



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, June 2, 1998**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 2, 1998

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1005)

[*English*]

## COMMONWEALTH SPEAKERS AND PRESIDING OFFICERS

**The Speaker:** My colleagues, I have the honour to lay upon the table the report of the 14th Conference of Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers which took place at Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, January 2 to 8, 1998.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*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 10 petitions.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk—Brant, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to present to the House a report from the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association concerning the 47th Commonwealth parliamentary seminar which took place March 3 to 14, 1998 in the United Kingdom.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, it was attended by a very able opposition member of the Reform Party who is sitting in the Chair.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Thank you very much. I was most honoured to attend that conference representing our parliament.

\* \* \*

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CANADIAN HERITAGE

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to its order of reference of Friday, April 3, 1998, the committee has considered Bill C-38, an act to amend the National Parks Act, and has agreed to report it without amendment.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### NATIONAL SYMBOL OF CANADIAN UNITY ACT

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-413, an act to provide for the recognition of a national symbol for the promotion of Canadian unity.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce my private member's bill, which is an act to provide for the recognition of a national symbol for the promotion of Canadian unity.

The purpose of this bill is to promote Canadian unity and to provide a symbol which assists in this very important endeavour. I look forward to debating this bill in the House and I look forward to the support of my colleagues.

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

\* \* \*

• (1010)

### INCOME TAX ACT

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-414, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (wages of apprentices).

*Routine Proceedings*

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce my private member's bill, an act to amend the Income Tax Act. [English]

The purpose of the bill is to allow an employer a tax credit equal to the wages paid by the employer to a person hired as an apprentice. This deduction could only be made upon completion of the full term of the apprenticeship with the employer.

I look forward to debating the bill in the House and I look forward to the support of my colleagues.

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

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CRIMINAL CODE**

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-415, an act to amend the Criminal Code (gaming and betting).

He said: I wish to inform this House, and you in particular, Mr. Speaker, that if passed this bill would allow international cruise ships to continue operating casinos on board while in Canadian waters.

I am reintroducing this bill because it is essential to the Quebec tourist industry, particularly in the greater Quebec City region, as this region could then undergo an incredible expansion as a destination and stopover for international cruise ships.

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

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**CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT**

**Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg, BQ)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-416, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (accelerated parole reviews).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this bill, the purpose of which is to prevent high-profile criminals from getting paroled after serving one-sixth of their sentence, even if the crimes for which they have been sentenced were not of a violent nature.

The latest example of this is Mr. Lagana, a notorious drug trafficker specializing in money laundering who, unfortunately, was granted parole after serving one-sixth of his sentence. The purpose of this bill is to prevent such decisions.

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

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I move that the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, presented on Thursday, May 7, 1998, be concurred in.

• (1015)

I rise today representing the constituents of Edmonton East to move concurrence in this motion. As the sands of time run out on the 20th century they do too for Canada's World War II veterans who were captured and enslaved by Japan 57 years ago.

On Christmas Day in 1941, 2,000 soldiers surrendered to Japan beginning a 44 month tenure of a hell of inhumanity at the hands of the Japanese and at the feet of Emperor Hirohito. Many barely survived, only to suffer lifelong misery from the effects of Japan's engineered slave labour camps. These men were sentenced to pay with their lives and health by a Canadian government eager for a war posting and by an enemy, Japan, indifferent to humanitarian treatment and the Geneva convention.

Japan went on to recover from its war injuries to prosper as an industrial giant, somewhat due to our veterans' efforts. Canada's Hong Kong enslavement veterans deserve an apology and some recompense. It is fair. It is right and the Liberals agree.

Some of these very modern industries then employed slave labour treating the workers with brutality beyond contempt. On the eve of the new millennium as we face the globalization of the international marketplace, Canada must take a leadership role in insisting that we Canadians are not simply purveyors of timber and oilfield technology. Canadians also export our Constitution and Charter of Rights and Freedoms. When the outside world sees our flag, the symbol of our nation, it feels warm in the solace that it stands for freedom and rights of all Canadians.

Our government could do well and reflect on this to act to redress wrongs committed years ago to our brave veterans. By example Canada could lead the way to show to other nations as Japan that their shame is our shame if we do not act.

Japan's shame is well documented in all the nations of the world except Japan itself. Revisionists and extinguishment of history may well suit the Japanese population as a whole but Canada should not participate. Canada must not wait for Japan to act. Canada must reference Japan's shame, lead by example and act alone.

*Routine Proceedings*

To acquiesce and support Hong Kong veterans in spirit but not in recompense as the Minister of Veterans Affairs wishes is to be an accomplice to the same and to share Emperor Akihito's bewilderment in the veterans' disdain and to share Hirohito's shame. To be mute to the outrageous honouring of Hirohito's son Akihito for chivalry when our Hong Kong veterans still suffer from the ravages of enslavement is unconscionable and displays a government callousness that cries out for question.

Certainly the Government of Canada must achieve fiscal responsibility by a balanced budget and reduced taxes, but we have a duty to show Canadians that we care and will support their legitimate concerns. We also have a duty to show to the world that we are not followers but rather a leader when recognition and recompense are appropriate.

We can and must act now to do right and provide compensation to our war veterans who were forced to endure slave labour at the hands of the Japanese and Hirohito. We must not hesitate or skip one heartbeat in the conduct of our duty to Canada's veterans. Certainly we should claim costs from Japan but at a later date.

Today I will read a list of survivors' names to put a human face to this request and hopefully to add a sense of urgency as well. This list contains 361 names. It is shorter than it was a week ago. It will be shorter again a week from now. I ask in the name of decency that I will not be in the House on this matter to read again a much shorter list next year and the year after. I ask that you pick up the torch. I ask that you not fail in the task lest we all forget.

• (1020)

Hong Kong veterans Robert Acton, Leslie Adams, Borge Agerbak, Knud Agerkak, Peter Allain, William Allister, Arthur Ambrose, Francis Andrews, Alexander Archibald, Harold Atkinson, Alfred Babin, James Badger, Harold Baker, Stanley Banfill, George Barron, Robert Barter, Thomas Barton, Eric Batley, John Beaton, George Belcourt, James Bell, William Bell, Jack Bennett, Duncan Benton, Leo Berard, Donat Bernier, Walter Billson, Leonard Birchall, Gerard Bisson, August Bitzer, Clement Blacquièrre, Joseph Blacquièrre, Phillip Bliss, Sydney Blow, Eugene Bond, Graham Boudreau, Armand Bourbonnière, Robert Bowman, William Bradley, Charles Brady, Ray Bronson, Charles Broome, Frank Brown, Lucine Brunet, Ernest Buck, Ludovic Bujold, Clarence Burgess, Bruce Cadoret, Wallace Cake, Kenneth Cambon, Charles Campbell, Railton Campbell, Edward Campbellton, Leslie Canivet, Charles Cardinal, Arnold Carrière, Lloyd Carter, Bernard Castonguay, Robert Chamberlain, George Chanell, Frederick Chapman, Leslie Chater, Charles Chesser, Glyn Chipping, Kathleen Christie, Ronald Claricoates, Oswald Clark, Robert John Clayton, Bliss Cole, Lloyd Cole, Fred Cooper, Claude Corbett, Renaud Côté, Leonard Cotton, Kenneth Court, George Coutts, Albert Cox, Bryce Craig, Winston Cunningham, Adolphe Cyr, Roger Cyr, Theophil Cyr, Wilmer Cyr, Donald Dainard, Charles Dallain, Jean-Paul Dallain, Paul Dancause, John Danielson, James

Darrah, John Davies, Morgan Davies, Frederick Dawe, John Dearden, Pierre-Lionel Delarosbil, Albert Delbridge, Elmer Denison, William Derhak, Thomas Dewar, Ralph Dewby, Arthur Diehl, Samuel Disensi, Phillip Doddridge, John Doiron, Leonard Doiron, Rosaire Doiron, Gerald Doucette, Lts Doull, Lloyd Doull, Robert Dunlop, Gordon Dunn, Daniel Dunseath, Gordon Durrant, George Edgecombe, Harold Englehart, Arley Enright, Roderick Everson, Kenneth Ewing, John Fair, John Fertal, Cecil Fines, Horace Fitchett, Audrey Flegg, John Fleming, Robert Fleming, Thomas Forsyth, Earl Francis, Homidas Fredette, Isaac Friesen, Frederick Gard, John Gauthier, Donald Geraghty, Horace Gerrard, David Golden, Jack Goodey, Edward Granham, Walter Gray, Glenford Gregoire, Richard Grieves, Anthony Grimston, Gerald Gunnson, James Guthrie, Harry Gyselman, Michael Haddad, George Hallada, Lloyd Hanna, George Harbour, Allan Harper, Wallace Harrington, Harry Hawryshok, John Hay, Harold Heath, Norman Henderson, Walter Henderson, Elwin Herring, Joseph Hickey, William Hickie, Henry Hladych, Kenneth Hogarth, James Houston, Alfred Hunt, Clarence Hunt, Hector Hunt, Joseph Hunt, Edmond Hurd, Thomas Hutchinson, Kenneth Inche, Walter Inglis, Gilbert Jacquard, John James, James Jessop, Alton Jewers, Richard Johnson, Thomas Jones, Wilfred Jones, Richard Keays, Lloyd Keene, Frederick Kelly, Reginald Kerr, John Kinahan, Michael Kudlovich, Thodore Kurluk, Ernest Ladde, Thomas Laflamme, William Laidlaw, Regis Lajeunesse, Jean Pierre Lalime, Frederick Lanyon, Eugene Lapointe, Maurice Lapointe, John Lavoie, Reginald Law, Philip Lawlis, John Lebelle, Jean-Paul Leblanc, Joseph Leblanc, Leandre Leblanc, Leopold Leblanc, Lionel Lecouffe, Lesly Leggo, Richard Leir, Wilbert Lester, John Levitt, Stanley Lloyd, William Lockwood, Arthur Lousier, John Lowe, Oswald Luce, Wilbert Lynch, Henry Lyons, Robert Lytle, Gerald Marley, Allison MacDonald, Edward MacDonald, George MacDonell, Laurie MacKay, Ralph MacLean, James MacMillan, Donald MacPherson, Eldon MacWhirter, William MacWhirter, Eric Maloney, William Maltman, Williams Marks, Geoffrey Marston, Allen Martin, David Martin, Douglas Martin, John Maruschak, Frederick Mason, Eugene Matchett, Alfred Matthews, Clifford Matthews, William Mayne, Richard Maze, William McAuley, Clifford McDavid, Milton McDonald, Roy McDonald, Lewis McFawn, John McGee, John McGreevy, Gordon McLellan, William McNaughton, Angus McRitchie, George Merritt, Joe Michalkow, Joseph Miller, James Mitchell, James Moar, William Muir, Leon Murphy, Raymond Murray, Howard Naylor, Donald Nelson, Frank Neufeld, William Nicholson, Cornelius Nickel, Wallace Normand, Walter O'Hara, Lloyd O'Leary, Albert Oakford, Robert Olscamp, Carl Olsson, Grenville Onyette, Douglas Orr, Marcel Ouellet, William Overton, Gordon Palin, Parker Robert, Soren Paulson, Raymond Pellor, Gerard Pentland, Abraham Peters, George Peterson, Arthur Pifher, Leo Pitre, Joseph Poirier, Ferdinand Poitras, Allison Pollock, Coleman Pollock, John Pollock, William Pople, Arnold Porter, Ross Purse, Edward Query, Raymond Quirion, Charles Rame,

*Routine Proceedings*

Lawrence Rattie, Douglas Rees, Douglas Reid, James Riddoch, Arthur Roberts, Austin Roberts, Ernest Roberts, Roy Robinson, William Rodgers, Edwin Rodrigues, Peter Rollick, Jacob Rose, Arnold Ross, Lancelot Ross, Lawrence Ross, John Roussel, Ronald Routledge, Berthrand Roy, Albert Russell, Fred Ryman, Mattew Sandford, William Sarginson, Oliver Sauson, Adam Schnell, Theodore Schultz, Arthur Schwartz, Leonard Seaborn, Lloyd Seaward, Edward Shayler, John Simcoe, Harold Smith, Jack Smith, John Smith, Raymond Smith, John Snively, Donald Southworth, Lionel Speller, Arthur Squires, Robert Stager, Lawrence Stebbe, Clarence, Leslie Stickles, John Stroud, Gerald Sunstrum, Royce Sweet, Dempsey Syvret, John Tayler, George Taylor, Joseph Tennier, Elved Thomas, Bernard Thompson, Daniel Thompson, Percy Thompson, Wendell Thompson, Raoul Tremblay, Sidney Vale, Johannes Van Baalen, Emile Van Raes, Alfred Wagner, Howard Ward, Robert Warren, Lenoard Watson, John Webb, Harry White, Allan Whitman, Richard Wilson, Cecil Windsor, Peter Wing, Leonard Wood, Arthur Wright, Frederick Wright, John Yanota, Lavin Zaharychuk and Nick Zytaruk.

