially established on April 1, 1999, the laws and ordinances of the Northwest Territories will become the laws of Nunavut. The powers of the new government of Nunavut will be equivalent to those of the existing territorial governments.

The transfer of culture, public housing and health programs should be completed by the year 2009.

Obviously, the transfer of certain jurisdictions from the territorial and federal governments to the new government of Nunavut is somewhat complex. It requires a lot of preparation and, I would say, negotiation. However, it must also be said that the history of the Northwest Territories is complex. The origin of that part of the country and the history of its division into distinct territories go back a long way.

From the time Rupert's Land was divided up, first to form the province of Manitoba in 1870, then to establish the Yukon in 1898, then to carve out the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1905, and finally to establish the present boundaries of the Northwest Territories in 1912, there were different types of administrations and a lot of negotiations between the people and the leaders.

On the aboriginal side, since 1976, Inuit Tapirisat, the Inuit organization, has been suggesting to the territorial and federal leaders to delimit their territory to allow for the settlement of land claims made by the Inuit of Canada.

• (1300)

It took two referendums, in 1982 and 1992, for both sides to agree on the new boundaries.

This bill establishing Nunavut, and its amendments, is the result of more than 25 years of efforts by the Inuit, who fought tirelessly to regain control over their land and their lives.

Obviously, the Bloc Québécois cannot object to a piece of legislation which crowns so many years of negotiations and allows the Inuit to finally take their place on this continent by taking charge of their own lives.

Thanks to Bill C-39 establishing Nunavut, the Inuit will be in control and they will have all the necessary economic, political, social and cultural levers to look after their development and government on their own. This way, they will be able to act in their own best interest, for the good of their community, ensuring the harmonious development of their territory.

However, my party, speaking through the critic for aboriginal affairs, the hon. member for Saint-Jean, expressed a serious concern at second reading. The Bloc Québécois remains concerned about the representation of Nunavut in the Senate.

We have nothing against the representation of Nunavut per se. However, representations have been made by our members in the last parliament to abolish the Senate of Canada, that obsolete and ineffective institution.

This institution, which costs Quebeckers and Canadians needlessly, belongs to a different century and operates on patronage. Such patronage appointments deprive our legislative process of the required credibility and objectivity, which is a rather serious problem.

To conclude, another concern expressed by my colleague, the hon. member for Saint-Jean and critic for aboriginal affairs, relates to the islands east of James Bay, south of Hudson Bay and north of Nunavik, in Quebec.

I draw the attention of this House to the fact that the James Bay Cree and the Nunavik Inuit have been trying to negotiate since 1977 with the Department of Indian Affairs, so that we recognize their rights over the waters, the sea ice and the surrounding waters, as well as resources.

Negotiations were effectively suspended very soon after they began, in 1977, because of a dispute over compensation and the status of the regions involved. Since measures were undertaken to

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create Nunavut, the Cree and the Inuit have been wanting to begin a dialogue on this issue with the department.

Officials from the Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec appeared before the aboriginal affairs committee and expressed their concerns about this bill, as it relates to their claims.

They hope this bill will move the minister of Indian affairs to resume negotiations on the recognition of their rights. They say that they support the creation of Nunavut, but they reaffirm the importance of the negotiations on their rights within the boundaries of Nunavut, and the need to resume these negotiations.

I strongly hope that the minister of Indian affairs and her officials will reply favourably to that call. Otherwise, my party will make it its duty to hound them about this important issue.

I hope that the creation of Nunavut will bring harmony and prosperity to Inuit and aboriginal communities in that part of the country.

At the beginning of my speech, I mentioned that there are aboriginal communities in my riding. Among them are Washat and Maliothenam.

• (1305)

I demand the government keep its word. On the subject of the Inuit, during the election campaign, there was a promise of money for a cultural centre. The Montagnais in Washat and Maliothenam have undertaken the major project of building a cultural centre to promote their culture. Through their initiative they have undertaken a project worth over \$3 million.

The Government of Quebec, which promised \$700,000, contributed \$700,000. The federal government, through the Minister of Indian affairs and Northern Development solemnly promised \$700,000 during the election.

I ask this government whether it is going to contribute the \$700,000 or not? Will it honour its commitment? Since we are on the subject of aboriginal peoples, I will take the opportunity to ask the government to honour its commitment and contribute the \$700,000, because the construction of the Montagnais cultural centre in Maliothenam and Washat, in Sept-Îles, is just about complete. The centre will be inaugurated on June 22, and they do not yet have the promised \$700,000. So, I say to the government "You promised things. Honour your promise. Give them the \$700,000".

[English]

Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-39 to facilitate the creation of Nunavut. On behalf of my colleagues in the New Democratic Party I would like to indicate at the outset our strong and unequivocal support for the bill.

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In less than one year Canada's third territory will come into being, thanks to the passage of the Nunavut Act on June 10, 1993. This legislation would pave the way for Nunavut's first general election. The creation of Nunavut and the unfolding of aboriginal self-government through public government in this new territory will be watched closely throughout the world.

It is unfortunate that the Reform Party earlier in discussion of the bill opted for using the creation of Nunavut as an inappropriate political opportunity to deal with other issues and is even today continuing in its failure to support the bill. It is yet another example of the Reform Party putting its own selfish political interests ahead of the interests of the aboriginal peoples and the people of the north who themselves want to move ahead with the creation of Nunavut and the concept of self-government.

The bill, which my colleagues and I hope soon becomes law, is not primarily the result of the efforts of members of the Chamber. It merely represents a short segment in the long process reflecting the hopes, dreams, plans and tireless effort of many Inuit and others in the momentous task of giving birth to the new territory.

I applaud their efforts with all sincerity. Not only have they made history in the soon to be Nunavut but throughout Canada and indeed throughout the world. Central to the success thus far, the historic effort that is the creation of Nunavut, has been the careful negotiations among Inuit negotiators, government and others.

I congratulate all Inuit who have worked on and participated in this effort over the last 22 years and even before. The tireless efforts of the Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., formerly the Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut, deserve recognition at this stage of dealing with the bill.

Support for the bill will be an important part of the effort to move ahead with aboriginal self-government in this region. This will allow for province type powers essential to the development of the social, cultural, economic and political well-being of Inuit.

Nunavut comprises 1.9 million square kilometres, roughly one-fifth of the entire Canadian land mass or almost the size of Greenland. This clearly represents a tremendous opportunity for Inuit to manage wildlife and resources in a formal fashion in government, having already managed them for so many thousands of years before Canada came into being. This will seek to formalize inherent Inuit rights to fish, wildlife and land that have been their right since time immemorial.

• (1310)

With a population of roughly 24,600, Inuit will comprise over four out of every five people in the territory to be. The representatives elected to bring this new territory into being would be accountable to a largely aboriginal electorate. The land claims agreement already passed recognizes Inuit title to 350,000 square

kilometres of land and includes provisions for joint management and resource revenue sharing.

While the minority population of Nunavut currently pervades the territorial administration, the challenge in part will be to see how the majority culture of Nunavut can be knit together with the culture of the minority population as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples suggested.

Once again I commend the Inuit involved in all aspects of the negotiations which led to the bill and to the development of Nunavut as a whole. This extends not only to the chief negotiators but also to all those involved at every level and their families who so often had to endure long absences during the varied steps of the process.

As well I recognize the efforts of the standing committee, the committee clerk, the staff and those within the ministry who have worked in a positive way to assist with bringing this new territory into being.

Just last week I had the opportunity of travelling north and visiting some of the aboriginal communities in northern Quebec as well as Iqaluit, the capital of the newly created territory of Nunavut. This trip to the north was quite an eye opener for me. It was very interesting to see the beautiful yet rugged terrain of the north.

It also brought to light many of the very serious problems that people in the north face in their day to day living: the very high cost of living because everything has to be transported in by either ship or air; the housing situation of the people in the north quite often involving a lot of overcrowding and inadequate housing; and the employment opportunities, or perhaps I should say the lack of employment opportunities, in many cases. There are many challenges to be faced by the people in the north.

We also saw a number of very positive things happening. We were able to visit the Arctic college to see the steps that were being taken for Inuit people to maintain their language and to move ahead with courses that will be relevant to their way of life and to their existence.

There is a lot of excitement around the creation of Nunavut. There is a lot of expectation in the air. The people who have worked long and hard to create this territory and to become a part of the Canadian society in a meaningful way deserve our support. They deserve much better than haggling over the bill around the point of a senate and a senator.

The bill should move ahead with the support of every member of the House. As we support this initiative we are supporting the right of a people to determine their destiny, to take part in shaping their lives and to lead meaningful lives within the context of Canadian society.

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In conclusion, I am very pleased to be able to support the bill. I urge every member of the House to support it at third reading.

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to make a few comments on this bill. I make my comments on behalf of the member for South Shore, our Indian affairs critic, who was unable to be here today because of pressing public business.

The creation of a new territory in the northeastern and central region of Canada on April 1, 1999 is a very historic occasion. It will create Nunavut as a separate territory from within what is currently the Northwest Territories. It is quite appropriate that I should be making a few comments today on the bill, given the fact that it will happen 50 years to the day that Newfoundland entered Confederation, quite an appropriate date for such an occurrence I might add.

I will begin with a brief history of the events leading up to this momentous occasion. The creation of the new territory in the north to be called Nunavut has been a long time coming. It has been a long time in reaching fruition. The journey has not been an easy one. It has had many hurdles along the way.

• (1315)

The first attempt to divide the Northwest Territories into two regions was back in 1960, as I am sure you are well aware, Mr. Speaker, and was initiated by the western region of the Northwest Territories. As we are all aware the legislation died on the Order Paper when the election was called.

The next event of significance was the release of the Carrothers report in 1966 and its recommendation that a division of the Northwest Territories would not be beneficial at that time to the Inuit living primarily in the eastern region. Instead the report made a number of recommendations including the creation of electoral constituencies in the eastern and central Arctic. As well, it suggested the appointment of a commissioner who resided in the Northwest Territories. At that time of course the commissioner of the Northwest Territories was based out of Ottawa. Finally, the report recommended the transfer of federal programs to the territorial government.

Obviously these recommendations were to set the stage for division of the Northwest Territories at a later point in time when the region would be in a better position to assume control of its administration and of its governance as well. These recommendations were acted upon in the following years.

In 1976 there was another bid for division of the territory, this time by the Inuit, or the ITC, an organization representing Inuit in Canada. A plebiscite on the issue of division followed in 1982 and it garnered a 56% rate of approval which was particularly strong among the people in the eastern Arctic.

That year also saw the formation of a constitutional alliance consisting of members of the legislative assembly in the Northwest Territories and representatives from aboriginal groups. Its objective of course was to develop an agreement on dividing up all of this territory.

Although an agreement was reached in 1987 it was not ratified by the Dene Nation and the Metis association who had a land claim settlement in the western area and objected to the proposed boundary. The agreement, as we are all aware, failed and the many groups who were involved with that agreement at that time of course dissolved as well.

The next step in the process was in 1990 when the PC government asked John Parker to determine the boundary between the two land claim settlement areas, one belonging to the Dene-Metis Nation in the western area and the Inuit in the eastern region. This was taken to a plebiscite in May 1992 and it received a 54% approval rating.

One very important piece of information I have not mentioned is that the Inuit land claim agreement that was finalized in April 1990 called for the creation of the new territory. The Inuit ratified the agreement with a vote in November 1992 with 85% of the people voting in favour of the settlement. The land claims settlement area will become the Nunavut territory on April 1, 1999. This was the largest aboriginal land claim settlement agreement in Canadian history.

Nunavut means "our land" in Inuktitut and represents almost two million, or 1.9 million square kilometres, roughly one-fifth of Canada's land mass which is quite a large piece of territory in anyone's interpretation. The capital of this new region will be Iqaluit on Baffin Island. I always have problems with that particular word, but it will be Iqaluit on Baffin Island.

There are a number of challenges that must be overcome before the creation of Nunavut in April 1999. This legislation addresses some of those concerns. It confers great powers incidentally to the interim commissioner, Jack Anawak, to enable him to enter into leases on behalf of the new territory. It ensures that employees hired for the new government positions are in permanent rather than temporary positions.

• (1320)

More important, this amendment to the Nunavut Act provides for an election before the date that the new territory comes into existence. This is of critical importance to ensure that a government will be in place to begin work immediately without having to go through the process of an election in what is obviously going to be a critical and a very dynamic time for the people in this new territory.

Another issue of concern to the western region was the number of elected representatives required for governing after this particular division or split occurs. Since the western region will be left

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with 14 members but the regulations require 15 members, the amendment to this legislation which reduces the number down to 14 is going to be welcomed by the Nunavut people. This will ensure the western region is in a position to offer a continuation of services for that area.

Also, the legislation amends the Constitution Act, 1867, to create another seat in the Senate to recognize this new territory. Currently there is only one seat for the NWT. The senator representing the NWT resides in what will become Nunavut. This amendment will eliminate any uncertainty in that area as well.

One of the greatest concerns expressed by the Inuit and others affected by the change was the need for continuation of services. This legislation helps to ensure that this will occur. At the same time there are still concerns for those people living in the eastern and central Arctic as well. There are concerns as to whether the infrastructure is going to be in place. Will financial assistance be provided? Will there be enough of it? Are there going to be enough people to fill the expected 600 new positions that will be created in Nunavut?

The new territory will consist of approximately 24,000 people. Eighty-five per cent or 18,000 of them will be Inuit. Inuktitut will be the working language for them. The hope is to have 85% of the staffing positions filled by Inuit in the long term, 45% in the short term.