• (1030)

This tribute is to Canada's forgotten war veterans to remind the all party committee of its unanimous agreement to compensate Canada's Hong Kong war veterans for enslavement. I want to recognize the human element of a well documented statistical history.

I wish now to conclude my tribute to the surviving veterans of Japan's evil enslavement with a call for support for compensation for Canada's Hong Kong veterans.

**Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure that everyone in the House can support this issue. I hope the Liberal government will take those steps to ensure that our veterans who were enslaved in camps in Hong Kong during the war will be adequately recognized and compensated. That compensation will be claimed from the country of Japan.

I ask the member if he could give us an explanation as to why Canada has not acted on this issue prior to now. Why does it take until 1998 for a government, whether current or previous, to act on this very important issue?

**Mr. Peter Goldring:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question.

The history of this relates back to 1953 when there was a settlement made with a Japan that was broke. With Japan's economy after the war it was felt that there was no money available for compensation. The Canadian government on behalf of the Hong

Kong veterans accepted a \$1 a day settlement for enslaved labour by Japan, a buck a day settlement.

What the Hong Kong veterans are asking for is something that was a reasonable return for labour at that time, let alone slave labour. They would like \$18 a day, which would be reasonable. The \$1 a day was totally unacceptable. It was inappropriate. Japan, now the richest country on earth, uses that buck a day settlement as an excuse not to approach it again. That is wrong. Canada now has an opportunity now to correct this wrong.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have a brief comment to make, which is that the Bloc Quebecois would be totally in favour of this motion, particularly since, during the previous Parliament, the Bloc Quebecois introduced two motions in the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs in response to this request by the Hong Kong combatants and veterans for fair compensation.

The government opposed those two motions, or at least the first. Those motions afforded the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs the opportunity to hear some very moving testimony from the POWs themselves, or their survivors, who revealed all the details of the dreadful treatment accorded these prisoners, who were used as forced labour, and worked on airports and other things from which the Japanese and the Japanese government benefited.

What our party finds most distressing is the government's total lack of compassion and sympathy for these prisoners and their survivors. The government is hiding behind an international treaty, a peace agreement and legal opinions on this matter, which have never been presented to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, despite demands from opposition parties including our own.

It is hard to understand why the Government of Canada is unwilling to demonstrate the requisite generosity toward these prisoners, as it did toward other prisoners and veterans.

• (1035)

We feel that the government should follow up on the recommendation in the report by the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade to pay each Hong Kong veteran fair compensation, particularly as this fair compensation has been estimated at about \$23,000 per veteran and as there are only 200 to 400 of them left to receive it.

In conclusion, my question for my colleague in the Reform Party is this: Does he not think that this claim is justified and should be recognized, particularly as many other prisoners and veterans have had their right to fair compensation recognized?

*Routine Proceedings*

[English]

**Mr. Peter Goldring:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the kind comments from my colleague.

I do believe it is essential for Canada to step forward and give recognition to these honourable veterans. It has been far too long. Christmas day 1941 was the first day of their internment. It is now 58 years later and there are still questions.

In this day of revising and changing history, we should step forward, do the right thing and provide compensation for these veterans. We should give them this sign of respect.

I phoned Mr. Wilbert Lynch in Edmonton yesterday. He is now in the hospital and I wish to give him my regards right now. There is a sense of urgency to give this sign of respect.

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the House do now proceed to orders of the day.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:** Mr. Speaker, will we not be given an opportunity to present our petitions this morning?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** On the assumption that the motion passes, we will go to orders of the day. We will not be doing petitions.

**Ms. Marlene Catterall:** Mr. Speaker, I would be quite prepared, once this motion is dealt with, to ask for the consent of the House to return to petitions for a few moments.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The question is on the motion to proceed to orders of the day. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Call in the members.

• (1120)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 188)

## YEAS

## Members

Adams	Alcock
Assad	Assadourian
Augustine	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Baker	Bakopanos
Barnes	Beaumur
Bélair	Bélanger
Bellemare	Bennett
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Bonwick	Boudria
Bradshaw	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Caccia
Calder	Cannis
Caplan	Carroll
Catterall	Cauchon
Chamberlain	Chan
Charbonneau	Coderre
Cohen	Collenette
Cullen	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Discepola	Drouin
Duhamel	Easter
Eggleton	Finestone
Finlay	Folco
Fontana	Fry
Gagliano	Gallaway
Godfrey	Goodale
Graham	Gray (Windsor West)
Grose	Guarnieri
Harb	Harvard
Hubbard	Iftody
Jackson	Jennings
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Keys	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Lastewka
Lavigne	Lee
Lincoln	Longfield
MacAulay	Mahoney
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Marchi
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Massé	McCormick
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague	McWhinney
Mifflin	Minna
Mitchell	Myers
Nault	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Peric	Peterson
Pettigrew	Phinney
Pickard (Kent—Essex)	Pillitteri
Pratt	Redman
Reed	Robillard
Saada	Sekora
Serré	Shepherd
Speller	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
St-Julien	Szabo
Telegdi	Thibeault
Torsney	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Volpe	Whelan
Wilfert —127	

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## NAYS

## Members

Abbott	Alarie
Anders	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bailey	Bellehumeur
Bergeron	Bigras
Blaikie	Borotsik
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brien	Brisson
Cadman	Casey
Casson	Chatters
Cummins	Dalphond-Guiral
Debien	Desjarlais
Desrochers	Dockrill
Doyle	Dubé (Lévis)
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)	Duncan
Earle	Epp
Gagnon	Gauthier
Gilmour	Girard-Bujold
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Goldring
Gouk	Grewal
Grey (Edmonton North)	Guay
Guimond	Hanger
Harris	Hart
Harvey	Herron
Hill (Macleod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom	Jaffer
Jones	Keddy (South Shore)
Kenney (Calgary-Sud-Est)	Kerpan
Konrad	Lalonde
Laurin	Lebel
Lefebvre	Lill
Loubier	Lowther
Lunn	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mancini	Manning
Marceau	Marchand
Mark	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Mayfield	McDonough
McNally	Mercier
Meredith	Mills (Red Deer)
Morrison	Muise
Nystrom	Obhrai
Pankiw	Penson
Perron	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Price
Proctor	Reynolds
Ritz	Schmidt
Scott (Skeena)	Solberg
Solomon	St-Hilaire
St-Jacques	Stoffer
Strahl	Thompson (Charlotte)
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)
Turp	Vellacott
Wasylcia-Leis	White (Langley—Abbotsford)
White (North Vancouver)—105	

## PAIRED MEMBERS

Crête	de Savoye
Duceppe	Fournier
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
O'Brien (Labrador)	Proud

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**Mr. Allan Kerpan:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Would it be possible for the Chair to seek unanimous consent that those members who wish to present petitions would get that opportunity as it was omitted earlier this morning.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member for Blackstrap has requested the unanimous consent of the House to revert to petitions. Is there unanimous consent?

**An hon. member:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** There is not unanimous consent. We will now go to orders of the day.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1125)

[Translation]

## PARKS CANADA ACT

**Hon. Marcel Massé (for the Minister of Canadian Heritage)** moved that Bill C-29, an act to establish the Parks Canada Agency and to amend other Acts as a consequence, be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to provide details on a bit of a debate that arose in connection with the deliberations of the committee on Bill C-29, an act to establish the Parks Canada agency.

As I sit on this committee, I had an opportunity to be in on discussions and even, at one point, to introduce an amendment. I would like to speak about this amendment today.

The aim of the amendment was to have the Official Languages Act, a cornerstone of public policy in this country on respect for linguistic duality, apply in its entirety to the bill establishing the Parks Canada agency. I would first like to repeat the remarks I made in introducing the amendment in committee.

First off, I have to say I am no expert, that my area of expertise is not legislative drafting. So, if changes are required to clarify thinking or the scope the committee wishes to give this amendment, if it agrees to it, naturally, I have no problem.

I have to say here that the intent of this amendment was to make it clear the Official Languages Act applied to the bill before us at the time.

As I said, since I am no expert in drafting bills, I asked the government to simply follow the discussions and, if the proposed amendment were passed, ensure that it was improved, if necessary, to really define the scope of debate and accurately represent the committee's intent in the debate that preceded the vote on the amendment. This was done. That said, the debate took place May 12.

What was said in the debate is important. Discussions in committee even raised the question of whether the person painting a fence, cutting the grass or collecting garbage had to do so in both

official languages. Absolutely not. That was clear during the debate.

We were referring to services to the public and a majority of committee members felt that, if the agency were created, it could not be exempted from the obligation to provide services to the public in both official languages, even if it called on a third party or subcontractor to provide services that it would normally perform itself. These third parties or subcontractors would also, in the case of services to the public, provide these services in both official languages, in every province of the country. The issue was discussed and clearly understood. The amendment was passed by a majority of committee members.

A little later, on May 20, the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt issued a press release which stated, and I quote:

[*English*]

On May 12 the Liberal dominated House of Commons heritage committee voted in favour of including specific reference to the Official Languages Act in the new bill establishing the Parks Canada Agency.

[*Translation*]

The member for Saskatoon-Humboldt goes on in this vein, leading people to believe that the said amendment would have the exact opposite effect of what was sought, that is to demand that any subcontractor performing any type of work, including painting a fence—which is the example used by the member—do so in both official languages.

• (1130)

That was absolutely not the committee's intention, and it does not in any way reflect the outcome of the debate. I cannot see how the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt could arrive at such a conclusion.

[*English*]

I felt disappointed that he did not praise the committee. The party that he represents has always criticized the hegemony of government. He used the term Liberal dominated House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. It is interesting that in this case the amendment carried and was supported by the Bloc Quebecois, the NDP, the Tories and two of five Liberals. It was not a Liberal dominated vote, yet he chose to present it that way.

He chose to ignore the fact that members of the committee sat down, did some serious work and had a very thorough discussion on the concept of services to the public being offered in both official languages, whether by Parks Canada as a department or by Parks Canada as an agency. That was the debate. That was the intent. That is what the committee wanted, yet he chose to say otherwise. He chose to say that the committee was insisting that anybody who paints a fence must do it in both languages. It is very

### *Government Orders*

disappointing to see such misrepresentation of the intent of the committee.

I said at the start that when the amendment was tabled there was an invitation given to the government to redraft it to reflect accurately the intent and the desire of the committee that services to the public be offered in both official languages. That is what the government did. That is the amendment that was tabled in this House, which I had the honour of supporting along with one of my colleagues, and that was the amendment that was carried.

The system worked. The will of the committee eventually won the day and the government rallied, despite an opinion to the contrary. It saw the advantages of putting in the bill a direct reference that the agency and subcontractors who offer services to the public would be subject to the Official Languages Act. This very much reflects a concern expressed to this House by the official languages commissioner in his most recent report.

Over the last few years there has been a devolution in the general way of handling things. They go to third parties, special agencies and so forth. The official languages commissioner has rightfully demonstrated that there has been, without it being the objective necessarily, a fraying of the application of the Official Languages Act. There has been some sort of an erosion of its application through this devolution. A majority of members of the committee wanted to make sure that was not the case with the Parks Canada agency. That is what was intended. That is what the reformulated amendment does.

I would hope that instead of fearmongering, if not French-mongering, we would realize what the objective was. It was strictly to make sure that Canadians from coast to coast could visit their national parks and expect to be served in either official language.

[*Translation*]

I would like to congratulate the government for showing such flexibility. Various and even opposite views were expressed regarding the need for and appropriateness of such an amendment. It is because we debated these various views that we came up with a solution.

The government endorsed the notion that we had to clearly indicate that we must not shirk one of our main responsibilities as a government, which is to provide services in the language of their choice to all Canadians who visit their national parks. It is as simple as that.

We must not resort to fearmongering with this issue, as some tried to do. This is very bad for everything we stand for in this country: respect for Canada's linguistic duality and the possibility for Quebecers to visit parks in Alberta and get served in their language and, conversely, for Albertans to go to Quebec and get served in English, if it is their language. Such was the purpose of

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the amendment, and I am very disappointed by the attitude of some members opposite who tried to make a big deal out of this.

I wanted to take a few minutes to assure all those who contacted me that there was no intention other than to respect a fundamental principle in our country, that of our linguistic duality and the implementation of the Official Languages Act when a Canadian visits a national park in a province other than the one in which he or she lives.

• (1135)

[*English*]

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

At this particular stage, are we not at third reading and, therefore, would there not be questions and comments?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** We are at third reading and we are on the first three speakers, and the first three speakers have 40 minutes.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I was wondering if I could get unanimous consent to present a number of petitions, which should take one minute or so.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member has requested unanimous consent to present petitions. Does the hon. member have unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member does not have unanimous consent.

**Mr. Dick Harris:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I think that maybe it would be appropriate for the member for Yorkton—Melville to tell us the substance of his petitions in order that we can make—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Nice try, but it is not a point of order. We will resume the debate.

**Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to rise in the House today to participate in the third reading debate on Bill C-29. This bill seeks to establish a new parks agency responsible for the administration and protection of our national parks, national historic sites and other heritage areas.

As the House knows, the responsibility for national parks presently lies with the Department of Canadian Heritage. Bill C-29

would transfer that responsibility from the heritage department to a new body that would operate at arm's length from the government.

The new agency will still be accountable to parliament through the appropriate minister. As well, accountability will be ensured since the new agency will be subject to the Access to Information Act and the auditor general will be able to report on the agency's activities.

The bill, as it was originally drafted, ensured that the chief executive officer of the agency would undertake consultations at least every two years. It committed the CEO to hold public forums and to invite interested parties to participate. However, the Liberal government has removed that provision and placed those consultations at the discretion of the minister.

As well, reference to public forums has been removed from the bill and in its place the minister will convene a round table of persons. There is no commitment to making these discussions public nor to making the minister's responses to the round table public. This is a step backwards in the bill since it leaves the public on the sidelines and consolidates more power in the hands of cabinet. That is something that we should be moving away from, not entrenching further.

There seems to be a movement within this government to diminish the role of parliament and to move decision making into cabinet and rule by regulation. I think this is a disturbing trend. It leaves many members of the House feeling powerless and ineffective.

Nevertheless, I am pleased to note that members of the heritage committee did at times work well together on this bill and some sensible amendments were the result. First of all, the name of the agency was changed to the Parks Canada Agency. Many witnesses who appeared before the committee expressed a concern that the Parks Canada brand name was going to be lost. It is a name that has international recognition. There was also a concern about costs if Parks Canada signage needed to be changed.

Accordingly, I introduced an amendment at committee stage to have the new agency renamed the Parks Canada Agency. Other members of the committee could see the sense in that, so the amendment carried. It was unusual, but the Secretary of State for Parks testified against the name change, saying that it was unnecessary.

I was pleased that the committee members were not swayed by his arguments and opted to maintain the Parks Canada name. Indeed, a great many amendments were moved at committee stage which I believe reflected the keen interest each member had in producing a good bill.

Unfortunately, one part of the bill is drafted very poorly. It is in fact redundant. I refer to clause 36 which refers to the application of the Official Languages Act.

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• (1140)

To paraphrase, clause 36 now states that the Official Languages Act will apply to the new agency, since the agency is a federal institution.

What is wrong with that? The Official Languages Act applies to all federal institutions anyway, so there is no need to spell it out in the bill. Why is it there? It is a smoke and mirrors clause to cover the tracks of the justice minister and the member for Ottawa—Vanier.

At committee stage the member proposed an amendment, which passed, that would force the application of the Official Languages Act on subcontractors working in national parks. Make no mistake about it, despite his denials to the contrary, the intent and the objective of his amendment was obvious. He completely went against the advice and instructions not only of his own justice minister, but of justice officials who were present at the committee meeting. They told him in no uncertain terms that the Official Languages Act would apply because it is a federal agency and that by writing it specifically into the bill with specific reference to subcontractors was unprecedented and would result in the criticism that followed, that being that people who were never before subjected to the requirement of being fluently bilingual would be. Painters and garbage collectors were the examples that were used in committee that day.

He was also discussing whether it was a Liberal dominated committee. In fact it is. I invite anyone to look back at the record to see how the voting went. As far as I know, I am the only person who voted against the amendment.

Furthermore, if what he was saying was so benign and innocent, why did the Liberal officials take him behind closed doors, force him to withdraw the amendment and replace it with this new amendment? They were obviously admitting that they were making a mistake.

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member opposite has just said that I was forced to do something and that is totally inaccurate and misleading.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** That is a point of debate.

**Mr. Jim Pankiw:** Mr. Speaker, the point I was making is that if the intent of his motion was not as it obviously was, then there would have been no need for him to have risen in the House today to say that he was standing to reassure members that that was not his intention, when in fact it was, and that should be obvious to everybody.

At committee stage the amendment passed. It would have resulted in the requirement that fence painters and garbage collectors, which were the examples used in committee, would have to be fluently bilingual.

As we know, the justice minister told the member for Ottawa—Vanier not to do it and justice officials told the member not to do it. What happened? He did it. As a result the justice minister looks bad and it is the fault of the member for Ottawa—Vanier.

To get out of this jam and to avoid a major political embarrassment for the justice minister and for the member for Ottawa—Vanier, the government brought in this vacuous political amendment, which is clause 36.1. The wording of this clause is lifted straight out of the Official Languages Act. The clause does nothing to the bill except clutter it. It is trite law. It brings redundant and unnecessary language into the bill. It is poor legislative draftsmanship.

The Liberals do not seem to mind. They would rather pass a poorly drafted bill than simply admit that they made a mistake and delete the offensive clause.

My amendment to delete that clause was voted down by the government last night at report stage. Hopefully when Bill C-29 is reviewed by the Senate it will recognize that clause 36.1 is unnecessary and delete it.

However, I think we can all acknowledge that the chance of that happening is remote indeed because, as we know, the Senate is ineffective and useless. This is a prime example of why we should have an effective and elected Senate because, in cases where a Liberal dominated government puts forward redundant, meaningless legislation, it could be corrected.

• (1145)

Aside from the bill itself which simply establishes the framework for the new organization, I have some concerns about how Parks Canada is currently being run.

We have reports printed by the *Globe and Mail* that memos within Parks Canada instructed staff to mislead the public with respect to developments at Lake Louise. The same article says Parks Canada will undertake public consultations only after final decisions have been made.

I asked the secretary of state about these memos at committee but he did not really answer my questions. I asked him to table these memos but he suggested I get them from the media.

I find the contents of these memos, if described accurately by the *Globe and Mail*, to be quite disturbing. My concern is that no Canadian would want Parks Canada to operate in a manner suggested by these leaked memos. I am concerned that this method of operation may be standard practice at Parks Canada but that this time it was caught.

Will the new agency operate differently or is this method of operation too deeply ingrained and impossible to root out? Only time will tell, but I certainly hope these leaked documents are not indicative of how the new agency will deal with the public.

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The agency will also have its plate full with respect to parks issues. There is of course the development at Lake Louise and the contents of these memos. As well, near Jasper a debate is raging concerning the Cheviot coal mine.

The federal government has found itself in court over this project as environmental groups argue that the full impact the mine will have on the environment has not been completely examined.

Also, the agency will have to deal with the ramifications surrounding the boundaries of Tuktut Nogait national park. There has been some debate over a mineral find that extends across the western boundary of the proposed park. While the Inuvialuit want the boundary changed to permit exploration of the minerals the federal government refuses to review the matter.

Considering the government's stubborn position, the new agency will definitely have trouble improving relations between itself and the Inuvialuit in the Northwest Territories.

The agency will be working toward the creation of 15 new national parks by the year 2000. This is a monumental task considering the cutbacks that Parks Canada has had to face. I hope this goal does not make it revenue hungry and force it to hike fees and service charges unnecessarily.

Aside from the concerns I have mentioned I believe the creation of a parks agency is a good idea. It should allow national parks to operate more efficiently since the agency will be able to raise and keep its own revenues. As well, it will allow the use of third parties to administer certain facilities and the agency will have access to a new \$10 million parks and heritage sites account. This account will provide funds for the agency in times when particular opportunities arise to purchase land, expand a park, et cetera. Furthermore, funds from this account are repayable to the crown with interest.

The new agency structure provides much needed flexibility. I believe the new agency will ensure our national parks and heritage sites are administered in an accountable, efficient and cost effective manner.

Policy issues concerning our national parks are another matter which I know we all take an interest in. However, this bill simply creates a framework for the new parks agency and I support that framework. I hope other members can also see their way to supporting this new organizational structure.

**Mr. Garry Breitzkreuz:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. A short time ago I asked for unanimous consent to present my repeal of Bill C-68 petitions. I am wondering if I could present them at this time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** No.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we are debating today at third reading Bill C-29 introduced by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, the short title of which was National Parks Act.

I say "was" because, faced with the unanimity of those who testified before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage and of the committee members themselves, the secretary of state responsible for Parks Canada finally bowed to the evidence and accepted the amendment passed by the committee suggesting that the title of the bill be changed to an "act to establish the Parks Canada Agency and to amend other acts as a consequence".

• (1150)

Clause 1 of this bill sets out the short title of the act as follows: "Parks Canada Act".

After holding public hearings in which a number of witnesses raised objections to this bill, questioning Heritage Canada and justice officials to get a different perspective on how to interpret certain clauses and to address the objections raised, and asking the secretary of state responsible for Parks Canada about the government's objectives in establishing this agency, the committee proceeded to the clause by clause study of the bill.

In order to take into account all the work done by committee members, we then set out to examine the merits of several amendments proposed by the various parties. To this end, at report stage, we used a working paper made available to the House of Commons. This was an updated version of Bill C-29, reprinted as amended by the standing committee.

With few exceptions, the amendments in question are mainly changes of a technical nature or designed to ensure the text said the same thing in both official languages.

As for the additions, they fit for the most part into three categories. First, additions to clarify a clause to facilitate the interpretation of the act. A fine example of this type of addition can be found at clause 5.1, which clarifies the status of the direction referred to in clauses 4 and 5 of the original bill. It reads as follows "A direction by the Minister referred to in sections 4 and 5 is not a statutory instrument for the purposes of the Statutory Instruments Act".

A second type of addition is for the purpose of improving the bill. There are several examples of these, including clause 21, which calls for the creation of a new parks and historic sites account. There was an addition to subsection 3(c), the possibility that this account could be used, not only to maintain and develop, but also to "restore any national park, national historic site or

other protected heritage area that has not yet attained full operational status”.

In clause 32, ecological integrity has been added. A significant addition was made to clause 33, to enhance the transparency of the agency’s administration. It calls for the chief executive officer to submit a corporate plan for the agency before March 31 of each year, and that 30 days after its approval by Treasury Board, the Minister must table a summary of the plan in each house of parliament.

To this was added, and I quote “at which time the plan shall be made available to the public on request”. This phrase was added to the bill at the request of a number of witnesses who wished to have access to this type of document.

Another significant addition was to clause 36.1, which reflects an amendment adopted by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, and reads as follows “The Official Languages Act applies to the Agency and to its subcontractors”.

This addition was to initiate lengthy discussions between representatives of the Department of Justice and the committee members. We also debated it here at the report stage, when a member of the government, the hon. member for Brossard—La Prairie, asked for withdrawal of the amendment to clause 36.1 passed by the committee, and its replacement with another amendment.

The new clause 36.1 ought therefore to read as follows “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”.

• (1155)

I followed with interest the presentation made earlier by my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier. I remember the remarks made by Reform members, including the chief opposition whip, who, offended, rose in this House to accuse the Bloc Québécois of having only French on the doors of its offices to indicate the offices of its party leader, its House leader and so on.

As I walked through the corridors, I realized that those living in glass houses should not throw stones, because they risk having them thrown back. Members should know that, if they go to hallway C on the sixth floor of the Centre Block, they will find a

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sign saying “Deputy Whip of the Official Opposition” in English only on the whip’s door.

A third way to change the law and add details to it is to amend the laws affected by the passage of a bill. In the case in point, Bill C-29 amends the Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park Act, among others, by amending the definitions of “park warden” and “superintendent” to align them with those in this bill.

Some of the amendments we introduced were rejected either by the committee or by the government majority. Although creation of the agency offers certain benefits, it also raises concerns.

The federal government has shown us for the past five years its strong tendency to pass its problems on to others. Sometimes it sends them to the provinces. Sometimes it gets around them by creating new agencies and requiring them to be more cost effective.

This is why we wanted to make sure that the Parks Canada Agency struck a balance between its priority mission and its concern to be cost effective. Our amendment read as follows, and I quote:

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.

I have to say we have a real concern. We all know about the lure of money. If the government does not maintain parliamentary appropriations at an adequate level so the agency has the means to fulfil its mandate, the agency will have to find a way to do so at any cost.

That is why an amendment such as the one we proposed could have been useful for the agency. Indeed, it could have used it to present its case to the Treasury Board and get the funds it needs to meet the challenge it is faced with. Unfortunately, our amendment was rejected.

We also proposed another amendment which made a lot of sense. Generally speaking, local communities lose part of their environment when parks or historic sites are created. That is why we asked the government to show some compassion towards these communities by giving them access to these parks and sites at a reduced fee.

Unfortunately, this government is obsessed with money. It rejected our amendment, even though the arguments used to justify its decision did not convince me at all.

Rather, they made me realize that the government is aware that, in most cases, visits are made primarily by local people. It is with these local people, who make more frequent visits than tourists from outside the region, the province or even the country, that Parks Canada will make money, through entry fees. So, in this case as in others, the government is opting for the status quo.