The federal government has provided about \$40 million for training and education to prepare the people living in the eastern and central Arctic for positions in this new government. With the settlement of land claims in this area however a number of new positions are available for the Inuit. It may be difficult to find people to staff all of these new positions. With Nunavut's plan to have government offices spread out over 11 different communities, it might be difficult to attract workers to the outlying areas.

The Nunavut Implementation Commission has reported that Nunavut will have to obtain 50% of the people for these new positions from outside its region. At the same time a report by the Government of the Northwest Territories suggests that only 10% to 15% of its staff will move to Nunavut. That means Nunavut will not have a large corporate knowledge base upon which to build.

Furthermore, it is questionable whether the infrastructure will be in place at that time. This is a great concern. Arctic conditions make it difficult not only to ensure adequate supplies but also decrease the amount of time available for construction. Moreover there is little or no private sector space available since everything is typically built on an as needed basis. Although the entire infrastructure is not required immediately and the timetable factors in a delay of two years for some of it, a continuation of services will not be possible without adequate infrastructure.

• (1325)

Nunavut will have a public government with Inuit and non-Inuit representatives. Although Nunavut was created as part of the land claim agreement, the Inuit chose a public government format.

The land claim agreement raises another interesting point however and that is what constitutional rights the Nunavut people will have. Although one would assume that its powers would be equivalent to those of the Yukon Territory and the western region, Nunavut will be created as part of a land claims settlement agreement under section 35 of the constitution. This is another area that is not clarified for the new territory and has the potential to create some uncertainty.

In summary let me say that the PC government initiated this process culminating in the creation of Nunavut in April 1999 when the Nunavut land claims settlement agreement was signed in May 1993. The creation of this territory is a positive move for the eastern region. The PC party supports self-government for aboriginal peoples as a means of improving their economic development and conditions.

While I agree in principle with this legislation as it attempts to rectify some omissions in the Nunavut Act, there are still a number of challenges facing a new territory as it counts down to April 1, 1999. Let us hope that these issues will be addressed quickly as the clock is ticking.

Before taking my seat, I just want to make one final comment on the amendment that the Reform Party has introduced. I believe this is an amendment the Nunavut people have not asked for. It is a feeble attempt to delay this particular piece of legislation. The issue of bringing the Senate in on this particular bill as to whether or not it should be elected is a separate issue quite apart from this bill and should not be entertained. It should be seen for what it really is which is one more attempt by the Reform Party to draw attention to its main preoccupation which is the Senate. It does nothing for the Nunavut people.

We agree in principle with this legislation. It attempts to rectify some omissions in the Nunavut Act. There are quite a number of challenges facing these people. We will be watching with interest because the clocking is ticking away.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Deputy Speaker: At the request of the government whip, the division demanded is deferred until Monday at the conclusion of the time provided for Government Orders.

* * *

• (1330)

CANADA GRAIN ACT

Hon. Stéphane Dion (for the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib) moved that Bill C-26, an act to amend the Canada Grain Act and the Agriculture and Agri-Food Administrative Monetary Penalties Act and to repeal the Grain Futures Act, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. John Harvard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak to third reading of Bill C-26. When I addressed this House on the occasion of the second reading of this bill, I discussed how this initiative should be viewed in the context of the government's priorities. I will do this again.

The grain industry is currently faced with significant challenges and opportunities. Global competitive and natural forces are leading to and accelerating change and challenges. The grain industry is changing rapidly in order to respond. Legislation must also evolve to assist that industry's efforts to meet those challenges and opportunities. This initiative reflects our government's willingness to meet the express needs of the grain industry and to co-operate in its efforts. The main objective of this government is to build a competitive and innovative economy that will grow to create even more jobs and improve the well-being of Canadians.

Agriculture and agri-food is a key sector of the Canadian economy. It continues to contribute very significantly to the building of our economy. This industry is growing tremendously. Producers and processors are optimistic about the future as they invest in and diversify their operations in order to benefit from new opportunities. I share their enthusiasm. I want to work with them in creating those opportunities.

One of the ways to accomplish the objective of continuing vigorous growth is to work closely with stakeholders. Our government intends to be the catalyst for partnerships with industry stakeholders. Our government is committed to a policy of full consultation with both the agri-food industry and the provinces. I believe we are succeeding in our goal. We recently announced the rural impact test and we want to build stronger rural communities by doing our share in supporting community development. We recognize the tremendous value of rural citizens and communities in Canada.

Bill C-26 is proof of our commitment to rural Canada. It would allow easier access into the special crops processing industry and it would have a very positive impact on rural employment opportunities.

In our federal rural policy we want to increase the participation of rural Canadians in the development of federal programs and services. The main elements of the bill satisfy this goal, especially those provisions that relate to special crops. Special crops producers and processors were involved in every stage of the process leading up to consideration of the bill by this House. They would continue to play a role during and after the implementation of its provisions.

The special crops industry has undergone impressive growth over the last 10 years. Crops that were once considered marginal to western Canada's agri-food economy are now being produced in significant volumes. More producers are planting special crops and a greater number of people want to become special crops dealers. There has been a call by stakeholders for more current legislation to establish a fair and effective licensing system for dealers and an efficient voluntary insurance plan for producers, legislation that recognizes the unique requirements of the special crops industry. With the growth of the industry a need was identified for changes to the regulatory system as well. Current regulations are seen to be unnecessarily punitive, offering minimal deterrent value. The Agriculture and Agri-food Administrative Monetary Penalties Act is proven legislation that provides a broad range of enforcement options.

• (1335)

The grains futures industry has also undergone significant changes recently. The Winnipeg Commodity Exchange plans to develop non-grain contracts. When this happens the Grain Futures Act, legislation used since 1939 to regulate grain futures and options trading, will become obsolete. Repealing the act would allow the Manitoba government to regulate all aspects of a modern commodity futures and options trading industry.

Bill C-26 was developed by the Canadian Grain Commission in co-operation with stakeholders representing special crops producers and dealers, and stakeholders representing the grain futures

Government Orders

industry. The proposed amendments contained in the bill would accomplish five main objectives.

They would establish an affordable licensing plan for special crops dealers in western Canada. They would introduce a producer funded insurance plan. They would create a special crops advisory committee that would report to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food. They would provide a fair and effective mechanism for enforcing the Canada Grain Act and regulations. They would transfer regulatory responsibility for grain futures to the province of Manitoba.

I will focus my comments on the first three objectives proposed in Bill C-26, the licensing and insurance plans and the advisory committee.

A new special crops licence for dealers in western Canada would be created under the proposed legislation. The licence would give companies the right to buy and sell special crops and to use official grade names when doing so. The plan would eliminate the security requirement for processors which has been identified as a major financial barrier to becoming licensed to deal in special crops. Instead of providing security the dealers would collect levies from producers from whom they buy special crops.

The levies would be remitted to the administrator of the program initially proposed to be the Canadian Grain Commission. After deducting an administration fee the commission would forward the premiums to the insurer. The Canadian Export Development Corporation has agreed to act as the initial insurer for the plan. The insurer and the agent can be changed in the future if the special crops advisory committee recommends it.

The cost of the levy is proposed to be 38 cents per \$100 of sales. The levy would be the sum of the insurance premium and administrative charges. Initially it is proposed that the insurance premium would be 20 cents per \$100 of sales and the commission's administrative fee would be 18 cents per \$100 of sales.

Currently security requirements are designed for high volume standard crops handled by large grain companies. The requirements were not designed for the much lower volume special crops which are mainly handled by small seed cleaning plants, special crops dealers and processors. The result is that companies that could otherwise be licensed stay on the sidelines. Unfortunately some others buy grain without a licence, exposing producers to the risk of loss. The special crops industry currently operates under a system that was established for the standard crops, wheat, barley, oats, flax, rye and canola. The government through Bill C-26 is responding to the special crop industry's expressed concerns and recommendations.

• (1340)

Removal of the security requirement which is a financial barrier to small dealers and processors would allow companies that had

previously been on the sidelines to become involved. It would also encourage companies currently operating without a licence to apply for one.

While licensing would be easier, this does not mean that everyone would be granted a licence. Prospective licencees would be required to demonstrate that they are financially able to deal in special crops before a licence was issued.

A consulting firm retained by the Canadian Grain Commission, Kelly and Associates, estimated an additional 125 firms in western Canada could become licensed under the proposed legislation. The changes could significantly expand the number of marketing outlets available to producers and promote healthy competition.

I would like to talk about the proposed voluntary producer funded insurance plan. Protection would still be available for special crop producers despite the elimination of the current security requirements for licencees.

The new insurance program proposed for special crops producers would replace the current security system which makes the real cost of security transparent to producers. Membership in the new plan would be voluntary and available to those producers who choose to participate.

If a licensed company defaults on payment obligations for special crops that it has bought or if that company becomes insolvent, participating producers would be able to make a claim to the insurance plan.

Producers could choose to opt out of the insurance program. In that case, they would not be eligible for security in case of default by licensed grain dealers.

Producers who choose not to participate would still be required to pay the levy but would then receive a refund from the administrator of the program.

The proposed plan originally required producers who opted out to apply for a refund. Witnesses before the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food expressed concern about this aspect of the plan, placing an administrative burden on producers.

The committee agreed and, taking a proactive approach, approved an amendment to make the refund process automatic. A proactive approach was also taken with regard to the clause that provides for special crops to be added or removed from the plan.

There was concern that standard crops such as wheat, oats, barley, rye, flax and canola might also be included. Although this was never the intent of the legislation, the committee approved changes that specifically exclude the six standard crops from the plan.

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The mandatory deduction from all producers, whether they are in or out of the plan, was an issue studied at some length by the interim special crops advisory committee.

The committee, which included representatives from a number of stakeholder groups, decided a mandatory refundable model was needed to ensure the viability of the program.

The main factors which led to this decision were as follows. The plan has to be administratively efficient to keep costs down for producers. It is far more efficient and cost effective to deduct the levy from all producers and later reimburse those who have opted out. This is a significant benefit to the industry as it keeps paperwork to a minimum.

Members of the interim special crops advisory committee were concerned that a plan that required producers to opt in might leave some producers, unknowingly, without coverage and open to risk.

The mandatory refundable model has already successfully been used by other plans. It is similar to some provincial pulse crop levies and the Saskatchewan canola levy. For these reasons, the advisory committee felt it should be applied to the insurance plan.

Operating costs of the program are expected to be recovered through fees collected for services provided. The proposed fees are based on estimates of variables such as participation levels and deliveries.

• (1345)

Once the plan is operational the program administrator would be in a position to better evaluate the true costs that would be incurred and make the necessary adjustments. If the administrative portion of the levy is found to be too high, adjustments would be made to reflect actual costs.

During the consultation stage stakeholders called for the establishment of a formal mechanism to ensure continued input into the program. They wanted to ensure that concerns regarding licensing and security would be heard by the minister.

The proposed amendments to the Canada Grain Act address this issue by creating a special crops advisory committee. The nine member committee will be appointed by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. Special crops producers and dealers from each of the western provinces would be identified to sit on the committee.

The committee will advise the minister on the licensing and security operations of the special crops program. They can recommend to the minister that the administrator of the insurance plan or the insurer be replaced. The committee would also be able to make

recommendations on the designation of new crops or removal of crops and on other issues related to special crops referred to the committee by the minister.

A majority of the members of the committee would be producers rather than dealers. This reflects the fact that the cost of the insurance plan would be borne by producers.

I close my speech by talking about the potential impact the bill would have. Special crops processors are important employers in the towns where they are located. For example, Sedley, Saskatchewan, with a population of only 342 people, is bordered by the rural municipalities of Francis and Lajord. Sedley Seeds, located seven miles out of town, employs eight people on a permanent basis, four of whom are town residents. It employs approximately fifteen people during the pre-seeding and post-harvesting rush. Vigro Seed & Supply, located right in Sedley, permanently employs twelve people, seven of whom are town residents. It employs approximately thirty people during peak periods.

Although the two companies do not seem big by Toronto, Montreal or Ottawa standards, they are important local employers. They provide valuable services to the local rural community. As the regular elevator system is rationalizing and closing facilities, special crops processors like Sedley Seeds or Vigro Seed & Supply located throughout western Canada would be in a position to provide alternative delivery options and services to producers.

The bill is good for the special crops industry and for rural Canada. I encourage all members of the House to support it.

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand today to speak to Bill C-26, the legislation to amend the Canadian Grain Act, the Agriculture and Agri-Food Administration Monetary Penalties Act, and to repeal the Grain Futures Act.

As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food noted, the bill applies to special crops including peas, lentils, corn, fava beans, soybeans, sunflowers and others.

Bill C-26 would allow for the creation of an insurance plan for western Canadian special crops producers to protect them against losses if dealers or buyers go bankrupt with unpaid bills. The bill would also make provision for the minister of agriculture to establish a special crops advisory committee.

The bill, if enacted, would repeal the Grain Futures Act allowing responsibility for regulating the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange to revert to the Manitoba Securities Commission. The exchange is now regulated by the Canadian Grains Commission but it would be more appropriate to have it regulated by a provincial government agency.

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Special crops are of growing importance in western Canada. Mr. Garry Meier, chair of the board of Saskatchewan Pulse Growers Association, appeared before the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food last month and told us that Canada is the world's leading exporter of lentils and peas. Mr. Meier reported that Saskatchewan actually produces 96% of the Canadian lentil crop and 66% of dried peas.

● (1350)

We in this caucus support any measures that will improve the ability of farmers to prosper from growing and marketing special crops like peas and lentils. We also support measures that would put the entire special crops industry on a firmer financial footing. For this reason we are generally in favour of Bill C-26.

Having said that we are generally in favour, however, we feel that the bill could have been improved if only the government had accepted some suggestions made by the representatives of producer organizations such as Mr. Meier.