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The result is that we have a slightly better bill instead of one that could have been greatly improved, if the government had not used its majority to impose on us decisions that were made not by those elected to represent the people of this country and look after their interests, but by bureaucrats and public servants who are too close to their own reality to have the proper perspective to make the best decisions.

• (1200)

The aim of the bill is to turn Parks Canada, one of the three programs of the Department of Canadian Heritage, into an agency separate from the department, to be known as the Parks Canada Agency.

At the moment, Parks Canada has 5,000 employees, more than a third of whom work seasonally. It administers 38 national parks and national park reserves, three marine conservation areas, 131 national historic sites, seven historic canals, 165 heritage train stations and 31 heritage rivers. In addition, Parks Canada works with 661 national historic sites it does not own. It administers policy on some 1,000 heritage federal buildings and shares responsibility for eight world heritage sites with UNESCO.

Briefly, the three reasons the government gives for the creation of a new agency to replace Parks Canada are as follows: to simplify structures, to improve administrative efficiency and to establish more flexible staffing and financial procedures.

In order to achieve these objectives, the agency will have new or revised financial, administrative and human resource management powers. To this end, the agency will become a separate entity, a public corporation as defined in schedule II to the Financial Administration Act and will become subject to part II of schedule I of the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

In terms of responsibilities, the agency will report directly to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, who will be accountable for the agency's activities to Parliament. The agency will report to parliament by tabling the following five documents: an annual report on the agency's operations; a summary of the five year corporate plan; management plans for the national parks, national historic sites and other protected areas; a report every five years on the human resources management regime; and a biennial report on the state of protected heritage areas.

In addition, the financial statements of the agency are to be examined by the auditor general, who will report to the government and will also provide an assessment of the agency's mandate, objectives and business plan. The Parks Canada agency will remain subject to the legislation governing official languages, employment equity and human rights, access to information and privacy.

As for the agency's funding, the legislation will give it a number of new financial powers, particularly: a budget spread over two years, which is better suited to investing in the development of parks and historic sites; the power to retain and reinvest all proceeds with the exception of fines; the creation of a dedicated permanent fund from parliamentary appropriations and the sale of surplus property. This account will be used to finance new national parks and historic sites. Finally, the agency may advance funds for the unplanned purchase of land when favourable conditions present themselves. These advances must be repaid with interest.

As for human resources management, the agency will be a separate employer under the Public Service Staff Relations Act. The director will be empowered to appoint employees and to define the conditions of employment of agency staff, particularly negotiation of a collective agreement and the creation of a classification and staffing system.

Hopefully, these changes will give the agency the necessary flexibility to develop a human resources management system better suited to its operational context. The parks and historic sites system is spread across the entire country, operates year round and around the clock in a number of different time zones, and employs many seasonal, permanent and part time workers. All employees whose duties are transferred to the Parks Canada agency will receive an offer of employment. Their present jobs are guaranteed for two years by Treasury Board.

According to the federal government, the creation of an agency responsible for Canada's parks will fulfil the present mission of the Parks Canada program of Canadian Heritage with greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness. This strikes us as an important commitment: enhanced efficiency for less money.

• (1205)

Let us not forget that, in the last four years, the government reduced Parks Canada's budget by \$100 million. That budget is used, among other things, to develop the network of national parks and marine conservation areas, and to maintain and promote national historic sites and monuments.

The financial constraints imposed on Parks Canada led the government to consider a restructuring of the program's operations. The bill we are debating today at third reading is the result of that exercise. The government reached the conclusion that the best way to ensure the objectives of Parks Canada were met was to create the Parks Canada agency.

The Bloc Quebecois has long been asking the federal government to streamline its operations wherever possible, and to fight waste, instead of cutting in social programs and education. This is why we support the bill, since it will truly improve the effectiveness of the parks' management, without jeopardizing the mandate to preserve, protect and develop Canada's national parks and

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historic sites for future generations and for all Canadians and Quebecers.

The government has assured us that this bill is not the first step toward the privatization of parks. We were very concerned that the Parks Canada agency might be the first step toward the privatization of parks. I want to say it here in the House so it will be officially recorded in Hansard. The government has assured us that it has absolutely no intention of privatizing Parks Canada.

When he appeared before the Canadian heritage committee, on November 20, the secretary of state responsible for Parks Canada said, and I quote:

There's something I have said over and over again, and I will take an opportunity to say it here when we are talking about finance. It is not the intention of this government to either privatize or commercialize Parks Canada. We believe the maintenance of our special places in Canada is an important trust given to us by Canadians. That stewardship Canadians want to see exercised publicly, and we will continue to do that through our agency and through the oversight of Parliament.

One of the Bloc Quebecois' main concerns about this bill is to ensure that, once in operation, the agency will maintain access to parks for everyone. This bill shows the unequivocal will of the government to increase user fees in parks, even though taxpayers already contribute through taxes. There has to be a reasonable limit to the fee increases imposed on visitors.

We put forward the idea that people living close to these parks should enjoy a preferential rate, but the government rejected our amendment.

The agency should use its increased revenues from user fees, royalties or the sale of assets to provide more services, better fulfil its mandate, or develop its activities. The anticipated increase in revenues should not be used by the government to justify a further reduction of parliamentary appropriations for the agency.

A fair balance must be maintained between the revenues from taxes paid by taxpayers, and those from the fees they have to pay when they visit these parks and sites. If we continually increase fees, soon there will not be enough visitors and Parks Canada will have a hard time keeping these parks, sites and historic monuments in good shape.

We also want to ensure that the agency's financial objectives and the obvious desire of the federal government to increase the number of visitors to ensure greater economic benefits do not lead to overuse of our parks and historic sites.

• (1210)

We know how difficult it sometimes is to keep sites in decent shape because too many people have been allowed in all at once

and there is not enough time for proper maintenance. We would like to be sure that the agency balances the need to preserve and maintain natural or historic sites against the increase in the number of visitors and the related expansion of tourism and commercial activities.

The Bloc Quebecois is not alone in expressing the concerns I have just mentioned. In November 1996, the auditor general presented a meaty report to parliament on the protection of Canada's national heritage. The auditor general had examined the systems established by Parks Canada to maintain and enhance the ecological integrity of national parks. I am delighted that the government has agreed to add a provision to one of the bill's clauses to the effect that the Parks Canada Agency will have the mandate of preserving the ecological integrity of national parks.

In 1996 the auditor general pointed out that park management plans place more emphasis on economic and social factors than on ecological factors. He noted also that Parks Canada should upgrade its knowledge of the condition of natural resources in national parks in order to adopt a sensible management approach, based on the ecosystems.

In this regard, a number of witnesses appeared before the committee to express their concerns. I hope that the Parks Canada Agency, which can obtain the minutes of our meetings, will read them carefully, analyze them and take them into consideration when developing its policies.

Since the auditor general's report, Parks Canada has taken a number of corrective measures and, last fall, when the secretary of state forwarded to us Parks Canada's response to some of the auditor general's criticisms, it was clear that it had truly made an effort.

The bill calls for measures relating to the creation and implementation of park management plans. Much still remains to be done, however, before all the auditor general's recommendations can be implemented. The data on park conditions still need to be updated, and the policies on ecological conditions need to be implemented on an ongoing basis as well. The environmental objectives set in the act must result in concrete measures if they are to be achieved, regardless of budget constraints. I do hope that the Parks Canada Agency can really fulfil that part of its mandate.

Parks Canada designed ambitious development plans to complete the network of national parks, expand the number of national historic sites, and create marine conservation areas. Currently, 24 of the 39 natural regions defined by Parks Canada are represented in the network, and the objective is to develop the 15 remaining regions by the year 2000.

That objective seems quite ambitious, considering the pace at which Parks Canada operates. Still, even though its pace may seem slow, Parks Canada should not act precipitously but take the time to

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meet the needs of the communities, instead of trying to please bureaucrats and technocrats. [English]

There is a case in point, which we will soon discuss, when we deal with another bill on a park in the Northwest Territories that sets boundaries which do not at all reflect what is good for the community. But this is another issue which will be debated at another time.

The federal government claims that these objectives are attainable, thanks to the improved efficiency resulting from a restructuring exercise that will allow Parks Canada to do more with fewer resources. Developing the 15 remaining regions in two years sounds like sheer utopia. We hope that the government and the minister will not ask the Parks Canada agency to achieve this goal in less than two years, since we are almost half way through 1998.

• (1215)

The year 2000 will soon be here, and I think the Parks Canada agency must have the time it needs to develop these 15 regions at its own pace and to carry out the consultations necessary to involve the people concerned in their development.

Nevertheless, we question the new agency's ability to consolidate and fully develop the existing sites, while maintaining its objectives of expansion in today's context of budgetary restraint. What we do not want to see happen is for there to be a very vast but badly maintained system, with insufficient services and no ecological integrity. We wish to ensure that the development of the system of national parks and historic sites is durable and sustainable.

We let the government know that, when this bill was studied by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, we wanted the committee to call as witnesses representatives of all groups of employees, including seasonal and part time workers, whose status might be changed as a result of the bill's planned changes. We were very satisfied on this point, since the representatives of these employees from all categories testified before the committee.

It would appear, from what we heard, that relations are excellent and that everything seems to be progressing in the best way possible, under the best conditions. We were assured that the tendering process for all Parks Canada agency contracts would be impartial and transparent in accordance with regulations. The new structure and wide-ranging authority of the agency's CEO in the management of human resources must not pave the way for arbitrary decisions and patronage appointments. It would appear we have guarantees here too.

We will support Bill C-29, which creates the Parks Canada agency. We will carefully monitor the establishment of this agency to ensure that everyone may work there and carry out the mandate given the Parks Canada agency in peace, friendship, solidarity and prosperity.

**Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise today and speak to this particular piece of legislation which has come before the House. I am not the New Democratic Party's critic in this area but I do come from an island that has not one but two national parks located within its boundaries. This is of particular importance to the people of Cape Breton.

The Cape Breton Highlands National Park is contained in my riding. It contains some of the most spectacular scenery in the country and some of the most important plant growth and ecological—

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Peter Mancini:** Thank you. I acknowledge the applause from my colleagues from Nova Scotia.

On the island of Cape Breton in the riding of my colleague from Bras d'Or is the national historic park the Fortress of Louisbourg which is of great importance to the heritage and history of this country.

When I stand to speak on this bill, I do so from the perspective of a resident who sees the importance of these parks to their own areas in many ways.

I start by addressing some of the concerns that have been raised by the hon. member for Rimouski—Mitis and the concerns of constituents in my riding and I think across the country on a fee structure for using national historic parks.

There has been some mention made that people who once resided in these parks gave up their land. It was a concern of the Bloc Quebecois member that those people be given reduced rates. I would go further and say that they be given free rates to the parks.

I can speak as one who represents people whose property was expropriated by the national government to ensure that there was a national park in Cape Breton to be used for the benefit of all Canadians. Indeed many people from all over the world visit that park.

• (1220)

Those people were farmers and fishermen, families who had lived on particular pieces of land for generations. The land represented their livelihood. They were prosperous farmers. They were prosperous fishermen. Their land bordered the coastline. They were self-sufficient. They farmed and fished all summer. They dried the fish in the winter and they preserved the goods from their farms.

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That land was expropriated. It was expropriated for a good reason. It is important to preserve that area. Those individuals were relocated. They pay taxes to the Canadian government for the preservation of the parks. To ask them now to also pay a fee to enter land that was once their own is unfair. I know it will raise the hackles of the constituents in my riding. I have already received complaints about that very process.

As well I want to talk a little bit about the advisory council. We are creating an agency to manage the parks. We have heard that this is not a step. The hon. member for Rimouski—Mitis quoted the secretary of state as saying that this was not a step to privatization. We have not gone far enough to include the public in the debate about the management of the parks and what role the community should have in that area.

I am concerned when we delegate authority to an agency in that we lose some accountability. I say that having just had some experience with Nav Canada corporation. Members in this House will remember that was a private corporation, admittedly different from an agency, set up to deal with the flight service stations in various airports. When I asked it for a report dealing with the safety of individuals in my community, I was told it is not the corporation's policy to make that report public and I could not see it even though I am a member of parliament.

I have some concerns when we say that we are going to move Parks Canada from the full administrative role that the government has in administering Parks Canada to an agency that may or may not be answerable. I recognize that the minister will have some authority. At the same time we need to make sure that every individual member in this House who has a request for information for that agency is entitled to receive the information immediately or as soon as possible.

This party has other concerns with regard to amendments that we put forward, some of which were accepted. I still have great concerns when it comes to the personnel in Parks Canada. As I read the act and what the government intends to do, it gives no great comfort to the employees of Parks Canada. They have already been cut back in terms of numbers, leaving those who are left to pick up the additional workload. They have had their wages frozen and rolled back. They have had their work increased for less money. I know from speaking to people who work for Parks Canada in my riding that there are serious morale concerns.