As I mentioned, Bill C-26 will allow for the creation of an insurance plan for western Canadian special crops producers. Producers would pay a levy of 38 cents on each \$100 worth of crops delivered to buyers and dealers. In other words, producers themselves without a contribution from any level of government will finance the insurance program. It is here that there could have been an improvement to the piece of legislation.

The standing committee on agriculture heard from organizations that represent special crops growers. The Saskatchewan and Manitoba pulse growers associations both recommended a full-fledged board of directors instead of an advisory committee. A motion later proposed by the opposition parties also recommended that the directors of the board be chosen by the minister from a list of officially registered special crops commodity groups.

Both these recommendations make good sense to our caucus. After all, farmers will pay for this insurance program without any contribution whatsoever from government. It only makes sense that they should call the shots. For example, it is they who should decide who should act as the agent for their insurance program.

Had these suggestions been incorporated, it would have improved the legislation and overall its acceptance by western Canadian special crops producers and farmers.

The special crops insurance program will be financed by producers from a levy or check off on all crops delivered to the buyers and the dealers. The nature of these check offs has been a controversial aspect of the bill. The government prefers to say that the insurance program is "voluntarily", but that is not really true. Farmers have to pay a levy up front and then at the end of the crop year they can apply for a refund.

The Saskatchewan Pulse Growers Association does not refer to it as voluntary but as a mandatory recoverable, which I think is a far better description. Another way of describing it is a form of negative option billing where they get a service unless they indicate in writing that they do not want said service, and if they do not want it they ask to have themselves removed. Cable television companies tried this a couple of years ago and experienced a considerable consumer revolt as a result.

We in the New Democratic Party caucus criticized this mandatory insurance provision of Bill C-26 in the debate at second reading and argued that the insurance plan should be voluntary. Later when Bill C-26 was discussed at the agriculture committee, producer groups also asked that the insurance plan be made voluntary. They said that farmers would not appreciate another check off and would not appreciate the paperwork necessary to get their money back at the end of the crop year.

Following this recommendation by producer groups there was a motion at the standing committee on agriculture that the plan be voluntary, but again unwisely in our opinion government members voted it down. Government members had no solid explanation as to why the plan required mandatory features. I am disappointed they did not see fit to do what commodity organizations had requested.

Commodity organizations do not like the mandatory aspect of the insurance plan any more than we in this caucus do, but the Manitoba and Saskatchewan pulse growers associations consulted their members who told them to support the legislation despite the apparent flaws. Our caucus took this message to heart and despite its shortcomings we have decided to support Bill C-26.

Some have expressed the fear that the insurance program might one day be made to apply to other crops including wheat, oats and barley. That concern now has been laid to rest by an amendment proposed on the government side in the agriculture committee.

● (1355)

As a result of this amendment the legislation applies only to special crops and clearly not to standard grains such as wheat and barley.

Bill C-26, despite its shortcomings, is by and large a good piece of legislation. Both the Saskatchewan and Manitoba pulse growers associations support the bill although they have made some suggestions for improvements which unfortunately the government has chosen to ignore.

On balance, it is worthwhile legislation. The major commodity groups support it and our caucus will be supporting it as well.

The Deputy Speaker: In light of the time do members want to call it 2 o'clock and start Statements by Members?

S. O. 31

Some hon. members: Agreed.

HOUSING

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, B.C. has a \$1 billion disaster in the making, the so-called leaky condo crisis.

A renowned Canadian building scientist, Joe Lstiburek, blames the federal government's national building code and its R-2000 program. Despite loads of research that warned of the problem and of serious design flaws in R-2000 homes, the government did nothing.

It is no coincidence that most of greater Vancouver's failing buildings were constructed after the advent of the Department of Natural Resources R-2000 program.

Instead of addressing the problems found in British Columbia, CMHC spent its energy trying to see what effect poly vapour barriers had in the dry prairie climate. National standards and programs were never adapted to B.C. and we now have a billion dollars disaster.

I call on the government to acknowledge that it promoted and continue to promote a method of home construction that is guaranteed to create wet rotting walls for decades to come.

* * *

AFRICAN CANADIAN COMMUNITY

Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the African Canadian community lost four of its members in the last two weeks: Mr. Al Mercury, Mr. Leonard Johnston, Mr. Ed Clarke and Ms. Carol Cayonne. These individuals made significant contributions to the African Canadian community and indeed to all of Canada.

Mr. Mercury was instrumental in establishing several Lions clubs which provided various services to many in the greater Toronto area.

Mr. Leonard Johnston was founder of Third World Books and Craft store which became a major conduit for African Canadian literature.

● (1400)

Mr. Ed Clarke was a humanitarian who worked tirelessly with African Canadian organizations to address human rights issues.

Ms. Carol Cayonne was dedicated to supporting women and individuals living in public housing.

They were trail blazers. They charted new courses for the African Canadian community in Canada and their selfless devotion to community service will not be forgotten.

I thank Al, Leonard, Ed and Carol for their many years of service.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

JUSTICE

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, unelected judges are changing the law and defying a rational decision made by parliament. They are not interpreting and applying the law as the justice minister claimed yesterday.

The Rosenberg decision by the Ontario Court of Appeal will change the definition of spouse in the Income Tax Act to include same sex couples. During the debate of Bill C-33 in the last parliament the government promised that this would never happen.

The Minister of Justice had a decision to make and doing nothing is not a decision. Will the minister appeal the Rosenberg decision and ask the supreme court to respect the current definition of the term spouse in the many statutes passed by parliament, or will the minister let MPs decide this important issue as the previous minister of justice promised?

Canadians are demanding that elected MPs should make our laws, not unelected judges. This decision will have far reaching implications for spousal and family benefits, will lead to the term spouse being redefined in more than 40 federal statutes and further undermine the institution of marriage and the traditional family in Canada.

* * *

EDUCATION

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago a new Internet service was launched to help Canadian principals and school boards to recruit teachers.

The Apply to Teach Network is the first central registry of its kind for teachers, and it saves Canadian school boards a lot of time and money by simplifying the recruiting process.

It is with great pleasure that I rise today to congratulate both Industry Canada and the Centre for Education and Training, a division of the Peel District School Board, for jointly developing this project.

Once again the federal government has shown that it can play a key role by working with members of the education and business community.

S. O. 31

[Translation]

CANADIAN ARMENIAN COMMUNITY

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am greatly honoured to day to raise in this House to draw attention to the 80th anniversary of the first republic of Armenia on May 28, 1918.

[English]

Although the first republic was short lived, it achieved a first election in 1919 that was universal and by secret ballot and granted the right to vote to adults of both sexes, including minorities, it established a university and schools were subsidized by the state.

[Translation]

I invite all members of this House to join with me in celebrating this anniversary with the Canadians of Armenian origin in my riding of Laval West and everywhere else in Canada.

[English]

Let me take this opportunity also to express my hope that the ties between Canada and Armenia will continue to grow and prosper in the years and decades to come.

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CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, after listening to farmers' concerns about secrecy at the Canadian Wheat Board, the Senate has recommended that the board be audited by the auditor general.

This is very timely because during the testimony at the Senate hearings on Bill C-4 the Canadian Wheat Board officials admitted that they are one of the largest players on the Minneapolis grain exchange.

Mr. Earl Geddes, program manager for market development, said "We will play about as much as they let us, always being long with wheat stocks".

The board fails to report these activities in its annual report to farmers. If the wheat board minister had any desire to make the board more accountable and transparent to farmers he would fulfil his duty and table a report on these trading activities before this House and he would allow the auditor general to do an annual audit on the wheat board books.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week two reports have drawn our attention to the

environment, one from the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development and one from the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development.

The two reports emphasized the efforts made, sometimes leading to progress in certain areas, but they also drew attention to major problems, whether in implementing legislation or in managing certain of our commitments.

Any system which allows such vigorous and objective criticism is a healthy one, and offers the hope that we will be able to do more and to do better in the future.

As for those who, like the Bloc Québécois, take advantage of this to say that the federal government has no right to be involved with the environment, I have two things to say to them. First, let them ask the Government of Quebec to take the time to hold an independent public examination of its environmental management as rigorous as this one, and the population will see how Quebec is sliding backward as far as the environment is concerned. The same applies to Ontario.

Second, the federal and provincial governments must work together, instead of trying to eliminate each other, if we want to be able to face up to our responsibilities as far as sustainable development is concerned.

* * *

[English]

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Mr. David Pratt (Nepean—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all of Canada welcomes the 340 men and women of the Canadian forces who are returning home from the Persian Gulf after three months of Operation Determination, a U.S. led force prepared for possible military action against Iraq.

The HMCS *Toronto*, part of a multinational naval force, will also be back in Halifax by mid-June. The vessel completed more than 90 haulings, boardings and inspections to help enforce UN sanctions against Iraq.

Two Hercules refuelling aircraft have returned to their base in Winnipeg. They provided air-to-air refuelling to the multinational air element enforcing the no-fly zones over Iraq. They flew more than 140 missions and provided more than two million pounds of fuel to coalition aircraft.

The Canadian forces have done an incredible job and all Canadians should be proud of their contribution in maintaining international peace and security in this region.

I welcome them home and thank them for helping to make Operation Determination a success.

TRANSITIONAL JOBS FUND

Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to set the record straight on the transitional jobs fund, one of the government's many achievements.

The transitional jobs fund is a three year, \$300 million initiative that works in partnership with private sector employers, communities, workers and other levels of government to create much needed long term jobs for Canadians living in high unemployment areas.

• (1405)

Despite the ideological ramblings of the member for Calgary West and his dogmatic opposition to government action for job creation, the fact is that the TJF is an immensely successful program.

About 700 projects have been undertaken with the private sector to create over 30,000 longstanding jobs. That is progress. The \$220 million in federal funding spent to date has leveraged over \$1.7 billion from our partners. That is performance. For every dollar invested by the federal government nearly \$9 is invested by our partners. That is value.

Contrary to the cynical members opposite, this government believes in job creation and is taking action.

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RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Transport for months has been studying rail passenger travel in Canada. The emphasis has been on the core area from Windsor to Quebec City.

Recently the Lynx Consortium made public a plan to build a high speed service between Toronto and Quebec City. Obviously this group would not have gone public without having some private consultations with government officials. These government officials would be from the departments of transport, finance, the environment and probably others.

In order for Canadians to be more informed and before the parliamentary committee can make comment, it is incumbent upon this government to provide as many details as possible on its position, its funding and any other commitment it has.

If Canadians are going to be expected to contribute in a financial way then there should be openness and transparency so the public can understand it before—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Wentworth—Burlington.

S. O. 31

YEAR 2000

Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, governments are spending millions of dollars trying to fix the so-called millennium bug. This is the glitch whereby computers have a two digit date code that cannot recognize the year 2000. Unless their microchips are reprogrammed the machines and the systems they serve will come to a crashing halt at the end of 1999.

The Reform Party has a similar millennium bug. Its constitution is like a microchip in that it contains the party's entire philosophy in a very small space and, like a microchip, also has a self-destruct clause that requires the party to dissolve itself in the year 2000.

Unless Reformers reprogram their constitution at their convention this weekend the party will soon be no more. If I may suggest it to the members opposite, don't do it. They should encourage their delegates to do nothing. Let the millennium bug bite. If they really want to unite the right, then they should let the party and especially its leader simply go "poof".

* * *

[*Translation*]

SAINT-JÉRÔME EMPLOYMENT CENTRE

Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during the restructuring of Canada employment centres by the Minister of Human Resources Development, several centres in less populated areas were closed so that centres in larger towns could stay open.

This is what happened in Lachute. At the time, the government promised the community that was affected by this closing and that was at a disadvantage because of a lack of public transit, that an acceptable level of activity would be maintained. The Saint-Jérôme CEC therefore gave the contract for checking and forwarding EI applications to the Argenteuil literacy centre. But this service was recently cut, supposedly because of the potential savings to the Saint-Jérôme CEC.

We are asking for this service to be restored as rapidly as possible, so that the people in the Lachute area can have access to the services provided by the Department of Human Resources Development like everyone else—

The Speaker: The member for Dartmouth.

* * *

[*English*]

TOBACCO

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, tobacco claims the lives of 40,000 Canadians every year. The World Health Organization has declared this Sunday "World No-Tobacco Day" in the hope of preventing this addiction in young people.

S. O. 31

The Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Cancer Society and others concerned about the health of young people point out that tobacco sponsorships of sporting and other events are a significant factor in getting kids to start smoking. Associating cigarettes with fun activities or sports heroes contributes to disease and death.

As culture critic for my party and as an active member of the arts community I want to see that arts, culture and other groups now dependent on tobacco sponsorships are given replacement funds.

• (1410)

The answer is definitely not, as the Minister of Health proposes, to water down the sponsorship provisions of the Tobacco Act. In so doing, he is going in the opposite direction to the rest of the world and it is a very dangerous direction.

For the sake of our children, I urge the Minister of Health to uphold the Tobacco Act and support arts, culture and sporting groups until they are able to find other sponsors.

* * *

NELSON A. BOYLEN COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to welcome to Ottawa the students and teachers of the multihandicap program at Nelson A. Boylen Collegiate Institute from the riding of York South—Weston. They are here on a three day field trip to explore and learn about our nation's capital.

It is important to recognize the outstanding and valuable work of this special education program. The aim of the multihandicap program is to promote the student's physical, social, intellectual and emotional development in order to be able to manage in an open society as skilled, autonomous and purposeful individuals. The program graduates students with the skills and attitudes necessary to live with dignity in the larger community.

Congratulations to Amelia Cristinziano and her colleagues for their excellent work in helping these truly exceptional young Canadians in their pursuit of learning.

The students had the opportunity and pleasure of meeting the Prime Minister yesterday, but they assure me that they will still be voting for me in the next election.

Welcome to Ottawa, students.

* * *

TOBACCO

Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC): Mr. Speaker, last year tobacco claimed the lives of more than 40,000 Canadians and, despite these alarming numbers, it is predicted that more than 100,000 Canadian children will start to smoke this year alone.

We all understand that inaction on this matter kills. That is why on May 31 the World Health Organization's "No Tobacco Day" will be promoting the theme "Growing up without Tobacco".

On this day I challenge all my colleagues in the House of Commons and their staff to lead by example and butt out for life. A healthy future for our youth depends on their support.

The Canadian Medical Association urges all parliamentarians to endorse strong regulations so our children can grow up without tobacco. Together we can build a smoke free future for all of our children.

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[Translation]

JOLIETTE LIBELLULES

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the world school volleyball championship held in Greece from May 10 to 17, 1998, the Libellules of Joliette's Thérèse-Martin high school placed 13th, thus obtaining the best result for a Canadian team since the beginning of this sports competition.

Under the able direction of trainers Yvon Turgeon and Julie Lachapelle, these young girls, whose average age is 15 and a half, turned in an exceptional performance against athletes averaging 18 years of age.

With their 13th place position in school volleyball, the Joliette Libellules are a credit to Quebec and to Canada which, by the way, they represented for the first time in this world championship.

Theirs is an impressive achievement and they deserve all our admiration and congratulations.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Yvon Turgeon, who is retiring after 20 years of devoted service to the Libellules team.

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[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is definite progress on the Ipperwash army base transfer talks despite Reform Party comments.

Last night in my riding the member for Vancouver Island North offered this advice: "The Canadian military should confront natives living at the former Camp Ipperwash and re-occupy the land".

These careless comments are unfortunate and distressing. I am proud that the local residents, both non-native and native, have shown remarkable courage and patience as the talks continue, hopefully ending very soon with the official transfer of the land to the natives.

Oral Questions

The Reform Party's extreme remarks may serve only to alienate people and raise emotions, hindering all of us from the real task of working together in true partnership.

Leadership is about seeking solutions co-operatively, in a spirit of mutual trust and respect. That is what the Liberal government, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and I strongly support. We are so near. I urge all of us to continue to work together.

* * *

[Translation]

PHILIPPE SOLDEVILA

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Council of the Arts John Hirsch Prize for 1998 was awarded to theater director Philippe Soldevila at the Carrefour international du théâtre.

Commemorating Mr. Hirsch's great contribution to Canadian theater, this prize is awarded each year to a promising director who has demonstrated original artistic vision.

A Quebec City native, Mr. Soldevila has already directed several successful plays. Apart from being artistic director of the Théâtre Sortie de secours since its foundation in 1989, he has worked with Robert Lepage, which gave him the opportunity to meet artists from various countries. The John Hirsch Prize is just the latest addition to the awards he has received over the last few years.

• (1415)

This young man is another one of those reputable creators from Quebec who are the pride of Quebecers.

Congratulations to Mr. Soldevila, who is on the way to becoming a master of his art.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the situation in South Asia continues to deteriorate. This morning's detonation of five nuclear bombs by Pakistan has greatly increased tensions in this very volatile region.

Canada has enjoyed a unique positive relationship with all countries in the region and is therefore in the unique position to engage all of them in active diplomatic measures to help broker a resolution during this very difficult time.

Will the Prime Minister tell the House what specific measures the Government of Canada is prepared to undertake to help defuse this very difficult situation?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question. I deplore the decision by the Government of Pakistan to proceed with the tests. When I was in Birmingham I called Prime Minister Sharif to ask him not to do it. I tried to persuade my colleagues to persuade Pakistan not to make the decision, because I was afraid that other countries would want to do the same thing.

Unfortunately Canada, Japan and the United States could not persuade the others to move more strongly with a statement on that Friday night.

For us, we will have to do what we did with India and impose the same types of sanctions that we had—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Fraser Valley.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that Canada's fingerprints can be seen on the nuclear programs of several countries in the region including Pakistan, India and China.

Canada should feel a special obligation to condemn the nuclear testing as the Prime Minister has done and at the same time use our influence to bring about a diplomatic resolution to this very tense situation.

Since Pakistan's actions have forced us to withdraw our ambassador among other actions that the Prime Minister has announced this morning, would he tell us what other measures he will use to bring about some sort of a negotiated settlement to bring these parties together to resolve this matter diplomatically?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, they have tested the atomic bomb. They did it in India and they did it in Pakistan. It is condemned by Canada. I hope it will be condemned by all nations of the world.

We have made a lot of progress in the last seven or eight years following SALT I and SALT II in the reduction of stockpiling of nuclear armament by the Russians and the Americans.

It is a very sad development but the tests have been done. We will discuss and put pressure on both countries to sign treaties where they will commit themselves not to proceed any more and follow the same rules that apply to other nations in the same circumstances.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the difficulty that we now face is that as countries withdraw their ambassadors and withdraw their diplomatic relations with Pakistan and India, it is becoming increasingly difficult to bring these people together to negotiate a settlement during this time.

Will the Prime Minister consider tabling an emergency resolution in the General Assembly of the United Nations in an attempt to

Oral Questions

bring all the countries together in as speedy way as possible to negotiate and to talk rather than withdraw our diplomats and disengage from a very serious situation?

[Translation]

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have to consider the difficult question of the conflicts between those two countries, Pakistan and India, and the problems in Kashmir. Things are getting tense right now. There have been outbreaks of violence between the two countries, something we deplore. Canada has always tried to maintain peace between the two countries.

For now, we just have to wait and see. I thank the hon. member for his suggestion. If there is anything else we can do at the United Nations level, we will. The existing tensions are caused by the decision of the Indian authorities to conduct nuclear tests. We regret this and we also regret—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this morning we learned that the health minister will now provide an ongoing package of \$42 million to help all the victims of AIDS.

• (1420)

Once again I have a question for the Minister of Health. What about all the victims of hepatitis C? How long will the ones who were left out have to wait?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can understand why the Reform Party would not support the strategy against AIDS. It has opposed it from the beginning. It appears its so-called compassion is for some of the sick and dying but not for the others.

The member for Macleod blames the victims by saying that those with HIV and AIDS have unhealthy lifestyles. What about those with HIV through the blood system?

The member for Calgary Northeast said that we should not have the AIDS conference in Vancouver. He asked the Minister of Immigration to close the borders. He did not want people with HIV to be in the country. He said that it would put an undue burden on our health system. This is sheer hypocrisy.

The Speaker: Once again, my colleagues, I would ask you to please stay away from inflammatory words such as hypocrisy.

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House have never heard such nonsense coming from a minister in our lives.

The fact is all victims of AIDS are now being assisted by the government but somehow the rules are different for hepatitis C victims.

Why is a one tier system the right one for AIDS victims but a two tier system is the government's choice for hepatitis C victims? Do hepatitis C victims not deserve to be treated equally?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is sheer undiluted nonsense. That man and his colleagues in the Reform Party have opposed the AIDS strategy from the beginning. They pick and choose those to whom they award their political compassion.

They are the embodiment of insincerity. They do not know the first thing about these policy issues and they are prepared to use victims as they do today for their narrow political—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the premiers of Ontario and New Brunswick, the Quebec National Assembly, the Alliance des manufacturiers du Québec, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the CSN have all condemned the government's misappropriation of \$17 billion from the employment insurance fund. This morning, the Minister of Finance alluded to the possibility of an across the board tax cut.

Can the minister, who eliminated his deficit by taking money from the pockets of workers and businesses, assure us that, before considering an across the board tax cut, he will take into account the huge sacrifices he imposed on employment insurance claimants and reduce the tax on jobs that employment insurance has become?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, am I to understand that the leader of the Bloc Québécois objects to the fact that we have reduced taxes for 83% of all Canadian taxpayers? Am I to understand that he objects to the fact that 400,000 people with very low salaries or incomes no longer have to pay any taxes?

Am I to understand that he is opposed to the assistance that we are providing to students and poor families, because all this is achieved through the tax system? Is this what the member is saying?

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I object to a minister caring more about his ships than about the unemployed. This is what I object to.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Oral Questions

The Speaker: I would respectfully ask the leader of the Bloc Québécois to put his question.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, I am asking the minister, who has taken money from the businesses and workers most in need, if time has not come to restore employment insurance benefits. Is it not time to improve access to the EI program? After all, it is these people who eliminated the deficit, not those to whom the minister is referring.

• (1425)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year we reduced premiums by \$1.4 billion.

The member says he is not referring to the same people as we are. We are referring to the 400,000 taxpayers who no longer pay taxes because their income is very low, to the 83% of Canadian taxpayers who no longer pay the 3% surtax, students and poor families. These are the people we are speaking for. Who does the leader of the Bloc Québécois speak for?

* * *

TRANSITIONAL JOBS FUND

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Human Resources Development believes he is a responsible manager because he axed the employment insurance program.

But now that the government has been forced to admit that it has taken too much money for the employment insurance fund, choices have to be made.

How can the minister, who claims to be a responsible manager, hide behind active measures when the main one available to him, namely the transitional jobs fund, has run dry?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is still money in the transitional jobs fund. It has been committed, but will be spent between now and March 31.

Our main active measure is not the transitional jobs fund but the \$2.7 billion we will be transferring to the Quebec government under the Quebec job market development agreement. So, that is \$2.7 billion from the employment insurance fund.

This is much more important than what the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques is complaining about and for which he has never recognized the headway we have been making in this country.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, all week the minister has been telling us that we need only to identify problems for him to deal with them. We have been doing just that all week.

Again this morning, five studies commissioned by his department were released to the Bloc Québécois under the Access to Information Act. These studies reminded the minister that the 1994 reform has cost the unemployed heavily.

Like everyone, the minister knows that a substantial surplus has been accumulated. As a good manager, does he not think that the time has come to put money, new money, into the transitional jobs fund for those who need it?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques just skimmed the reports quickly. I think he did not get the whole picture.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew: These reports clearly established that people—and I will have to say it very slowly this time—have been finding jobs faster since our 1994 reform. A larger number of workers who had lost their jobs in seasonal industries have found new jobs in other industries for the rest of the year. There are some very positive aspects—

The Speaker: The leader of the Democratic Party.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, earlier today the health minister suggested that safety concerns over imported albumin were just a matter of paperwork, but the court order specifically raised concerns over both the quality and the purity of Alpha's blood products.

The company was ordered to discontinue immediately "all manufacturing and distribution of products using reworked, reprocessed, returned or rejected lots".

In view of these facts how can the minister continue to dismiss concerns as just a matter of paperwork?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, how can the member continue to leave the impression that these products are unsafe when they have been approved for use in both the United States, which has an exacting standard, and here in Canada which has its own standard?

The product in question has received approval from the authorities who have made the appropriate inquiries, the appropriate inspections, and have come to the conclusion that this product is safe.

For the member to say otherwise day after day in the House is very unfair to those who rely upon this product for health purposes.

Oral Questions

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the minister was doing his job he would know that the imported albumin being used on Canadians was made before Alpha was ordered to clean up its practices, before Alpha was ordered to stop using reworked and rejected products, and before Alpha was ordered by the courts to improve purity and quality.

In view of these facts the minister should have Canadians inspect the site, trace the lot and test the product now.

What is the minister waiting for?

• (1430)

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all know people in life who take a little knowledge and then judiciously select some of the facts and combine them in quick statements leaving a misimpression. In fact it is the NDP policy. That is what it is. The leader is making an example for the House of exactly that approach.

The reality and the bottom line is of importance to Canadians. This product has been approved by those responsible in both the United States and Canada. The people who take it can take it with confidence for that reason.

* * *

THE SENATE

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. It is reported that the government is deeming certain individuals to be "national treasures" because they are "invaluable" to the institutions of parliament.

Could the Prime Minister please tell this chamber of parliament who is making these decisions and who is paying for these decisions? Finally, when will the government account to the taxpayers of Canada for these expenses?

The Speaker: It is a pretty general question. The hon. House leader.

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, even though the words of the question are changed, it is still quite obvious that any reference in this House to how the other house functions and how it chooses to allocate its office space is strictly the jurisdiction of the other house.

Need I remind the hon. member opposite that similar things have been done for other senators, for individuals like Jack Marshall.

The Speaker: My colleagues, I am not sure where the questions are going. We will have to keep it to the administrative responsibility of the government.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, I have to say so much for transparency and accountability in spending our taxpayers' dollars.

I again would ask the Prime Minister how this government is accounting to Canadians for these actions and expenditures.

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all members of this House know that the administration of one house through its board of internal economy or in the case of the other place, the committee of internal economy is strictly of the confidence of the other place.

We know that once members have left the house in question, in that case the other place although it has happened here too, they have been allowed some office space. A case was raised now without mentioning it. Other members of other parties including her own were accorded the same kind of benefits.

The Speaker: My colleagues, here is the dilemma that I have. I have a question that is very general about a subject we cannot discuss yet I have an answer being given about a subject we are not supposed to discuss. I think I am going to rule both of you out of order.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I will shift gears here for a minute. The finance minister is under increasing fire first from Mike Harris of Ontario and now his Liberal cousins in New Brunswick for allowing the surplus in the EI fund to become a cash cow instead of the insurance program it was intended to be.

Will the minister assure this House today that he will make real cuts to the premiums and return the EI fund to its original purpose?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would simply point out to the hon. member that last year we cut the premiums by \$1.4 billion. That is a real cut. It is real money. In fact since we have taken office the premiums, which were to go to \$3.30, have been cut by \$4.5 billion a year. In my opinion that is real money.