Now we are telling the individuals who work for Parks Canada that they are going to be answerable to a new agency. That agency we are told would simplify organizational structures, improve administrative efficiency and allow more flexible staffing and financial procedures. Given what these individuals have been through in the last six to eight years, it seems that they have legitimate concerns about what those phrases mean.

I think we can read into those phrases, contracting out of services, layoffs and seasonal work with reduced benefits. I think we can also read into them less money in the hands of the individuals who work in those parks and who are the citizens who have given up the development of that land for commercial enterprises in order to ensure that all Canadians can benefit from it. That causes concern for me as a representative of the people who work in Parks Canada and who live in the surrounding areas.

I have concerns about the increasing fees at Parks Canada. Let us not forget that we have a number of parks across this country. If we increase the fees, I would hope that we do not see the parks getting into some kind of competition with each other whereby certain incentives will have to be offered at the Cape Breton Highlands national park to entice tourists from the new park located in Prince Edward Island or from Banff National Park. I hope that we do not begin a race to the bottom whereby the parks get more and more Disney-like in an effort to attract visitors.

• (1225)

As we move away from federal government financing of the parks, and I appreciate that we are looking at an 80-20 split here, 80% from the federal government and 20% from private revenue, we are on a very slippery slope where we may begin to increase the dependency of the parks on private financing. That then increases competition between the parks to attract the limited tourist dollars that come into this country. Once we do that, we move away from the ecological concerns and the preservation concerns of the mandate for having these national historic parks to creating a carnival-like atmosphere whereby the parks will cater to the lowest common denominator. I take the government at its word when it says we are not moving in this direction.

At the same time I am concerned that we are moving toward a more American style of parks system. As I speak to the House today I am not sure that members know this but it has been reported in "Environmental Dimensions" that on May 20 the minister of state for parks entered into an agreement with the United States regarding national parks along the border states. A co-management or a co-operation agreement has been entered into between Canada and the United States on managing the border area parks. There will be co-operation in management, research, protection, conservation and the presentation of national parks and national historic sites.

I do not know if members of the committee have been made aware of this but this country's national parks are something Canadians hold dear. They determine our identity. When people in other countries think of Canada they think of our national parks. They think of Banff in Alberta. They think of the new park in Prince Edward Island. The pristine waters. Those are the things that define us. Now we see that the minister of state has entered into an agreement to co-manage Canada's national parks that fall along the border between Canada and the United States.

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Why in heaven's name would the minister do this? Why are we handing over the authority to manage those parks to another country? What does that mean in terms of Bill C-29?

It may well mean that personnel for border area parks could be American. It means that the new chief executive officer who will head the Canada parks agency will have to deal with the U.S. parks service. I am not sure the committee was aware of this at the time the bill was introduced. As I indicated, I do not sit on that committee, but I think it is worth questioning the minister in this regard.

The minister of course says for his part that he is delighted to have made the commitment to create a framework for future co-operation and co-ordination in conserving and presenting the national and cultural heritage sites. But these are our national and cultural heritage sites.

We see that kind of movement by the minister at the same time that we are introducing this piece of legislation to take some responsibility away from the government and to create an agency. At the same time we are talking about increasing user fees for the parks. At the same time we are not providing special incentives, if you will, for those who live in the areas so that they do not have to pay the same price to use the parks. It causes me concern as to where we are going with the national parks.

With those comments I indicate that the New Democratic Party has always been in favour of Canada's national historic parks and preserving them for the people of Canada and for the people in whose regions they exist.

• (1230)

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I was very interested in the comments by the NDP member with respect to this piece of legislation. It is one of the few pieces of legislation that the Reform Party feels relatively comfortable with that has been proposed by the government with one or two exceptions that I will be outlining in a speech later today.

I really have to wonder where the head space of the NDP is with respect to this issue of making something more efficient. It would seem as though as long as national parks are under some kind of public service, some kind of overlayering of bureaucracy, that is going to make the parks more protected. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The biggest single problem that Parks Canada has had in recent history has been that there has been an overlayering and an overcomplication of the administration of the parks. What this act will do in terms of creating efficiency is set up the most creative and efficient way to deliver services to Canadians and visitors to the parks and to give the greatest protection to parks in Canada.

I think the NDP unfortunately is setting up a bogeyman by saying if we do not have all of this overlayering somehow the parks are going to be in peril. I do not know whether the NDP is coming from the 1950s, 1940s or the 1920s, but it certainly is not coming from the level of today's way of delivering services to people. I cannot imagine where this member has come from with his comments.

**Mr. Peter Mancini:** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to reply to that comment from the member who says he does not know where the head space is of the NDP. It is with the Canadian public and in the preservation of the things that the Canadian public from one end of the country to the other holds dear.

I understand the Reform Party will support this piece of legislation. Perhaps it is the beginning of unite the right or the merger the hon. member's leader speaks about. There is not that great a difference I guess between some Liberal thinking and Reform thinking.

The member says this is the most creative and efficient way to manage the parks. He asks if we are in the 1950s or the 1920s. We are moving well into the millennium when the preservation of the things Canadians hold dear will never be more important. We know where the Reform Party would like to go with Parks Canada. It would like to have a Disneyland and McDonald's on every corner. That is its mechanism for making money and becoming cost efficient in Canada's parks.

I am happy to respond to his comments and let Canadians know the difference between the NDP which has always fought to protect and preserve traditions of Canada and the Reform Party which has adopted the thinking of Ronald Reagan and the United States.

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** Mr. Speaker, apparently this member is not aware that I and my family have proudly lived in the region of East Kootenay since 1974. We live there because there are four mountain parks within my constituency in addition to another three mountain parks on the Alberta side of the border.

I am very aware of and have a personal commitment to parks. I find his myopic sense of righteousness as put forward by the NDP that somehow it is the only protectors of the environment to be exceptionally unfortunate.

It is my commitment and it is the commitment of the Reform Party that national parks be accessible to Canadians while at the same time reflecting that these parks represent a national treasure that must be protected.

It is really scandalous that he would be making these kinds of allegations which are absolutely, totally and factually inaccurate.

**Mr. Peter Mancini:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad it took my comments to wring out of the hon. member that he sees these as

historic treasures even in his own riding. I suggest that the people of his riding, if they have concerns about the protection of those very parks that he has so eloquently mentioned, question him on this bill and what it means. I wonder if those individuals will have to pay the same price for access to their own land that the tourists will have to pay. I wonder if those people understand there may be a downgrading in the privatization of the parks to the lowest common denominator. I am sure, given his comments today and the members of his constituency who are watching him, that he will have to answer those questions for them.

• (1235)

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** Mr. Speaker, the member may not have been in the House last night. He must have missed the fact that the Reform Party voted in favour of the lower rates for the local residents. He obviously missed that.

With respect to the delivery of services, Kootenay National Park is in my constituency within the geography of my constituency office. The park did the initial trial for delivery of services by painting road signs of all things. The park created an efficiency after due process by giving an individual who was only half employed a commercial contract. On the basis of that commercial contract, the individual who had become an ex-park employee was able to start his own commercial sign business. With that base he could go ahead to develop his own private business in the Invermere area outside of Radium, the Kootenay National Park boundary.

Now delivery of the sign painting service to Kootenay National Park is at a significantly lower cost, a new commercial enterprise is now paying taxes and there is somebody who is very happy to deliver the commercial services as well as the services he is delivering to the park. It is a win-win-win. It is this kind of creativeness and inventiveness we would bring to deliver services to the Canadian public and to protect parks for future generations. It is not under the rubric or the umbrella of this overlaying of bureaucracy that the NDP seems to feel is the only way to protect the ecology of the parks. There are new ways. Maybe this member should start to learn that the NDP ideas of the 1950s do not fit anymore.

**Mr. Peter Mancini:** Mr. Speaker, I find that an interesting analogy. The hon. member has given us what he believes to be a success story of contracting out. I wonder if the individuals who live along the border states, where the minister of state has just entered into an agreement for co-management of Canada's parks, will feel happy if the contracting out of services goes to the Americans or if we go to some other nation to paint the signs, to mow the lawns, to bring in the machinery. I wonder how happy the constituents in this member's riding would be if the contracting out went to a nation with no minimum wage. I know that is his position. The workers in that riding would be forced to the lowest possible wage in order to maintain what was once their own land.

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[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, if you ask, I believe you would find unanimous consent to withdraw my private member's bill on Louis Riel, given that tomorrow another precedent will be set in this House with the introduction of a private member's bill on Louis Riel prepared by two government members and four opposition members.

If you ask, I believe you would find unanimous consent of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member for Rimouski—Mitis seeks the unanimous consent of the House to withdraw her bill on Louis Riel.

Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** There is no consent.

• (1240)

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak in favour of Bill C-29.

This act calls for the establishment of an agency to administer laws that apply to national parks, national historic sites, national marine conservation areas and other heritage areas and places. It would also amend related acts.

A number of amendments have been made to Bill C-29 which include changing the name of the agency. It was very important to us that the agency be known as the Parks Canada agency since Parks Canada has become a highly recognized tourism and cultural icon. While not all our amendments were adopted in committee we support the bill. It reflects the changes that need to take place be it by simplifying organizational structures, improving administrative efficiency and allowing more flexible staffing and financial procedures.

The bill establishes the Parks Canada agency as a distinct legal entity. The agency will report directly to the minister of heritage who will be accountable for its activities before parliament.

Bill C-29 also outlines the roles and responsibilities of the minister with respect to reporting and submission requirements to parliament, cabinet, Treasury Board and the public. This accountability regime includes responsibility for corporate reports, annual reports, state of Canadian protected area reports, management plans for both national parks and national historic sites and the holding of biannual public forums to solicit public feedback.

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The legislation specifies the roles and responsibilities of the deputy minister of heritage with respect to policy advice, policy development and legislative development, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the chief executive officer of the Canada parks agency.

Bill C-29 also outlines the roles and responsibilities of Treasury Board as they relate to a broad array of administrative interactions between Treasury Board and the Canada parks agency. It also specifies the auditor general's audit function over the parks agency's financial statements and performance.

Bill C-29 also contains provisions for the maintenance of other government services and administrative functions as they relate to the functioning of the Canada parks agency. These include the Access to Information Act, the Privacy Act, the Official Languages Act, the Public Service Superannuation Act, the Employment Equity Act and the Canadian Human Rights Act.

This bill would give the agency a number of financial powers, including a two year operational budget, retention and reinvestment power for all revenues, the establishment of an account to fund new national parks and historic sites from appropriations, the sale and surplus of properties and general donations, and the authority to advance funds for various reasons, including unfunded land acquisition opportunities.

Bill C-29 was not and is not a perfect a bill. A number of opposition members proposed amendments to Bill C-29 to strengthen it. Some of those amendments were adopted but other amendments that would have given the bill more teeth were rejected. We were told that such amendments should be brought to other related acts such as the Parks Canada Act. During our hearings on Bill C-29 many of the witnesses, including representatives of the Canadian Nature Federation and CPAWS, shared their concern that the government must do more to protect the ecological integrity of our parks.

The auditor general in his 1996 report criticized Parks Canada for not doing enough to protect the ecological integrity of Canada's national parks. He also stated the government is in danger of not meeting its objective of completing the national park system by the year 2000. Even the minister of state for parks acknowledges that the national park system cannot be completed in the next two years.

• (1245 )

My party looks forward to dealing with the Canada Parks Act when it comes before the House. Although Canada's parks service has been in existence since 1911 it has never been legislatively recognized as the manager of the park system.

For instance, Parks Canada is not even mentioned in the National Parks Act and does not have a significant legislative mandate. The

PC Party has always recognized the importance of our national parks and national historic sites as contributors to our Canadian cultural identity.

In 1988 the former Progressive Conservative government modernized the National Parks Act which had not been updated since 1930. I look forward to remodernizing the National Parks Act and other acts that have a consequence on our parks, historic sites and waterways. My party will continue to work hard to promote, protect and enhance our rich legacy of accomplishments.

In closing, I thank all those groups and individuals who brought their concerns to me and assure them today that we will continue to work on their behalf to bring forward amendments to legislation as it comes before the House. As parliamentarians it is very important that we work together to ensure that Canada's natural heritage and resources are conserved for future generations. I urge all hon. members to support the bill.

**Mr. Jerry Pickard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to point out that I am sharing my time with the member for Oak Ridges.

Throughout the House I have heard some very positive comments about the forming of this parks agency. There is no question that it is a very positive step forward. When we think about the national parks system and national historic sites we think about the canals and the conservation areas. We think about all that will fall under this agency. It is a fantastic opportunity to show Canadians and people around the world what Canadians really stand for.

There is absolutely no question that as we look at our parks system it encompasses some of the most imaginative and most characteristic sections of Canada. There is no question that our heritage sites represent very important historic references to Canada. There is no question that we have within our parks system, our heritage system, our conservation areas, a really great story to tell.

That story can be told to young people throughout the land by taking them to those areas. That story can be told to all Canadians. In fact it can be told to visitors around the world to show what a great country we are, what great background we have and what great historical significance there is to this great country.