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the real money is in a surplus. It is growing toward \$20 billion and looking more like \$25 billion next year.

The minister talks about the choices his government has had to make and now he is faced with a tough one. He is being called out by his friends as well as by his opponents. The New Brunswick Liberals can see there is something fishy about the federal books.

• (1435)

Will the minister have to be dragged through the courts by the provinces like Ontario is threatening before he returns the EI surplus to Canadian taxpayers?

Oral Questions

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that the choices are tough at all. In fact last year we had the second largest reduction in the EI premiums in the history of the country, tax cuts for 83% of Canadians, \$1.5 billion going back into the CHST and the elimination of the deficit.

I do not find that a difficult choice. I find that good government.

* * *

[Translation]

GROUND FISH INDUSTRY

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

There are rumours circulating in my region that the minister will be announcing his new plan for assisting those involved in the groundfish fisheries on June 8.

Can the minister tell us whether this information is accurate and whether there will soon be some reassurance for people about the future groundfish strategy?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are of course aware that the people in the region are undergoing real stress because of the impending end of TAGS in August, a strategy we put in place several years ago.

Our government, several of my government colleagues and myself have worked very hard in recent weeks, and we are currently working with the provinces in order to assist the communities and individuals, through government programs, after the end of TAGS in August.

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like confirmation from the minister as to whether he has also consulted the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to ensure that the assistance will properly target the right clientele.

Moreover, I would like him to tell us whether he has met with his provincial counterparts, because according to the information available to me, he has not yet done so.

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last November I asked Eugène Harrigan, a senior official in my department, to do the rounds of the communities and meet with people. He met with the provincial administrations and consultations were on a very good level.

The Harrigan report is available to the opposition, and if they take the trouble to read it they will see that we have the best picture of the region that has ever been gathered, to enable us to make the right decisions.

I speak regularly with all ministers of fisheries and oceans across the country who want to talk to me, and am always pleased to do so.

* * *

[English]

FISHERIES

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, British Columbia's frustration over the west coast fisheries disaster has hit a new high. Five years of inaction has resulted in the current situation.

I am asking the Prime Minister, will he today call on President Clinton to personally intervene in this west coast disaster that we have today?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the subject of the overfishing by Alaskans and their failure to abide by the Pacific salmon treaty is a matter of concern that has been raised by my colleague the Minister of Foreign Affairs with his counterpart, by myself with my American counterpart as well as governors of the states of Washington, Oregon and Alaska, and in addition by the Prime Minister with the President of the United States.

What the hon. member forgets is that the United States is bound by a constitution whereby states have certain rights and the federal government in some areas cannot intervene any more than we in this House can tell a province what to put into their educational curriculum in that particular area. We cannot do that. They cannot interfere in a state jurisdiction.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this is more than just a concern. Perhaps treating this as just a concern and keeping it on the backbenches is the reason this is such a problem today.

I will ask once again. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans may be the minister of oceans in the near future. He has the Strangway report. He has the facts. Will he today put the fisheries issue, the west coast disaster on the front burner instead of the back burner?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no issue has caused more trouble between the United States and Canada in the last few years than this one. We have had it on the front burner in discussions between the United States federal government, the Canadian federal government, the Prime Minister and the President. If the hon. member insists upon forgetting or overlooking that the Americans are bound by a constitution and that that constitution gives certain powers to the states, he will continue to misunderstand the difficulties we face on this file.

Oral Questions

• (1440)

*[Translation]***NUCLEAR TESTS**

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

We have learned that Pakistan has just detonated five nuclear bombs, in response to India's nuclear tests. It also apparently has a long-range missile, equipped with a nuclear warhead.

As India and Pakistan now seem on the path to war, what does Canada plan to propose to its allies to defuse this crisis?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are attempting through every possible diplomatic channel to persuade them not to embark on war.

As you know, the conflict in Kashmir is a very longstanding one and apparently very difficult to resolve. We are using all possible means to persuade them not to go to war. It is very regrettable that, in their mutual posturing, they have decided to develop nuclear weapons. This is completely regrettable. We said so in Birmingham and we are saying it again in the House today.

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the sanctions against India and the diplomatic efforts with respect to Pakistan have, as we know, failed miserably.

Given this failure and, setting aside the fact that the situation is to be regretted as the Prime Minister says, I would like to know what concrete action Canada plans to take to stop the domino effect we know the Indo-Pakistani crisis may generate?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think that Canada has set a good example. We were among the first countries to withdraw our support in certain areas, to recall our ambassadors, to take other concrete measures to show these two countries that embarking on this course was not only completely disastrous for them, but that, from an economic standpoint, it will be the general public that pays for the mistakes made by their leaders.

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*[English]***THE SENATE**

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we know that the government seeks advice from odd and peculiar places at times. Bars and taverns sometimes come to mind, Mr. Speaker, and they were not ruled out of order. Now we find that former Senator

Allan MacEachen, a holdover from the sixties and the Trudeau era, is being—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order. I am going to ask the member to cut from there and go right to the question to see if it is acceptable.

Mr. John Williams: My question is for the Prime Minister. Why does the Prime Minister's Office say that Allan MacEachen is performing a service to all parliamentarians when he is an old Liberal Party hand and has nothing to offer to—

The Speaker: It is out of order. The hon. member for Mercier.

* * *

*[Translation]***EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

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

One element of the minister's reform should be brought to light. Employees can be so penalized under the new method of benefit calculation that it is absurd for some of them to take work offering few hours a week.

Will the minister recognize that the reform not only worsened workers' situations, but has made it very difficult for many employers, including SMBs, to find—

The Speaker: The Minister of Human Resources Development.

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is about a year out of date, because we resolved the problem of the short week with two pilot projects across the country.

As soon as we started the pilot projects on short weeks, the problem disappeared.

* * *

*[English]***INFRASTRUCTURE**

Mr. Lou Sekora (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for infrastructure.

The federal government has extended \$65 million in infrastructure payments to the province of British Columbia. What specific projects were announced and how will they benefit the people of British Columbia? Will the government commit to keeping this level of participation?

Oral Questions

• (1445)

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam for this, his first question in the House.

I was pleased that we were able to announce on May 19 the approval of 78 projects worth over \$57 million for British Columbia. The announced projects were for permanent core infrastructure upgrades, roads, bridges, telecommunications services, including a \$500,000 road project in the hon. member's riding.

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CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the leadership of the Canadian military continues to be in serious trouble. Over the last couple of years four generals have left the forces in disgrace. Now the surgeon general is being investigated, as the minister confirmed yesterday.

Will the defence minister take command and tell us the specific allegations, the status of the investigation and is General Clay under suspension?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, matters are under investigation and the people involved in that investigation have the right to the presumption of innocence until there are charges laid, in which case there would be an announcement made as to any of those specific charges.

We believe in a fair process. Let us allow that fair process to take place.

For the opposition to try to bring discredit against a very senior officer, in fact the senior woman in the Canadian military, I think is disgraceful.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this issue is of national importance. It is a top general in our armed forces.

I was in the RCMP and was responsible for press releases on many serious crimes. When the press came to me right out there in the public where I could be sued, I was always able to divulge the specifics of the allegation, was it a fraud, was it a theft, whatever.

Surely the minister can tell us today what specific allegation is being investigated.

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there has been no charge laid against anyone. They have a right to maintain their privacy. They have a right to presumption of innocence. If charges are laid, and there has been no determination of that, when due process has been followed, then the results will be announced.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, around 1991 the federal government ceased its contribution to the EI fund. Yesterday the Minister of Finance admitted he has spent the employment insurance surplus.

My question to the Minister of Finance is very simple. To whom belongs the surplus in the employment insurance fund?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all government revenues, whether contributions to the EI fund, contributions coming in forms of sales taxes or personal taxes, they all belong to the people of Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance knows very well that this money belongs to the country's workers.

Fewer than 40% of the unemployed are receiving employment insurance benefits, while the government takes their money. The deficit was reduced on the backs of families that have a hard time putting food on the table.

Is the Minister of Finance proud of having reduced the deficit on the backs of those most disadvantaged?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should tell us his choices. Is he opposed to the fact that we abolished personal income tax for 400,000 individuals? Is he opposed to the fact that we created a national child benefit? Is he opposed to the fact that we transferred an extra \$1.5 billion to the provinces?

Is he opposed to the fact that we eliminated the deficit and that interest rates are going down so that Canadians will be able to afford homes and cars? Is he opposed to the policies of this government to help Canadians?

* * *

• (1450)

[English]

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac, PC): Mr. Speaker, this government says it wants to help students find summer employment but it seems this commitment depends on which riding the students live in. For instance, students living in the Liberal ridings of Moncton and in Miramichi will receive twice as much funding as students living in my riding. Students living in the riding of the solicitor general receive three times as much funding as in my riding.

Oral Questions

Will the Minister of Human Resources Development commit an equitable funding formula for summer career placements and treat all students equally?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I fail to understand what the member is referring to. All students are treated the same way by all our programs across Atlantic Canada.

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac, PC): Mr. Speaker, we are in 1998, not 1950, and all Canadians should be treated fairly and equally regardless of their political parties.

A student living in a Conservative riding gets less funding than a student living in a Liberal riding.

According to HRDC, the hon. member's department, the solicitor general's riding gets three times more funding than my riding.

Will the minister commit additional funding today for students in my riding so they can get a good education, like every other Canadian?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we treat all ridings the very same way. We welcomed all the projects submitted to us.

If the member has a particular case he wants to raise with me I will be delighted to discuss it with him, but I do not see why he is taking the time of the House on an issue that he cannot substantiate very well.

* * *

[Translation]

ASBESTOS INDUSTRY

Mr. Claude Drouin (Beauce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could the Minister of International Trade inform the House of the action plan announced this morning in support of asbestos workers, in light of the fact that France has banned this product?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my hon. colleague for his question. Since the French government announced its ban on asbestos, the federal government has been working very hard at finding an effective solution.

The French report was supposed to be released in April, then in May. Now, we are days away from June. I will call a meeting with the mayor and reeve to announce that, today, our government has formally referred the asbestos issue to the World Trade Organization.

[English]

YEAR 2000

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board. For weeks now when questioned on the year 2000 bug the minister has said don't worry, be happy.

But the government's chief information officer and the year 2000 team contracted by the government have said that government computers will fail.

What is the minister's contingency plan to deal with seniors who will have to line up and wait for bureaucrats to hand out their old age security and Canada pension plan cheques in the year 2000?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question of the year 2000 bug is an important one and indeed we should all worry, both the private sector and the public sector.

However, in the public sector we have started to put together groups of people. He has alluded to one. There is now one in every one of the most affected departments. These groups are looking at the government-wide emergency systems that have to be made to function and are also drawing up contingency plans in every case. Even though we can never guarantee that nothing will fail, I think we are putting in the efforts necessary to make sure that we are able to meet the problem.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

Monday, we learned that the government had paralyzed the operation of Environment Canada by making it impossible for the department to protect the environment. In addition, the day before yesterday, the commissioner of the environment confirmed this government's inability to enforce environmental legislation under its own jurisdiction.

• (1455)

How does the minister justify encroaching further on provincial jurisdictions with her Bill C-32 when she is not even able to enforce laws under her own authority?

[English]

Hon. Christine Stewart (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my department is implementing all legislation and regulations at the present time. We look forward to the committee's

reviewing Bill C-32, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act legislation, because it has important elements in it to help in the enforcement of all our policies and regulations.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are witnessing the escalation of yet another trade war as the U.S. and the European Union use subsidies, including cash bonuses, to drive down international grain prices.

Predictably, Canada's minister of agriculture says there is no money for Canadian farmers who once again will be caught in the crossfire as they were in the 1980s and 1990s.

Instead of hand wringing and wishing the problem away, what proposals does the minister have that will be of specific help to Canadian grain farmers.

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the proposal we have is the action we are taking. I have already spoken to the secretary of agriculture in the United States and the commissioner of agriculture in the European Union. I pointed out very clearly that it is not in the best interests of anyone to escalate a subsidy war between our two countries or any countries.

We will be there for Canadian farmers with the safety net systems in the future as we have in the past and we will work with them.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC): Mr. Speaker, small craft harbours are in the process of organizing local harbour authorities whose responsibility is to maintain their wharfs. Wharfs with numerous fishing vessels can generate significant resources to maintain their existing facilities. However, small wharfs do not have that luxury and are in danger of losing their facilities.

What is the minister going to do to protect fishermen in small isolated areas from losing their wharfing facilities?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a general rule we are trying hard to make sure those in the local area who use the facilities are responsible for their maintenance and up-keep.

There are, however, as the hon. member has suggested, certain unique and unusual circumstances with certain wharfs and ports where we have made other arrangements or varied standard arrangements with the fishermen.

If he would give details of the case in question I would be able to respond to it. Perhaps he could discuss it with me at some other time.

Oral Questions

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

Given the criticisms levelled at the government this week by the commissioner of the environment for not meeting its international commitments and specifically those commitments made to reduce greenhouse gases at the Rio meetings in 1992, would he tell the House what steps are being taken by the government to ensure that Canadians and Canada meet the commitments made in Kyoto last December?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the commissioner's comments relate to that period before Kyoto. Since Kyoto and consistent with the commissioner's advice, Canada's first ministers have all agreed on a collaborative approach. All energy and environment ministers are now assembling the national implementation strategy.

We have both a federal and a national secretariat to co-ordinate the activity. We have allocated \$60 million more to energy efficiency and renewals. We have committed \$150 million more to building the foundation for longer term action and to trigger early action. The plan is well under way and Canada will meet its commitments.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Jake E. Hoeppepner (Portage—Lisgar, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on February 19 the *Western Producer* reported that the Canadian Wheat Board minister was adamant that the government auditor not get access to Canadian Wheat Board books because it handles farmer money rather than government money.