It is with a great deal of pride that I am able to talk to this issue today. I think it is in essence what Canada is about. The Canadian parks system has been significant over the past. It has grown tremendously in the last several years. There is no question that it must be expanded. It must be moved forward as well.

We have some very significant national sites that we must incorporate into the 39 different areas we designate as significant areas. We must make certain that the message to Canadians is that

we respect this great country with its land and historic sites, with all this put together.

If we travel through the north we see some amazing river valleys, gorges and mountain sites. We can look at the grasslands in Saskatchewan and realize it is the land of the prairie dog. This is the area where Sitting Bull rested after a traumatic event in the United States.

We can look at Prince Edward Island National Park and realize it is among the finest areas of Canada with the best salt water beaches in the country. Anne of Green Gables, a tremendous significant issue in Canada, is one of our national historic sites.

● (1250)

In my riding we have Point Pelee, one of the best birding locations in the world. People from Europe, Asia and the United States, in fact people from all over the world, come to visit that area to see the significance and celebrate this land itself.

We can look back at our heritage and understand some significant adventures in history. I think of Josiah Henson and the fabulous story of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the black culture coming together in our sites, or I think of other opportunities for Canadians to participate and enjoy what is happening.

Certainly with the agency coming to bear we can see some tremendous changes coming about. We will now have opportunity to move into parks that will have great significance for Canada's Great Lakes and Atlantic and Pacific areas.

Fathom Five National Marine Park protects Niagara escarpment history and work on the Georgian Bay waters. We have conservation marine parks on the Atlantic coast and on the Pacific coast which point out the significance of our flora and fauna, our rich culture and our Indian heritage.

The Saguenay River marine park on the St. Lawrence protects beluga whales, seals, plant and bird life of all kinds. Our national marine conservation area program is new and will remain an ongoing part of the national parks system. The evolution of our national parks system is very significant to our heritage and our understanding of the country.

Historic sites and monuments are another alternative area of education and support that we must make sure is expanded in a wide range of areas. Recently the board undertook initiatives to consider the history of aboriginal people in the country, the history and culture of women and the communities that have brought a great deal to our nation.

We could talk about the Grizzly Bear Mountain area and Scented Grass Hills that have been designated historic sites by our minister.

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We could talk about our great culture and Portia White, a Nova Scotian with a very rich, vibrant voice, a great concert personality in the area. We are designating sites to recognize great accomplishments of Canadians.

We will move forward with a cultural site for the black cultural centre in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. We certainly need to recognize the races. We need to recognize the cultures that have made the nation come together and great. We need to move forward on the issue of significant Canadians to ensure recognition of such events.

There is no question that the legislation will allow the parks agency to focus upon permanent, forward moving areas which will make the country very rich in national pride and very rich in national culture, one that we can display to the world, that we can exhibit to our visitors, and show our internal pride.

Because we have such good support in the House for the legislation it shows that all Canadians, regardless of political stripe, are extremely proud of the accomplishments of people and of the physical terrain of the country. We look forward to making certain the legislation moves along as quickly as possible.

I am pleased with many of the comments I have heard from the opposition. I am pleased with the comments I have heard from my own colleagues. I have to say for all Canadians that we are looking at something that is truly great for our land.

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I was interested as a point of information from the member who just spoke particularly about Point Pelee. As he mentioned somebody involved in birding would love this park. It is a very special place as are all national parks. However, it is in the middle of one of the Great Lakes where shipping is going back and forth. Unfortunately, as we know by some of the crustaceans that have ended up in water intakes and so on, very frequently ships from offshore will actually end up pumping bilge or from time to time dropping oil and that kind of thing.

● (1255)

As a point of interest and information, could the member enlighten us from a local perspective whether, in taking a look at the ecological integrity of that area, we should be looking at any further restrictions or any further controls particularly with respect to shipping and the potential of pollution around Point Pelee?

**Mr. Jerry Pickard:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question because it is an extremely significant one.

The freshwater system in Canada, particularly the Great Lakes, is one that has over the last five or ten years suffered a fair amount of change because of the zebra mussel being brought into Canada in the bilge water dumpings from foreign vessels.

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There are questions about other significant changes that can occur from boats entering the Great Lakes system, dumping bilge water and causing ecological change which in many cases could be very negative and problematic in the future.

I have made very clear in the past that I would certainly support and endorse this issue. I had opportunity to meet with several fishing communities and ecologists in our area two weeks ago to discuss it. We talked about legislation that may be significant.

I think legislation should be put into force that the dumping of bilge water from ships has to be stopped in our Great Lakes and in other waterways where it may cause significant change in our systems. I have no question about that.

The member is pointing out a very clear ecological problem not just for the Great Lakes, by the way. All freshwater systems throughout the country must have some type of protection. I would strongly endorse working at international levels to make sure that other countries with similar pristine areas to Canada's are protected as well as they possibly can be.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am wondering if the government has changed its mind and if I may now present my repeal of Bill C-68 petitions.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member for Yorkton—Melville has asked for unanimous consent to revert to presenting petitions. Is there unanimous consent?

**An hon. member:** No.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I think that, if you ask, you will probably find unanimous consent of the House for the following motion:

That the order for second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage of Bill C-213, An Act respecting the designation of a Louis Riel Day and revoking his conviction of August 1, 1885, be discharged, the bill withdrawn, and the item removed from the items outside the order of precedence.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The House has heard the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and bill withdrawn)

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[English]

**PARKS CANADA ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-29, an act to establish the Parks Canada Agency and to amend other acts as a consequence, be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Bryon Wilfert (Oak Ridges, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to address the House on Bill C-29. The rationale for establishing the proposed parks agency is that it would simplify organizational structures, improve administrative efficiency and allow more flexible staffing and financial procedures.

The bill does not seek to privatize Canada's parks, but the administration would become a separate employer or departmental corporation to be known as the Canadian parks agency.

● (1300)

Bill C-29 is intended to assist Parks Canada in its role of preserving, protecting and expanding Canada's national parks, historic sites and related protected areas.

From Cape Spear, Newfoundland to Pacific Rim National Park, more than 38 national parks and 786 historic sites visited annually by 24 million Canadians are among the most important aspects of Canadian identity and are cherished symbols of Canada's land and history. Of these, 12 Canadian locations have such outstanding universal value that they have been designated as UNESCO world heritage sites.

The creation of the new parks agency will result in three key benefits, benefits which will ensure continued excellence of stewardship for the precious heritage now entrusted to Parks Canada.

The Parks Canada agency will be an autonomous organization accountable to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and in turn to parliament, an organization able to make needed decisions in a more timely fashion at less cost to the Canadian taxpayer.

The new agency will be able to deliver continued cost effective and efficient services to visitors to the national parks, historic sites and other related protected heritage areas.

The Parks Canada agency will have new financial authorities and flexibilities to retain and reinvest revenues. These will allow appropriations to be used to create new national parks, national historic sites and related protected heritage areas throughout the country.

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The mandate of the program will not change after the new entity comes into existence. The legislation creating the new agency will support and will possibly strengthen the existing mandate. The Parks Canada agency will be in a better position to continue to maintain the current systems of national parks, national historic sites and other related protected heritage areas.

It will continue to provide a high level of service to park and site visitors and will work toward the completion of the national parks system and toward the expansion of a system of national historic sites and national marine conservation areas, and continue to preserve and maintain the natural ecosystem of the parks which is constantly renewing itself in order to survive.

This is why we are bringing in the new Parks Canada agency into existence. Canada's parks service is the oldest in the world with a distinguished history and a promising future. The creation of this agency is an important step forward, one which will ensure that we satisfy our obligations to Canadians and to the world to protect and to conserve our most enduring and cherished symbols.

As the past president of the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, I am a strong advocate of the need to preserve our national parks and the important role they play in the lives of Canadians. They provide an oasis for vacationing families as well as provide unlimited outdoor recreation for the avid campers and nature lovers in Canada. From mountain climbing in Banff and Jasper to bird watching at Point Pelee, Canadians are enjoying all the benefits our parks have to offer.

In turn, Canadians gain a greater appreciation of our country and its natural beauty. Our national parks are indeed a national treasure. They link us to our history, our heritage and the Canadian landscape.

In 1885, about 25 years before the Americans, Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, created North America's first national park, Banff National Park in the Rocky Mountains of Alberta. Banff remains one of Canada's premier and most loved national treasures. Its natural beauty and resources must be preserved for generations to come.

By passing Bill C-29, we in the House of Commons can ensure the renewal of the organization that Canadians have entrusted with their cherished national parks, national historic sites and other protected heritage areas.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:** Mr. Speaker, I think now is probably an appropriate time to get unanimous consent to submit the petitions that have been given to me by gun owners and other concerned Canadians on the repeal of Bill C-68.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** No.

• (1305)

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca.

It gives me great pleasure to rise in support of this legislation. Some things I will be discussing shortly that are of concern to me within the legislation but let me be perfectly clear. As the heritage critic for the Reform Party and with my colleague, the Reform Party parks critic, we recognize fully the value of the national parks system to Canadians and to Canada.

The Reform Party is committed to ensuring that we have national parks today and into the future for our children and for our children's children, that there be proper protection for the environment and the ecology around all our national parks. Our party is very committed to the entire concept of environmental responsibility for generations to come.

This is a good piece of legislation in that it simplifies and makes more efficient the delivery of services. I quote from the *Montreal Gazette* today, an article entitled "MPs vote to keep parks bilingual". The article states: "Several MPs feared that the new agency which will contract work out rather than use public servants will jack up entrance fees to make national parks into a money making operation".

I have four national parks in my constituency. I work with the superintendents and I work with the people who are delivering the services to Canadians from top to bottom in those park organizations. I know that is an absolutely false concern. The concern is to continue to deliver a high level of service and protection of parks at reasonable cost.

I outlined in debate between me and an NDP member an actual case in my constituency creating a contract with a person who is now a former park employee. Painting and maintaining signs in our parks, in Kootenay National Park, is now delivered in a far more cost effective way while this individual is much more involved in his own life. This individual has his own business, he is delivering a commercial service. Now rather than being a park employee drawing wages from Parks Canada, he is delivering services to Parks Canada as a contractor.

This is a far more efficient way of working. This former employee now being in his own business is now in a situation where he becomes a taxpayer generating more work and more wealth in commerce. He has just delivered a couple of massive signs, excellent work, to my community of Wasa Lake, British Columbia.

This concern the NDP has is really unfortunate because having had the great opportunity to work with supervisors, management and hourly workers in our parks, I have discovered a core of Canadians committed to our parks. Because of the bungling by this

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and the former government, there has been a very serious down-loading of concern and responsibility to people who were committed to the parks on one hand but on the other hand parks did not seem to be committed to them.

I look forward to this new agency as being a way of being able to straighten this out, and we are going to be able to bring some order to the management of parks. I think that is excellent.

However, I would be remiss if I did not mention the bit of silliness that was brought to this act by the member for Ottawa—Vanier and his colleague from Brossard—La Prairie.

There is a concept of law that it is bad law to put into law something that already exists. It is not only redundant, it is bad law.

• (1310)

By these two members' bringing forward this motion in committee that was accepted, what fundamentally happened was they brought forward something that already existed. If it did not exist what would have happened? Contrary to what the member said earlier in debate, people delivering services in the new Saguenay park, for example, who might be working on wharfs, I do not care in what language they speak to each other on the job or at home, there is no requirement for those people to be able to speak English.

Conversely, when one goes out west there is no necessity for somebody collecting garbage and cleaning up the campsites to be able to speak French. They put a piece of mischief into this legislation, albeit with every good intention. It was totally and absolutely unnecessary.

To prove the point that it was unnecessary, the top law maker in Canada, the justice minister, said this amendment was not only unnecessary but dangerous. Their colleague, the justice minister of Canada, the top law maker, said that what they did with this legislation was unfortunately a bit of a buffoonery.

It is all very well and good to stand on their bilingual high horse and try and lob salvos at us in the Reform Party. I guess that is part of the political game the Liberals like to play. The reality is there is absolutely no necessity for this. What did the Liberals do? Last night the Reform Party came forward with an amendment. The amendment said strike this unnecessary amendment created in committee. But in order to save face they asked all their sheep to line up and vote in favour of saying that the Official Languages Act applies to this piece of legislation. Guess what? It already applies to this piece of legislation. It was simply a piece of face saving. The justice minister saw that these people had put this piece buffoonery into the legislation. Unfortunately once again the Liberal sheep lined up on the side of trying to save face.

The reality of the situation is this. This piece of legislation, notwithstanding that one silliness, has the very real potential to create efficiencies in the delivery of service and in the protection of our national parks. That is what the Reform Party is about. I believe that is what all members of this House are about, to create an environment of protection of the parks.

Let me add one caveat. The concern I have is that if we are not very careful in the way we apply protection to these parks, we have the potential to end up with a situation of making them the exclusive playground of rich people. That would be an absolute shame. I hope one of the first things Parks Canada would be taking a look at, before or after this legislation, is the whole issue of entry fees, the way the entry fees are applied to not only local residents but to individuals and automobiles.