Has the minister now changed his mind? Is he willing to allow the auditor general to audit the Canadian Wheat Board as recommended by the Senate amendments to Bill C-4?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I commend the members of the other place for the work they have done on Bill C-4. They have proposed a number of changes in the legislation which by and large enhance and improve the legislation.

• (1500)

They have made some technical recommendations with respect to a particular role for the auditor general at that moment in time

Government Orders

when the corporation ceases to be a crown corporation and becomes a mixed enterprise, while it is going through that rather delicate transition. We have that recommendation under advisement, but I would say at this time that I am reasonably well disposed to that idea.

* * *

[Translation]

BC MINE IN BLACK LAKE

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétiën (Frontenac—Mégantic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in spite of the insensitivity that characterized former minister Doug Young, he had at least realized that abolishing POWA meant he would have to replace it with something else. This is precisely what the workers at the BC mine need.

Since these workers have been left with nothing, should the minister not fulfil the commitments made by his predecessor and propose an effective solution to help these people? Otherwise, he might suffer the same fate as Mr. Young.

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am of course aware of the plight of older workers, to which I alluded on several occasions. I think we all agree that POWA, which has yet to be replaced, was rather unfair and did not treat older workers equitably.

For the time being, we have put in place important measures and general programs that are also geared to these people and that address, in a large number of cases, their needs. But we have to see what else can be done.

* * *

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the government House leader if he would tell us about the business for the rest of today and for the following week. Perhaps he would give us some hint as to how long he thinks this session of parliament is going to go into the summer.

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon the House will continue with third reading of Bill C-26, the grain bill. I understand if there is an agreement that we may in fact suspend the consideration of this bill for reasons of convenience for some members of the House. We will not have additional business beyond that point other than private members' hour.

Next Monday shall be an allotted day. On Tuesday and, if necessary, on Wednesday we will attempt to complete Bill C-29, the parks bill, along with Bill C-39, the Nunavut legislation and, if

necessary, Bill C-26. We will then proceed and by Thursday we will consider Bill C-37, the Judges Act amendments.

Bill S-3, the pension benefits bill, and Bill C-38, the Tuktut Park bill, when they come out of committee, are also items that the House must complete in June.

In addition, we will have to dispose of any amendments made by the Senate to any bills we have passed.

If the House makes good progress on these urgent items we would also very much like to complete the following: Bill C-3, the DNA bill; Bill C-25, the defence legislation; Bill C-27, the coastal fisheries bill; Bill S-2, the transportation safety board bill; Bill S-9, the bill on exchange legislation; Bill C-20 the competition legislation, and other bills that may be reported from committee.

With this in mind, now that the time for consideration of estimates is complete, I wish to urge committees with legislation before them to get down to work on the legislation in question as quickly as possible.

The program that I have outlined clearly takes us beyond next week and well beyond the middle of June. I think it appropriate to designate the two final allotted days, which shall be Monday, June 8 and Tuesday June 9. Members are reminded that under our standing orders the House may debate estimates up to 10.00 p.m. on June 9, unless of course the wishes are to end earlier on that day.

● (1505)

But, at the present time, that gives advance notice to all members of parliament to be prepared to be here until 10 p.m. on June 9.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA GRAIN ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-26, an act to amend the Canada Grain Act and the Agriculture and Agri-Food Administrative Monetary Penalties Act and to repeal the Grain Futures Act, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC): Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise today to speak at third reading of Bill C-26. This government has defeated a number of amendments to Bill C-26 that would have made it much better.

The amendments which were put forward by the hon. member for Brandon—Souris took into account an important aspect of the bill that is clearly absent. The majority of the stakeholders who appeared before the standing committee on agriculture wanted the

specialty crops insurance program to be voluntary. The amendments that my party put forward spoke to this aspect and the government did not address it.

A resolution was passed at the Saskatchewan Canola Growers Association annual meeting and similar motions were passed at the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association convention, the Western Canadian Barley Growers Association convention and by the Saskatchewan Pulse Crop Development Board. The motion reads as follows:

Whereas the majority of Saskatchewan Canola Growers Association members also are growers of specialty crops, and

Whereas the proposed Special Crops Rural Initiative Program would appear to favour the Canadian Grain Commission and not necessarily special crop growers, and

Whereas the Special Crops Rural Initiative Program is promoted as being voluntary, it is in reality a form of negative billing which all consumers reject—, and

Whereas the scheme has questionable support at the farm level, and

Whereas the Saskatchewan Canola Growers Association rejects the compulsory nature of the Special Crops Rural Initiative Program, and

Whereas the special crops Industry has flourished without such a program,

Therefore be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Canola Growers Association inform the federal and western provincial ministers of agriculture of their concerns and at the very least that the Special Crops Rural Initiative Program be truly voluntary at both the growers and the special crops dealers.

This resolution aptly describes what Bill C-26 has failed to do. It fails to give farmers a choice, not unlike what the government did with Bill C-4, which failed to give farmers a choice in how they would sell their wheat. The compulsory nature of special crops insurance is a form of negative option billing. Today's producers run large operations and should not have to apply to opt out and then receive their money back if they do not wish to participate.

Farming businesses should have the right to decide themselves if they want to be bonded or licensed and, if so, to pay the bills themselves. Producers should have the choice to decide for themselves that there is too much risk selling to unlicensed buyers. Special crops producers would be better off having a choice between selling to large licensed grain dealers and small unlicensed grain dealers. That would make sense.

That being said, I must also mention the constructive work that was done at the committee level on this legislation. The committee looked at several issues of concern and the government introduced several amendments to make this legislation better for western Canadian farmers. The committee members from all parties actually supported some of the government amendments. To the surprise of many members on this side of the House, the government actually provided some reasonably sound amendments. However, Bill C-26 would have been much better for western Canadian farmers if government members had voted in favour of the PC Party's amendments at report stage.

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The bill is composed of three parts. It would first repeal the Grain Futures Act. In essence, the Grain Futures Act allows for the province of Manitoba, through the Manitoba Securities Commission, to regulate the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange instead of the federal government through its Canadian Grains Commission. This is related to the Manitoba Commodities Futures Act which was enacted by the Manitoba government. This was an idea suggested by the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange.

• (1510)

The WCE wants to access the hog industry. Instead of working with two separate regulators, the WCE will conduct all of its business through the Manitoba Securities Commission. This is a positive change for the agriculture industry and the PC party supports this aspect of the bill.

Second, it would amend the Canada Grain Act to allow specialty crops, for example soybeans, to fall under crop insurance plans. This would also permit the separation of licensing and security provisions for specialty crops dealers. This government believes that the inability to separate these two activities has been the primary problem in developing an insurance plan for the special crops industry of western Canada. By forcing such a separation in law and by putting the administration of a voluntary insurance plan under the Canada Grain Commission, Bill C-26 would remove the onus on special crops dealers to post costly security against the possibility of their default in payment to special crops producers.

The Canadian Export Development Corporation, CEDC, would be the insurer.

Also the government would lead people to believe that the insurance plan is voluntary. There are many people in the farming community who are sceptical that this insurance plan is voluntary.

Third, the bill would incorporate the Canada Grain Act within the Agriculture and Agri-Food Administrative Monetary Penalties Act, thereby allowing the Canadian Grain Commission to impose fines for most violations of the Canada Grain Act and its regulations. This is a positive legislative measure because it enables the Canadian Grain Commission to be more flexible and effective.

I conclude by saying that the PC party supports this bill. But we could have made this a much better piece of legislation if the government had supported the amendments put forward by our party. It is our job as legislators to work together in a non-partisan way, for the benefit of all Canadians, to try to do what is best for all Canadians and, in this instance, what is best for western Canadian farmers. I hope that in the future, and at all times in our deliberations in this Chamber and in the committee rooms, we try to work together, not against each other, to help all Canadians.

Private Members' Business

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my understanding that the Reform Party spokesperson on this issue is not available this afternoon and neither is the critic for the Bloc Québécois.

Therefore, I move:

That we adjourn the debate to allow both their spokespersons to speak again on the resumption of debate, if they wish, and that, if the House accepts that motion, we proceed to Private Members' Business.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there agreement to proceed in this way?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Madam Speaker, I propose that we set the clock as being 5.30 p.m., so that we may proceed to Private Members' Business.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there agreement to set the clock as being 5.30 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSIONS

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Government should, as part of a global effort to minimize climate change, develop a strategy for reducing carbon dioxide emissions in Canada possibly by 20%, based on 1988 levels, by the year 2005.

• (1515)

He said: Madam Speaker, climate change is probably the most complex and difficult issue of our times because it requires the application of social, economic and environmental policies. This is a classical sustainable development issue.

Our geography, sparse population, climate and distances make for a high per capita production of greenhouse gases, second only to the United States of America. However, current federal policies require attention because they encourage increased production of greenhouse gases.

At the same time innovative thinking and policies in Canada have come forward mainly from municipalities. For example, members of the 20% club are municipalities that have committed

to reduce their 1990 levels of greenhouse gas emission by the year 2000. Members of this club include the cities of Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, Regina, Edmonton and 32 other municipalities.

It must be stressed that the issue is not new to us in Canada. A delegation of the Canadian government participated in climate change conferences in 1991 in Geneva, in 1995 in Berlin and long before Kyoto. It might be useful to remember also that in Toronto the 1986 conference on energy and climate produced a resolution by the scientific community at that time to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by the year 2005.

This is not a new issue and the political commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions soon followed. The Liberal Party made a commitment in the 1988 election platform and again in the 1993 election platform to reduce emissions by 20% by the year 2005 based on 1988 emissions at that time.

Today, having committed at Kyoto to reductions of 60% below current levels by the year 2010 when we are already 13% above those levels, we must honestly recognize that we are five years and 19% behind in terms of having to catch up. Nevertheless, as if nothing had been said so far, we seem to be blissfully continuing with policies which compound rather than resolve the problem. I will provide some examples.

In 1996 the Minister of Finance introduced a special tax concession for the oil sands industry, an industry which produces several times the amount of greenhouse gases produced from conventional oil extraction. This tax concession, in addition to making the task of reducing emissions more difficult, may cost Canadian taxpayers up to \$800 million in forgone revenue. How can we successfully achieve the Kyoto goals with this kind of perverse tax incentive?

Another example is that Canadians who use urban transit regularly need recognition. The Minister of Finance seems unaware of the importance of making employer provided monthly transit passes a tax free benefit. On the other hand a tax free status is provided to those who provide their employees with monthly parking permits. On this subject the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has asked for this concession every year since 1990 without result so far.

Another example is the embarrassing sight of landfills producing methane and other gases at present being flared off into the atmosphere and increasing greenhouse gas emissions rather than their being captured and converted to energy. The municipalities need assistance from federal and provincial governments to capture these gases, to redirect them to district heating systems and at the same time to lower these emissions.

• (1520)

To make it easier for Canada to achieve the Kyoto objective, we therefore need something that could be called a Canadian atmo-

spheric fund. It would be patterned on the Toronto atmospheric fund established in 1992.

The Canadian atmospheric fund needs start-up capital. In the case of Canada, it could easily require \$300 million, which would be used for loans to projects such as landfill gas initiatives. The interest earned on loans and other investments can then be recirculated to other worthy projects.

In Toronto the fund has grown by over 100% since 1992, making it almost certain that Toronto will meet its 20% goal by the year 2000. This is a remarkable achievement.

In the case of railways, the Minister of Transport is currently presiding over the closure of railway lines all over the prairies. Grain elevators are being served more and more by diesel trucks emitting four times as many greenhouse gases as trains do.

Incidentally it must be also noted that in Canada the use of diesel trucks increased by 30% between 1990 and 1995. Obviously the policy of closing railway lines ought to be reversed if we are serious about Kyoto. This will certainly cause a major and difficult problem.

In addition, fleet performance is a low priority in the Department of Transport. There seems to be no visible action yet to provide impetus and incentives to the automotive industry to produce lower consumption vehicles.

There is no progressive taxation of gas guzzlers in order to register a clear message with consumers. There are no mandatory fuel economy standards. In short, there is very little to write home about.

Over the years it has become evident that natural gas will be the answer. We have plenty of it and we need a gradual conversion to natural gas and away from the other fossil fuels which produce much more greenhouse gases.

Therefore, in the light of this, Alberta could be the great winner in the race toward reduction of greenhouse gases, provided of course that Alberta legislators take a leadership role rather than wait as it seems to be doing now for the electorate to give it the green light.

The House may recall that at the time of the oil shock we discovered something we have since forgotten. Let me cover this aspect for a moment, namely the value of conservation and efficiency through building insulation and through retrofitting.

Successful programs were launched in the late 1970s and early 1980s to encourage Canadians to insulate their homes, to switch from gasoline to propane powered engines and to engage in all forms of energy conservation. These programs unfortunately were discontinued during the Mulroney years.

Then we come to the never ending saga of renewable energy sources, the poor cousins of non-renewable sources. Since 1985

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the proponents of renewable energies have asked successive finance ministers that a level playing field treatment be given to them, that they be given the same preferential treatment given to petroleum and other fossil fuel industries. This area requires particular attention.

A word or two now about the recently created climate change secretariat, which is definitely a step in the right direction and a good measure. It is supposed to deliver the Kyoto commitment through the combined efforts of two departments, natural resources and environment.

Important as they are, these two departments alone cannot deliver the required results. The secretariat has to pull in other key departments: finance, transport, public works, agriculture and industry. The secretariat needs to develop an integrated effort with all these departments.