We must be very careful while being fiscally prudent, which is what the Reform Party is all about, at the same time making sure we do not make our national parks a playground that only the rich can afford to come to.

On balance, clearly this is a good piece of legislation. My party will be supporting it with great enthusiasm.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend brought up a number of excellent points. He brought up bilingualism.

There is something called an opportunity cost. If we remove funds from one place and put them into another, we had better make sure we are getting more bang for our buck in the place we put them in than in the place we took them out of.

• (1315)

The government's proposal is to force subcontractors to become bilingual and ensure money is being put into something. One question as to whether or not it is going to get the returns necessary. This is in view of the fact that today our parks are under siege and many species are being threatened or becoming extinct.

Does my hon. colleague feel that the money the government is planning to use to force subcontractors to become officially bilingual could be better utilized in another area for preserving our parks?

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** Mr. Speaker, clearly the answer to that question is yes.

The situation is even more confused than what the hon. member has outlined. It is confused because of this face-saving attempt the Liberals made last night.

It is unclear what this redundant clause will actually mean in enforcement. The legislation was originally set up to come under the Official Languages Act which means that the delivery of services to individuals must be in both official languages. That is the way this bill was created. It is the intention of this bill. That is what the members of my caucus are in favour of which is fine.

The problem came when the members went overboard and brought in this piece of puffery. The problem is that it then appeared as though the painters, the garbage collectors, the people working on park benches, the people who are not actually verbally delivering services to the visitors to the parks were going to have to take French or English lessons depending on what their mother tongue was. If they were recent immigrants to the country and were still working on mastering either of the official languages, they

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might even have to take time out of their contract to become fluently bilingual, which of course is the height of idiocy.

What we have now as a result of the face-saving exercise the Liberals went through last night, is that we simply do not know the answer to the member's question. It is a perfectly valid question. We do not know what impact this is going to have. It just shows that there are times when it is good to bring forward amendments and there are other times like this when those amendments are problematic, troublesome and just create confusion.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I am finding it almost unbelievable that people from across Canada and from almost every province are giving me petitions to present and I am not allowed to properly present them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member for Yorkton—Melville does not have to go any further. Does the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville have the unanimous consent of the House to present petitions?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member does not have unanimous consent.

**Mr. Stan Keyes:** Mr. Speaker, maybe it would be helpful if the Speaker could explain to the hon. member that he does have the opportunity to deposit his petition at the clerk's table without having this show.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The House is forever indebted to the hon. parliamentary secretary for his pearls of wisdom. We will resume debate.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to speak on Bill C-29, the Parks Canada act.

There are problems today in our parks, from endangered species to threatened habitat to species that are becoming extinct. The mark the World Wildlife Fund has given the Canadian government is a *D* in its behaviour and activities toward protecting our species, the flora and fauna that inhabit our wonderful country. And today the government is pursuing a bill which deals with such absurdities as making subcontractors in our parks become bilingual. Is it necessary? The answer is no.

If the purpose of language is communication, if the purpose of language is to make people understand each other, clearly bilingual services are necessary in certain areas. It is probably not necessary

for the people who clean our parks, who work in our parks in many areas, who fix our parks on a contractual basis in construction. I fail to see where those individuals need to be bilingual. The government has simply not presented an idea of why that is so.

• (1320)

Looking at the parks, one of the biggest problems is that of resources as all industries and ministries have. As a result of a lack of resources and as a result of a lack of leadership, a major problem is that thousands of Canadian species are threatened or will become extinct. From the Vancouver Island marmot to the eastern cougar, to the Mississauga rattlesnake, to the northern right whale, all of these species and many, many others are threatened with potential extinction.

There are many solutions that we have to these problems. I will get into those a little bit later.

The money that the government will be using to force people to become bilingual could be put into other areas such as paying for enforcement officers and conservation officers and better equipment and surveillance measures for them. That would have a much more powerful effect on our parks in ensuring that the habitats of today will be there tomorrow. Instead, the government wants to pour money into a useless and futile attempt to make parks subcontractors bilingual.

There are many problems within our own areas, including the threatened extinction of many species. A situation that many people are not aware of is that Canada is a major conduit for threatened species' animal parts. The Siberian tiger, the Bengal tiger, the clouded leopard, endangered birds, animals and plant life, Canada is a major conduit for dispersing these parts from our country to other areas. It is contributing to the decimation of the population of various subspecies of tiger in other parts of the world, particularly in Asia; the decimation of the black rhino, the Javan rhino, the Sumatran rhino, the clouded leopard, the snow leopard and on and on it goes. Canada is partly responsible for that, not because of our enforcement officers, but because they do not have the resources to do their jobs.

Furthermore, there is the current situation with respect to our law. While our law provides for some serious penalties, those penalties are not being enforced. What kind of message does that give to potential poachers? It says that they can knock off those bears and send their gall bladders to other parts of the world because they know if they get caught they will only get their wrists slapped. That is an embarrassment to our country.

Furthermore, the reason poachers and people who sell wild animal and endangered species' parts all over the world are using Canada is that we have a large border, but also that our enforcement measures are wholly inadequate. They are wholly inadequate because of a lack of resources.

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There are other issues we have to deal with. The current legislation protects habitat. Habitat loss is the most important aspect of why species are becoming extinct. The federal government is not taking the leadership role to work with the provinces to make sure that larger tracts of land are being protected.

Animals and birds do not know provincial boundaries. They do not know where the line is drawn between Alberta and British Columbia. These animals need to be protected on a number of levels. It requires federal and provincial leadership in order to do that. The only time we have seen effective conservation measures being put in place is when provincial leaders have taken the bull by the horns and enacted some kind of legislation to protect them. We have seen an utter absence of leadership in this government and the previous government in trying to adjust the situation.

Here are some solutions. First, stop the forced bilingualism issue that my colleagues have spoken about before.

Second, the Canadian Endangered Species Protection Act needs strengthening. It is absolutely weak and as a result our species are paying the penalty.

Third, Cosewic is a group of independent scientists. It should be used to identify the plants and animals threatened with potential extinction which need our protection.

• (1325)

Fourth, we can look at other programs around the world where they have used their parks and their wild spaces to generate funds which they then pour back into their parks for expansion and preservation. This strengthens their ability to preserve the flora and fauna within their boundaries.

The golden lion tamarin, a beautiful little monkey in Central America, was becoming extinct. The Belize government made the park in which the monkeys live pay for itself through aggressive marketing. The park managed to save that species and many other species within that park. It prevented the encroachment of surrounding people and expanded the park. The moneys generated from the park went toward funds for health care, clean water and education of the surrounding people. The people benefited from the park in a tangible fashion which enabled them to act as a buffer zone to protect against poaching in the park.

We can apply that same lesson. We can use our parks in a sensible, environmentally sound way to generate funds. Rather than going toward general revenues and having the Minister of Finance spend the funds who knows where, we could ensure that at least a significant portion of those funds was poured back into the parks department for expansion and protection of the habitat for

many species. There is a lack of funds. This would be a very pragmatic way for the parks to generate the necessary funds for their own preservation. It could be done in a sensible way without destroying the parks at all. We have seen where this has been done in places around the world.

Fifth, we have to ensure the penalties we have on the books are severe and that they are applied to those people who commit crimes such as poaching and trafficking in endangered species.

Sixth is the aspect of differential fees. My colleague and others in the House have mentioned that it is a sham to charge the same fees for all people. Other parts of the world have differential fees for tourists and for domestic individuals. Tourists pay more. Domestic individuals who reside in the area pay nothing or very little to come and go from their parks. This model works. It is absurd to have the same fee for those who live in the park, for those who come and go from the park and for those who reside in the area. It will hamstring the ability of the parks to generate revenues which could be used to preserve the parks.

There is an enormous challenge in front of us. The preservation of wild habitats and animal species is not an esoteric intellectual argument. The pragmatic reason for it is that many species harbour direct benefits to human beings through medicine.

On a philosophical basis, what has been given to us we have a right to give to others. The fact that many species are becoming extinct, particularly amphibians, is a cold hard indicator that our ability, our environment, our survival as a species could be compromised. Many of the species in this world are harbingers of things to come. What happens to them may ultimately happen to us.

I ask that the federal government take a leadership role with respect to the parks department. I ask that it take a leadership role with respect to our endangered species and develop and put forth pragmatic solutions which already exist in Canada to try to preserve the wild animal species, the flora and fauna and the wild spaces within Canada.

**Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Skeena.

I am pleased to rise to speak on Bill C-29, the parks Canada agency act. My Reform colleagues and I are committed to having our national parks and heritage sites administered in an accountable, efficient and cost effective manner. We support the concept of cost recovery, but at the same time fees should not be levied at such a level that would deter people from using the parks. The national parks, after all, belong to the people of Canada.

• (1330)

The people of Dauphin—Swan River are fortunate to have a national park located in the centre of their riding. It is a beautiful park, possibly 70 miles by 30 miles, and is within an hour's drive for all residents of the riding.

The area that I would like to concentrate on in this brief time is the area of accountability.

Bill C-29 states that the agency will report directly to the Minister of Canadian Heritage who, in turn, will be accountable for its activities before parliament. Current mechanisms to ensure responsible public dialogue and accountability will be enhanced. I agree with that objective, but I will say that from my experience with Parks Canada we have a long way to go before that occurs.

A bi-annual review or forum of stakeholder groups will be conducted to provide an opportunity for public dialogue.

What I would like to do at this time is to relate my experiences regarding the national park located in my riding and basically talk about the process of consultation. I hope that with a new Parks Canada Agency Act the same mistakes will not be made.

Several years ago Parks Canada took on the task of restructuring the organization. The first thing it did was to notify the public and the stakeholders in my riding that it was going to hold meetings, which it did. As a former mayor of Dauphin I attended. Lo and behold, when the report came out, guess what happened? It forgot about listing the town of Dauphin. In fact, I complained about this very issue, but to no avail. It is obvious that in the report the meeting that was held in Dauphin was not there. Obviously we did not have a meeting. We had a meeting, but we really did not have a meeting. Surely this type of behaviour is unacceptable.

I hope this is not the way the new parks agency will conduct its consultations. By the way, the final report did not completely reflect the views of the stakeholders of the region. What it did reflect were the views of the parks officials and the bureaucrats.

The common point of view was that this consultation process was exercised so that Parks Canada could cut jobs. This it certainly did after the report was released.

Who will be the watchdog of the new Parks Canada Agency? Who will make sure that the consultations will not be a repeat of my own experience?

I would like to read a paragraph from a letter written by a 15 year employee of the park who resigned due to this reorganization. This individual had experienced many wonderful years in the employ of Parks Canada, except for his last couple of years. He states in his letter:

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However, due to many reasons, both work oriented and personal, I feel that my services are no longer beneficial for myself or the department. It has become very clear to me that my health has diminished and the stress level I am experiencing is intolerable. I have honestly persevered for approximately two years whereby specific individuals engaged in activities that I feel are not only legally unacceptable, but also morally unacceptable. As a result, the working environment has suffered considerably. Therefore I am unable to work in the conditions that now exist within my department. The low staff morale, the high double standards, unfair favouritism, lack of respect and authority along with the continual individual personal attacks on myself and others is beyond control.

It is my hope that the new parks agency will deal with its personnel in a more rational manner. I say again, who will be the watchdog of this new parks agency? The legislation says that it will report to the minister. Big deal. What does that mean? If the minister does not care to take an interest, where do we go from there? This has already happened in my experience in dealing with Parks Canada.

Another area I would like to talk about is cost recovery. I agree that we need to practise this principle. Even here there are limitations. The Wasagaming Chamber of Commerce is concerned that at this time the concept of cost recovery is exercised beyond what is reasonable. It is not considered reasonable for the park to charge local residents who live nearby when they enter the park to buy an ice cream cone.

• (1335)

The chamber of commerce is very concerned when the town site of Riding Mountain National Park is compared to the town site of Banff National Park. Obviously we cannot compare those two different places. There is probably no town site that could be compared to Banff National Park.

Chief Dwayne Blackbird of the Keesikownan Indian Reserve has concerns that they will not be considered as stakeholders in any future discussions with the new parks agency. A portion of Chief Blackbird's reservation is inside the boundary of the Riding Mountain National Park.

The town of Dauphin is also concerned about the new agency because of the water supply. Their water supply comes from the park. They were there before the park came into existence. Obviously they should have some historical rights to water.

Another concern is the decision of Parks Canada to clear cut 80,000 mature white spruce trees from inside the boundaries of the national park. Has anyone ever heard of that, cutting down 80,000 mature white spruce trees inside a national park in this country? I thought parks were to preserve our forests.

Once in a while we hear the threat from Parks Canada that it will charge users of the provincial trunk highway, which travels north and south through the national park. It is a direct access road between Dauphin and Brandon.