• (1525)

Why? It is because the transport sector alone is responsible for almost one-third of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. Why again? It is because the Department of Finance is responsible for the perverse and, if it is willing, beneficial tax subsidies it can introduce. In other words, the scope and authority of the proposed and now in place secretariat need to be expanded and reinforced if it is to accomplish its difficult task.

Before concluding I will say a few words about being seduced by promises of reductions through emissions trading or joint implementations and other clever mechanisms meant to make Canada and other countries look good on paper without delivering real substantive reductions; in other words hot air as some people call it in the climate change world.

There are at least four requirements that I submit would be meaningful and useful in connection with emission trading. First, an emission trading system must be accompanied by a cap on total emissions. Trading without a cap does not produce the desired results. If we are to reduce greenhouse gases the cap must be moved downward as time progresses. Second, reductions must be real and not merely reductions on paper. Third, reduction must be quantifiable and verifiable. Fourth, the system must be enforceable. If reductions are not met then there must be meaningful sanctions such as progressive fines that increase for every tonne of emissions above the agreed upon level.

Joint implementation—and I hate to use this technical word but it is inevitable in the climate change business—is usually understood to mean claiming credit in one country for reductions achieved abroad. There are limits to its value. Taking credit for reductions in other countries is not a substitute for reductions in Canada, for instance. The use of Canadian technology and innovations to achieve reductions in developing countries is a very useful endeavour. I do not deny that at all. However taking credit for

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reductions abroad should not prevent us from taking substantive action in Canada.

In this context it is important to note that when questioned about the merits of joint implementation in the emissions credit the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development said this week that it will take a long time before credits and joint implementation can be part of an overall plan.

In conclusion, we have already waited a long time. That is why we will likely fail to meet our commitments made before Kyoto and if we are to meet our Kyoto commitments we must act very soon. There are reasons why at present we produce such a high quantity of greenhouse gases. I indicated them at the beginning of this intervention, but now we have to change our ways and our policies.

The Kyoto commitment could benefit our economy to a considerable extent because it would force us to use energy in a judicious and more efficient manner, removing unnecessary and costly tax concessions. It will also force us to concentrate efforts on the production of energy via renewable resources in the long term and a shift to natural gas, of which we have plenty. In the process I am sure we will become more competitive in our economy and we will earn the respect of the international community.

We have to pull our weight. We have agreed to do that. Therefore we have to come to grips with the root causes of climate change and launch probably one of the most exciting and difficult plans that the Government of Canada has ever come across since its inception.

• (1530)

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the motion put forward by the member for Davenport proposes that the government should, as part of a global effort to minimize climate change, develop a strategy for reducing carbon dioxide emissions in Canada possibly by 20% based on 1988 levels by the year 2005.

This target is far more ambitious than the target agreed to by this government last December in Kyoto when an internationally binding agreement was signed to reduce Canada's emission levels by 19% by the year 2012.

It is ironic that we in the House are debating this motion in the same week that the standing committee on environment, which the member for Davenport chairs, has tabled a damning report on the environment department's enforcement of its Environmental Protection Act. It is also the same week that the commissioner on the environment has tabled his report on the environment that essentially gives this government an *F* on its ability to manage our environment.

The target set by this motion is highly unrealistic given that the commissioner on the environment just reported that he does not believe it is possible for Canada to reach the goals established at Kyoto.

The timeline for this motion, approximately 20% emission reduction by the year 2000, is clearly unrealistic. The environment minister probably will not have a strategy in place by the end of 1999.

Clearly a lot of work needs to be done before this government is capable of sorting out the details that must be considered before it can get close to devising any sort of strategy.

One of my serious concerns that this government fails to recognize and which is missing in this motion is the other players, the provinces, industry and Canadians.

Government cannot unilaterally establish a target. It must work with the provinces. It is not enough to just consult with Canadians. It is absolutely essential that government work in co-operation with the rest of Canada.

Reform has clearly taken the position, before and during the negotiations at Kyoto, that the federal government work with the provinces to set a mutually agreed on target. That was the purpose of the Regina accord.

Last November federal and provincial governments met and established a joint position on emissions and reductions. They agreed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2010. Yet a month later the government singlehandedly overturned the Regina position when the Prime Minister announced his own target of 3% below 1990 levels by 2010.

The Prime Minister was more concerned with beating the Americans than with setting realistic, acceptable standards for Canada. Surely Canada's interests deserve more consideration than this.

It appeared there was no other rationale behind these randomly chosen targets. No wonder the provinces were up in arms. These targets clearly placed Canada in a bad negotiating position when it went to the table in Kyoto.

To make matters worse, this government came out of Kyoto with a deal that was even worse. Without the support of the provinces, the Liberals agreed in Kyoto to a reduction of 6% below 1990 levels, which means a 19% reduction in only 10 years. This was not a national position but a federal government initiative. That is why to date the Liberals have failed to gain the co-operation of the provinces.

What the Liberals fail to recognize is that responding to climate change is an area of shared jurisdiction. Under the Constitution Act of 1867 there is no explicit mention of the environment and the division of federal and provincial powers. The provinces have jurisdiction over their natural resources, including energy production. They have control over power generation, building codes and

transportation. The federal government has jurisdiction over trans-boundary air pollution. Therefore responsibilities for taking action and for developing public policies to address issues such as climate change are shared.

Unfortunately, as we noted in the House time and time again and as the commissioner of the environment pointed out again this week in his report, the Liberal government refuses to work with the provinces. There are no clear and transparent agreements between governments that specifically define their respective roles and responsibilities in achieving the stabilization goal.

At the same time, federal roles and responsibilities have not been made clear. Leadership has been split between the natural resources and environment departments but nobody seems to know who is in charge. On one hand, the Liberals want to have the lead role in climate change but on the other hand, they refuse to hold themselves accountable.

• (1535)

According to the environment commissioner, the federal government has failed to devise an acceptable means by which it can be held accountable for its leadership on the climate change issue and for federal participation in implementing Canada's national action program on climate change, the NAPCC.

Not only is there an absolute lack of accountability with this government, there is also a vacuum of information. According to the environment commissioner, there is no written plan to implement the strategic direction of the national action program on climate change. The national action program on climate change is silent on the regime to measure and monitor results. There is no information on the results achieved from government actions.

Clear and concrete performance expectations have generally not been established. Implementation milestones and interim targets have not been defined. Before we devise a strategy as proposed by Motion 38, we must understand the implications and costs of the deal. This should have been done before Canada signed the Kyoto agreement. Yet six months after Canada has committed itself to legally binding emissions reductions, this government is still unable to give Canadians an estimate on the cost of living up to these obligations. The only studies that have been available are from external sources. These are the only studies that department officials have been able to refer to and they show the cost would be enormous.

According to a study prepared by the Business Council on National Issues, achieving the Kyoto target levels would require one of the following measures.

We would have to remove all Canadian cars and light trucks from the road or we would have to remove 90% of commercial

trucks and air, railway and marine transportation, or Canada would have to eliminate heating of all homes, all commercial buildings and all national gas distribution, or Canada would have to shut down three quarters of its fossil fuel power generation.

These are examples of the magnitude of the deal signed at Kyoto. The Kyoto agreement could cost billions to Canadians. Clearly governments need additional information on the costs and benefits of inaction as well as the costs and benefits of action. Such information is needed to make a sound cost-benefit decision.

Yet a 1996 review of the NAPCC reported that little or no work was under way in Canada to assess the economic implications of inaction. Canada must be a leader in setting high environmental standards while maintaining a global competitive position and good economic performance. In addressing emissions reductions nationally, the needs of both industry and the environment must be balanced.

Canada's economic interests must be protected. Yet the only way to protect Canada's economic interests is to ensure that internationally we have a level playing field. Developing nations must be an integral part of the solution. Canada has already achieved 80% of its goals in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Most of the growth in greenhouse gas emissions is expected to come from developing countries.

Countries such as China and India will be the world's largest emitters of greenhouse gases by early next century. However, developing countries do not have to participate in reductions and they did not sign the agreement in Kyoto. The possibility of climate change is a global issue and it must be addressed collectively.

Developing countries are responsible for 40% of the world's emissions. Canada is only responsible for 2%. In the next 15 years it is estimated developing countries will be responsible for 60% of the world's emissions.

The American government is taking the position that it will not participate in an agreement unless the developing countries sign on. The provinces have agreed Canada should not sign unless 75% of the countries responsible for greenhouse gas emissions sign on. If developing countries are not part of the discussion about climate change and rising greenhouse gas emissions, there will not be a solution.

Any proposed goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions will not be achieved without their participation. Before Canada ratifies any agreement, both developed and developing countries must participate equally in the protocol.

We must ensure that any commitments made are in Canada's interests and recognize Canada's unique circumstances. A national consensus should be gained before international commitments are

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made. Any greenhouse gas emission targets must be realistic, achievable and based on sound scientific evidence.

● (1540)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak today on an issue of paramount importance. The hon. member for Davenport is giving us an opportunity to address the important issue of climate change and this government's inability to develop a strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Canada.

I shall take a moment to read this very interesting motion:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should, as part of a global effort to minimize climate change, develop a strategy for reducing carbon dioxide emissions in Canada possibly by 20%, based on 1998 levels, by the year 2005.

Let me go over the key elements of this motion: global effort, strategy and 20% reduction. These are the elements I will address today in the time allocated to me to speak on this issue.

I shall focus first on the global reduction effort referred to in today's motion. This is an important point because Canada has traditionally been a world leader in the effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but that was before the Liberals took office in 1993.

If we take a look back at the 1992 conference in Rio, we can see that Canada was then actively involved in safeguarding our environment. Canada was in fact the first of more than 150 nations to sign the framework agreement. It worked hard on bringing these nations to join forces in fighting greenhouse gases. In those days, Canada took a leadership role on the international scene, encouraging other nations to act responsibly and take positive measures to counter climatic changes.

Unfortunately, one year later, the world lost a key player after the Liberal Party came to power in Canada. That party made Canada go from the position of world leader on the environment to that of a burden for the international community, and this is no exaggeration.

First, Canada is the world's second largest per capita polluter, in terms of greenhouse gases. As such, it cannot act as if it is not concerned by the issue. The Liberals came to office in 1993, one year after the signing of the international agreement in Rio.

What is the situation now, after five years of Liberal government? We produce 9% more greenhouse gases than we did in 1990. If the pattern is maintained, the Liberal Party will lead us to a 13% increase by the year 2000, while the Rio accord provided that emissions should be stabilized, which means a 0% increase. The Liberal Party has totally ignored Canada's international commitment to reduce greenhouse gases.

But there is more. The list of this government's environmental failures at the international level continues. As we know, the all important Kyoto negotiations took place last year. Once again, countries from all over the world got together to agree on targets for reducing greenhouse gases. The issue was very important, because this time the parties were trying to agree on objectives that would include legal obligations.

Let us take a look at Canada's role in these negotiations. First, while the governments of most developed countries were holding national debates on the issue of climatic changes in the year preceding the Kyoto summit, the federal government merely watched the train go by without worrying about anything. After discussing these issues internally, the G-7 members began to adopt a position on the international scene. In other words, these countries were already beginning to negotiate at the international level a position with which they would be comfortable.

Where was the Government of Canada? What was the position of the country that played a leading role in 1992? No one could tell. In fact, the Canadian government dragged its feet to the point of being the last G-7 member to present a bargaining position. While other countries were openly negotiating at the international level, the Liberal cabinet kept wondering what position to adopt. Some leadership.

● (1545)

The federal government has, of course, done everything in its power to cover up the amateur and incompetent way it has handled this. It has, for example, tried to justify its immobility by invoking the need to consult the provinces. Who could be opposed to consultation?

The problem here is that the federal government woke up a month before the Kyoto deadline, when it finally got around to calling together the provincial ministers of environment and natural resources at Regina.

I need not point out that these negotiations had been so well prepared by this government that they ended up in a disagreement between Quebec and the Canadian provinces. The provinces did, however, manage to reach agreement on a minimum position for reductions.

A month later, the very day they were leaving for Kyoto, the Canadian ministers of the environment and natural resources finally made public a negotiating position, a 3% reduction. Because they were the last to do so on the international scene, one would assume that this position was at least the object of consensus within Canada.

Unfortunately, this was not the case. The Canadian position was denounced immediately by the provinces, which had agreed to a different objective just the month before. In short, the federal

government did not play a leadership role on either the national or the international level. In both cases it failed miserably at getting its vision across.

This is why the reference to the world-wide effort in the motion of the hon. member for Davenport is so important here. While it did not commit to reduce gas emissions to the same extent as the United States, France, Germany or England, Canada must at least take steps to honour its commitment. To this end, the government must implement a strategy, and this is the second topic I want to address today.

Strategy is too strong a word to describe the Liberal government's action in connection with climate change. In fact, unless the Liberals had actually planned for their reduction effort to fail, it would be more appropriate to talk about Liberal ad-libbing. I am not the only one to say this, as the sponsor of today's motion knows.

This week, the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development tabled a report in which it makes caustic comments on the current government. It explains clearly why the federal Department of the Environment is presently unable to protect public health and the environment.

In our view, two serious problems are undermining the department's very credibility as far as meeting any environmental challenge is concerned: the chronic lack of resources and the possibility of unacceptable interference by senior management in the decision making process.

We were astonished to learn, for instance, that only half of the regulations for which the federal government is responsible in Quebec will be implemented in 1998-99, for lack of resources.

In addition, employees told of several cases of undue interference on the part of senior management in the past. During the standing committee's hearings, one manager even refused to answer our questions on this issue, for fear of reprisals.

The federal government has been aware of this situation since at least 1995. Why did it not change the decision structure which continues to favour such interference? In this case, as in the case of climactic change, there is a flagrant lack of political will on the part of the Liberal government to protect the environment and honour international commitments.

In addition to paralysing the Department of the Environment through draconian cuts, the Liberal government has not established who would be directing federal efforts to reduce greenhouse gases. I refer to the report by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development. He pointed clearly to federal improvisation in the reduction of toxic gases.

In conclusion, I support the motion of the member for Davenport and I wish that his government would read it and take note as soon

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as possible. I have my doubts, however, because the motion repeats verbatim a promise in the 1993 red book. Up to now, the Liberal Party has forgotten anything in the red book more often than not, now that it is in power.

• (1550)

[English]

Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am speaking on Motion No. M-38 submitted by the hon. member for Davenport, that in the opinion of the House the government should as part of a global effort to minimize climate change, develop a strategy in reducing carbon dioxide emissions in Canada possibly by 20% based on 1988 levels by the year 2005.

I commend my hon. colleague for his efforts to bring this debate to the House. It is very timely. Next week delegations from Canada and throughout the world will be gathering in Bonn, Germany in preparation for the Argentina talks that will take place in Buenos Aires in November. COP-4, as it will be deemed in Argentina, will decide on many of the major initiatives the nation states of this world can make toward reducing greenhouse gases.

As the New Democratic Party representative on the standing committee, it has been an honour for me to participate with the hon. member who serves as chair in the dialogue on greenhouse gases. The committee set out directions for our negotiators in Kyoto to emphasize a solid foundation for long term emissions reduction and to initiate public education and engagement in activities by the public, research and development, science and technology, and to make sure there is cost efficiency when dealing with emissions trading or joint implementation, that it is not just window dressing for greenhouse gases for industries to buy their way out of trouble.

Another major issue is that we need quick start initiatives immediately. That was also a contention of the environment commissioner. Those have not started at all. There could be cost shared basis projects, pilot projects for communities and municipalities, major research projects with industries and institutions of higher learning and engaging with developing countries on joint implementation issues.

These two major topics were a challenge and a major test for this government. My hon. colleague mentioned that his party platform was to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20%. I believe the Progressive Conservatives took that position. The Bloc advocates major reduction targets of up to 20%. The New Democratic Party advocates a 20% reduction target.

The only party that still will not take this test is the Reform Party. It will still not admit that greenhouse gases will have a major impact on our society, our world and our way of life. Its bottom line is still dollars, what it will cost.

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The provinces have to acknowledge that there will be costs. There will be a cost for the impacts associated with addressing the greenhouse gas emissions issue. But the issue is one of transitional measures. The provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Nova Scotia have been dragging their feet in coming alongside this because an industrial transition is involved here.

As Canadians and as citizens of the world we should take this challenge. In the test we have gone through this week, the environment department is a battered department. It should be taking the lead. A secretariat for dealing with climate change was recently established and two ministers were appointed as its co-leaders. Only one minister should take the lead on this issue for Canada. It is a sad fact that we should take on ourselves collectively as Canadians and as a government.

• (1555)

If we target to 2005 the 20% reduction, that is a major reduction within seven years. In seven years there is a measurable target we can take. In that measurable time we should be bringing on our youth, our children, the future generations, the people of the new millennium, the people we are going to leave our state of the nation with.

We should have our young people out there, empower them to be a conscience to our way of life. Why are they not knocking on the Bank of Canada's door every night when the Bank of Canada leaves its lights on 24 hours? Why are they not knocking on government department doors to be a conscience?

In the headlines we read of language officers in the province of Quebec being conscious about protecting their language in businesses, advertising and with the people of Quebec. Why could we not do that and empower our youth right now who are in dire need of employment?

We could do it this summer as a quick start initiative. We could send our youth to senior citizens homes. They could install R-40 or R-60 insulation in ceilings, put second and third panes on house windows to keep the temperature cool inside in the summer and the warm air inside in the winter. Let us do it now. Let us empower our children now. Let us empower our youth. Let us challenge ourselves.

Let us challenge ourselves as the hon. member mentioned and not abandon our railroads. Our railroads are the cleanest form of transporting goods in this country. The railroads were designed to unite this country from coast to coast. There is no northern railroad that connects the third coast or along the midportion of Canada. It only connects the southern portion. We cannot be selfish in that way.

We can talk of the whole issue of sinks in the equation of emissions trading, deciding how much our country has created in emissions. We deduct the sinks so our land use policies, our

reforestation policies have to come into play. We must reforest immediately the vast tracts of land which have been left bare. If man can cut the trees down, man can grow the trees. Let us do it.

The farmers and our agricultural community do not know the impact of what greenhouse gases and the future of the Kyoto agreement could have on their industry. Let us be fair, honest and forward and talk in a language that is not beyond anyone's terminology. Let us be open with the media. There should be public dialogue. There should be a public exchange. A secretariat should be formed immediately and be open to the public. I do not even know where they are on Parliament Hill. They have to be active now.

We made an agreement in Rio de Janeiro that should have been started, enacted and completed by the year 2000. Nothing is going to be done about it. We know we have failed on that measure.

Let us take the Kyoto agreement and take the challenges as the hon. member for Davenport has done. Let us raise the height of the bars and improve ourselves and look at the impact. I challenge the Reform members, I challenge the provinces, I challenge anyone who questions this issue to look at the impacts to the permafrost in the north.

As the permafrost falls and the heat rises in the northern regions of this country, the permafrost will no longer hold and bind the biomass and the soft soils will erode. As the heat rises in the glacial areas in the northern regions, heat deflects off of white and when the white glacier melts the heat will be attracted to the darker ground and the vegetation under that glacial melt.

The national action program on climate change has to be invigorated with a multi-department initiative not only by NRC the odd time when it is politically correct. We need the power of the Prime Minister behind this whole initiative. As leader of this country we need the Prime Minister's office to take a lead on this most drastic issue that is going to have an effect 100 to 150 years from now. We are going to generate a huge impact on our grandchildren in a higher climate and a higher economic travesty we will not even know.

• (1600)

Unfortunately there is no time to continue and I am only half way through my speech. I put my weight behind the challenge that the member for Davenport has stated and the Kyoto deal that this government and all the nations of the world have signed. Let us take on the challenge, the transportation challenge, our lifestyle challenge and let us empower our youth and create jobs by doing it.

Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to join the dialogue on this motion. This motion has been tabled before the House in the most constructive way in order to raise further attention to a very critical issue that challenges our country, our economy and the world community.

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It was only a few months ago that a number of individuals who spoke participated in a take note debate leading up to the climate change conference in Kyoto. During that debate we had the honour to listen to a number of individuals who have a very sincere interest in protecting our environment. I was very pleased to have had the opportunity to listen to a former environment minister, the hon. Jean Charest, who participated in that debate. He contributed to the world community with respect to climate change and played a role in Rio. I was very honoured to be a member of his team during that debate.

I was also very honoured to listen to other individuals, in particular the member for Davenport. He is definitely a well respected environmental crusader. Ultimately he deserves a fair amount of credit with respect to initiatives on the environment that may come to fruition and an increase in budget.

The issue of why this creates so much topic these days, when we look at it from our country's perspective, is that perhaps no country lives off its environment or natural resources more than we do. Whether it be our industries of pulp and paper, mining and other resource industries, a fair amount of our economy relies on living off our environment.

The other thing that drives our economy is export. A high proportion of our gross domestic product is exported. We currently export over \$210 billion each year to the United States. Later on I will explain how that comes into play.

The issue we are talking about is why is climate change an issue in the first place. I would like to read the second paragraph of a press release tabled by the commissioner for the environment earlier this week: "Climate change is perhaps the most difficult of all environmental problems facing governments around the world. Possible long term affects such as drier summers in the prairies, increases in forest fires and insect infestations, coastal flooding and more frequent extreme weather events could be devastating for Canada and all Canadians". These are some of the effects of climate change.

One thing I am very sad to point out, reading from section 3.28 of the auditor general's report, is that there is still one political party in this House that denounces the signs on climate change. It is too bad the member for Calgary Southwest is not here to listen to this debate. I can assure members he has an awful lot to learn when it comes to scientific evidence with respect to this very important issue.

I read from the IPCC report issued in 1995. The international community of esteemed scientists throughout the world clearly stated that the balance and evidence suggests that there is a discernible human influence on global climate change. The science on climate change is from a practical perspective beyond dispute.

• (1605)

We as parliamentarians have really failed in the last number of months with respect to this issue. We focused a lot on targets and timelines. To some degree this motion focuses on that as well.

We owe Canadians, we owe the environmental community, we owe the global community more of a contribution on how we get the job done as opposed to focusing more on mere targets and timelines.

Targets and timelines are necessary from the standpoint of what gets measured gets done. We need to start addressing some of the issues that are most important. Any decision made by government with respect to the environment I believe should follow three principles.

It must be based on science. In this case it is. It is the government's role to actually enhance it. Therefore it must be enhanced by government and it must be anchored in society's will.

The Government of Canada and the governments of the provinces and industry have a moral obligation to ensure the Canadian population is engaged in this very serious and real issue.

We should focus immediately on true quick start initiatives in terms of providing industry with aggressive tax incentives with respect to research and development on energy efficiency initiatives, with aggressive tax incentives for industry and for private citizens for the use of renewable energies.

We should have research and development of an aggressive nature with respect to energy efficiency initiatives. Those three things we should really focus on right from the start. We should move in that direction.

Look at some of these no regrets philosophies in terms of what we should be doing ultimately. For other reasons from a transportation perspective, and the member for Davenport talked about this, why would we not want to provide tax incentives for the use of public transportation passes?

There are many gains in terms of what would benefit our economy. I clearly support that initiative and I assure members I will be talking to our finance critic on that issue to make sure he is on side as well. I am sure the member for Davenport will be working on his finance minister on that topic.

Why this becomes a very important issue for us as a country is that we trade \$200 billion to \$210 billion each year with the Americans. Our ability to compete on the world stage relies on our ability to actually trade and compete.

The Americans have pledged to spend as much as \$7.4 billion U.S. on energy efficiency initiatives, on the use of renewable energy sources. When Americans do something they usually do it quite well. If they are to engage in making their industries that much more energy efficient, that much more cost competitive, if

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Canada does not have similar initiatives within our economy led by the Minister of Finance that will have very negative implications on our country's competitiveness because our industries simply will not be able to compete in the long run.

What this requires is prime ministerial leadership like we saw with respect to the earth summit with former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and former environment minister Jean Charest. We need that kind of involvement as well.

Although we know this is a very daunting task, we have been challenged like this before. I refer to the issue of acid rain. Initially industry said it would be economic armageddon if we had to change the way we operate our industries. The bottom line was that a lot of those industries were actually able to be that much more energy efficient and that much more cost effective by actually changing the processes in terms of how they operate. Acid rain is an example that we can look at and say this issue can actually be addressed.

The Minister of Finance loves to talk about our record. I love to talk about our environmental record. I am sad that the Minister of Finance does not have the opportunity to actually listen to these comments.

• (1610)

I applaud our initiatives in terms of acid rain, the hon. Jean Charest's initiative with respect to the green plan, the former Prime Minister's leadership with respect to the earth summit, a national packaging protocol and Tom MacMillan and Jean Charest when they brought in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

Those are the kinds of things I like to look back on at our environmental record. I want to work in the most non-partisan fashion possible so we can address this very serious issue of climate change. I applaud the member for Davenport for continuing to add to this debate.

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me very quickly thank all the participants in this debate for their comments and in some cases their suggestions. I thank the members for Rosemont, Churchill River and Fundy—Royal for their intense and active co-operation in committee where we work together.

The member for Saskatoon—Humboldt made an interesting point which I agree with that there has to be in achieving the Kyoto goal very a intensive form of co-operation with the provinces, the municipalities and the private sector. He found the motion before us today ambitious or a bit too strong, but it was written three

months before Kyoto. As it stands now, six months later it is only 1% of the mark.

One has to aim high in order to achieve the Kyoto commitment five years after the year 2005. As to his reference to the BCNI paper one can only say that it is shortsighted and ill informed, bordering on lunacy, intent only on fearmongering.

I agree with him when he emphasized that a national commitment is needed. We now have a national commitment. As indicated by the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of National Resources, it has been achieved well after the meeting in Kyoto.

Unfortunately during his 10 minutes the member for Rosemont engaged in partisan politics at great length. He gave us an historic overview as seen from the opposition benches month by month in very precise chronology. It was basically a partisan attack on federalism intended to prove that federalism does not work, which of course is something that we do not and cannot agree with. There are faults and shortcomings, that is true, but on the whole for a country of the size of Canada if we did not have federalism we would have to invent it.

I look forward to another debate when the member for Rosemont will give us the benefit of his ideas on how to tackle climate change and the ideas of his party. I am sure he has some very valuable and interesting ideas to put forward which we have been deprived of today.

The member for Churchill River made a very constructive intervention. He referred to the Bonn meeting, which is a good reminder. He spoke about transitional measures, a very interesting concept. He spoke about the new millennium people which I find a very interesting aspect of this issue because it is a long term intergenerational issue. There is a lot of potential in what he said.

He also made an interesting reference to buildings which are lit up all night, which is a luxury that we should do without.

I conclude by thanking the member for Fundy—Royal. He spoke about the three principles, which are very good, and the importance of becoming more effective in energy production.

If we are to achieve the Kyoto goals we have to have a very strong secretariat and very strong political leadership.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped from the order paper.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to order made Tuesday, February 17, 1998, the House stands adjourned until Monday, June 1, 1998 at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 4.14 p.m.)

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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

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