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The last concern that I will mention concerns the historical rights of access to a road closed by the park during the 1960s which connects the towns of Grandview and Rosssburn. This was done without any consultation with the local people. Currently there are seven municipalities which have lobbied hard to have the access road re-opened.

I will close by saying that these and other decisions made over the last many years continue to puzzle the people in my constituency. The people of Dauphin—Swan River want to see more transparency in how decisions are made. People want to be involved in the process and they want the process to be honest. They do not want consultation and then see something totally different written on paper.

One of the problems is that the park superintendent has too much power. At the present time the park superintendent or the director general has total authority within the boundaries of the park.

I challenge the new Parks Canada Agency to put into practice its proposal for enhancing accountability to Canadians. After all, it is the taxpayers of Canada who own the parks.

**Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague's speech and the examples which he gave about the parks in his riding and how this bill would affect the individuals within his riding.

I would ask if he might give us a little more detail about his support for the bill. I would also ask what his opinion is on the interventions made earlier concerning the subcontracting clause in terms of the requirement of all individuals having to speak French even if they are not directly involved in providing a service to individuals.

**Mr. Inky Mark:** Mr. Speaker, one of my biggest concerns with respect to accountability is: Where does one go when there is a problem with Parks Canada? Even though the process is in place, we have all the stakeholders, the round tables are established and the specific groups are organized, somewhere throughout this process it can be totally sabotaged. I say sabotaged seriously because, unfortunately, we do not control the final documentation or the final reports that are written about the discussions that take place at the round tables.

Sometimes I feel that it is almost like playing politics with the people who live in the parks and the surrounding areas. It almost appears as if they are trying to keep these people busy. Maybe the people will not complain as much if they are given access to the discussions, so they let them discuss the issues. But they know what they are going to do when the consultation process is finished.

• (1340)

That is my biggest concern. If the process is flawed, where does one go? Does one report to the minister or to the deputy minister?

At this time, with my experience over the last seven year, I have felt very frustrated in terms of who I take a problem to.

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I know that the member's constituents are aware of the fact that as mayor of Dauphin, Manitoba he worked very hard on this issue.

I am sure they are also aware that he continues to work very hard on their behalf, particularly with respect to the complications surrounding all the issues involving the Riding Mountain National Park.

One of the major problems that has been relayed to us by the member is the whole issue of how the parks are managed. They are run almost like a fiefdom. The Riding Mountain National Park is an absolutely classic example.

The direction of the road was changed at the town site on the south end that intersects the park going from south to north. The town site has basically been isolated. The commercial ventures in that area are suffering dreadfully. The parking lots in the area that were formerly overflowing on July 1 and on other holidays are all but empty even on what should be the busiest days.

The park fee structure that has been established in the area and the way in which fees are collected has fundamentally driven business outside the park. Yet, at the same time, Parks Canada is saying "We are not going to allow a renewal of leases in perpetuity".

I am sure the member has some things to say on this subject because it must be very frustrating for the people in his constituency.

**Mr. Inky Mark:** Mr. Speaker, the member pointed out that it is very frustrating. When someone is trying to get answers, one of the problems, as I indicated earlier, is who to take the problem to and will they want to deal with it.

Problems seem to go around in circles and circles. It is difficult to track down who is supposed to make the decisions to resolve the problems.

**Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I truly appreciate the opportunity to speak in the House today on this bill. I may be coming at this from a slightly different perspective than even some of my Reform colleagues, certainly a different perspective from many members of this House, but I come at it from this point of view for a very good reason.

I live in northwest British Columbia. The riding I represent, as members know, is Skeena. As they are probably aware, there has been a significant amount of debate in British Columbia over the whole issue of the creation of parks and so on, to the extent where many people, particularly in rural British Columbia, and I would imagine that it is similar in other rural parts of Canada, are

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becoming increasingly uncomfortable with the whole notion of parks.

I imagine that I am not unlike most Canadians. I grew up with a great sense of pride in Canada's national parks system. We took the care and the foresight to preserve parts of our country in perpetuity. There was only going to be human activity in the sense of viewing the wildlife, camping and so on. There was to be no other human activity in those areas.

When I talk about human activity, I am of course referring to mining and industrial activity. I am referring to towns being created and so on.

The experience in British Columbia has been more and more negative. Let me explain.

• (1345)

The provincial government in British Columbia is committed to turning 12% of the province into parkland. Mr. Speaker, I know you are not from British Columbia, but I also know you have probably had the occasion to fly over the province. On a clear day it is readily available for anybody to see that most of the province is a park by virtue of the fact that our geography makes it impossible for anything to happen on about 40% of the land base in that province. It is glaciers. It is mountain tops. It is inaccessible areas that are rugged and difficult for human beings to access. For all intents and purposes it will be left alone for all times. That is almost half the province.

In its infinite wisdom the NDP government in British Columbia is intent on turning 12% of British Columbia into parkland. Is it talking about glaciers? Is it talking about mountain tops? Is it talking about areas which are already inaccessible? No. To some degree it is talking about the areas that will never be used by human beings anyway, but for the most part it is talking about the valley bottoms, the forest land and the land base that is productive or potentially productive. I have a great deal of difficulty with that.

For example, we are so wealthy as a province that we can afford to leave \$10 billion worth of copper cobalt in the ground in Tulsequah to preserve it as a world heritage site, whatever that means, for all times and to forgo the economic prosperity and wealth creation that would have resulted from that mine development.

It is estimated by the business community in British Columbia that it would have resulted in about 2,000 full time, high paying jobs. We are talking about \$25 an hour jobs on the ground at the mine site and with the standard multiplier effect probably another 4,000 jobs in the province in businesses and industries to support the mining industry. Those are gone.

CBC and CTV cannot go around with television cameras and their microphones to interview people who lost their jobs because

nobody lost their jobs. It was not like Cassiar, a mining town that closed down in my riding. It had been there for a long time and the pain and suffering caused by this ridiculous decision could actually be seen. No. Those people cannot be interviewed because we do not know who they would have been, but we know for sure that those jobs would have been there. They are lost for all time.

I have another example to give, Moresby Island in the Queen Charlotte Islands. Back in the mid-eighties there was a lot of controversy concerning logging on South Moresby. We had the likes of the Sierra Foundation, the Earth First people, every environmental organization possible, along with significant parts of the aboriginal population decrying logging on South Moresby.

David Suzuki made a film about logging on South Moresby in which he showed his concern that the black bears may actually be forced off Lyell Island. Then it was pointed out to him that black bears did not live on Lyell Island and he had a difficult time explaining how he could have taken film footage and pawned it off on Canadians as representative of Lyell Island when in fact it was not the case. It was a blatant lie.

That is the kind of thing the environmental movement engages in all the time. It engages in lies and mistruths, scaremongering tactics, trying to convince Canadians that the sky is falling. It has been largely successful, particularly in large metropolitan areas of the country.

In any even the environmental movement persuaded both the provincial and federal governments to suspend all logging on South Moresby and to create a new national park. Is this going to be a wonderful thing? Is this going to be great? I hope there are people in Sandspit today watching this debate on television because I know how important the issue is for them.

• (1350)

This small but vibrant logging community that had existed for several decades was all but obliterated by this decision. The politicians of the day said that the economic focus for Sandspit and South Moresby would change from logging into tourism. What a joke. What a laugh.

We can go to Sandspit and ask the people there how much tourism they get. Parks Canada employees have built themselves a little fiefdom there at taxpayers' expense. They have a beautiful lodge. It is the only structure that is allowed within the park because it belongs to Parks Canada. Parks Canada employees are on what I liken to a year round vacation at taxpayers' expense. The only thing they do is limit the people that go into this so-called park.

They have made it difficult for anybody to access the park. They have a waiting list. They only allow 2,000 people a year or thereabouts into the park. One has to phone ahead to make a reservation a year in advance as if going to some high class hotel. I can see the parallel. One has to be a very wealthy person to afford

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the terms and conditions that Parks Canada has placed on anybody going into that park.

That is why I have a difficult time listening to the government talking about bringing in legislation to create new parks. I like the idea of conserving parts of our land basin for future generations and leaving it untouched. However I do not like the idea of creating little fiefdoms for Parks Canada bureaucrats to go around telling Canadians what they can and cannot do and to have my taxpayer's dollars and the hard earned taxpayers' dollars of other Canadians spent on building grand lodges, flying around on float planes and doing all the things most of us can only dream of doing. We would like to be able to enjoy the wilderness like Parks Canada people can.

That is why I have a difficult time supporting the legislation. That is why the people in my riding, the people in my province, have a difficult time with the whole notion of parks. It is not because we do not want to see a part of our heritage preserved and protected for our children and their children, for future generations. It is just that we are becoming increasingly sceptical and doubtful that it will happen under the guise of Parks Canada.

We see it as another giant boondoggle of the federal government consuming huge amounts of federal taxpayers' money and delivering no tangible benefits to the people of Canada and, more important, to the people in the residual communities where they are so much affected by Parks Canada dictates of the day.

I am looking forward to any questions members on the other side may have.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Questions and comments. Since there are no questions and comments we will continue with debate.

**Mr. Ken Epp:** Mr. Speaker, I am little bit slow today. I wonder whether we could revert to questions and comments and I could ask the hon. member a question or two. Would that require unanimous consent?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Does the hon. member for Elk Island have the unanimous consent of the House to revert to questions and comments?

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I could not follow the hon. member's comment. I want to know what he said.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The member for Elk Island requested unanimous consent of the House to revert to questions and comments.

Does the member for Elk Island have unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

• (1355)

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I just assumed Liberal members opposite would have some piercing questions for my colleague. I was waiting for them to rise but none of them did. My apologies for not jumping up and trying to be recognized ahead of the Liberals.

I have a national park in my own riding. One thing that is a big issue in Elk Island, the home of Elk Island National Park, is that local people actually started that park. They got it going, organized it and eventually made a golf course in it. They have had a ongoing fight with bureaucracy in Ottawa as to how the park should operate.

Ottawa sent them a message that they had to close the road through the park. A lot of seniors were involved in that park from the beginning. Some of them are unable now to ride bicycles. They are 85 years old, for heaven's sake, but they still like to take a ride through the park and enjoy it.

There are others with limited financial abilities who want to participate in the park they helped to build. Lo and behold in their senior years the very park they built is closed to them because they cannot afford to go there.

We have control. We have taxation. We have limitations on the way these people can use their parks. In my view there is too much control from distant Ottawa over parks that we want to enjoy, that we have developed, that really belong to the people. Suddenly parks have become an exclusive domain of the rich and the mighty and government bureaucrats. I would like my colleague to comment on that.

**Mr. Mike Scott:** Mr. Speaker, I tell my hon. friend that it is worse than he thought. The reason is that I am convinced the bureaucracy of Parks Canada is staffed and populated with radical environmentalists.

These people in essence are anti-human. That is why they do not want human beings in these parks. They care more about bugs and slugs than they do about people. That is the reality of it. David Suzuki, a leading light in the environmental movement, posited a few months ago that in order for the world to survive there had to be a mass die off of human beings. We invited him to lead the way but so far he has not taken the challenge.

That is the kind of attitude that pervades the bureaucracy at Parks Canada. It is the kind of attitude that pervades the environmental movement. These are largely far left political operatives who have lost the battle on the main front because communism as we know it is pretty much dead all over the world. They are trying to come through the back door and the environmental movement is a very effective way for them to do that. That is the reality of it.

*S. O. 31*

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

### DIOCESE OF PEMBROKE

**Mr. Hec Clouthier (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Diocese of Pembroke in my great riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke on the occasion of its 100th anniversary.

It was on May 4, 1898 that Pope Leo XIII raised the Vicariate of Pontiac to the status of a diocese with Bishop Narcisse Lorrain presiding. Since Bishop Lorrain there have been five bishops appointed to oversee the Diocese of Pembroke: Bishop Ryan, Bishop Nelligan, Bishop Windle, Bishop Smith and the current Bishop Brendan O'Brien.

On June 7, 1998, this Sunday, a mass of thanksgiving will be offered at the Pembroke Memorial Centre to celebrate this very auspicious occasion, to recognize the contributions of pioneers such as Bishop Lorrain and to reflect on the courage and generosity of our diocesan ancestors.

I congratulate Bishop O'Brien, Monsignor Barry and all those connected with this centennial celebration.

[*Translation*]

Congratulations, my friends.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### UKRAINE

**Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, as many as seven million Ukrainians were starved in Soviet socialist dictator Josef Stalin's artificial forced famine in Ukraine in 1932 and 1933.

• (1400)

This is approximately the total population of Manitoba, Newfoundland, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and P.E.I.

This month Canadians of Ukrainian descent commemorate the 65th anniversary of this socialist inspired genocide. Soviet socialist leaders used troops and secret police to seize every last scrap of food and grain. Ukrainian farmers were beaten, arrested and even shot for trying keep a few kernels on the fields of their collectivised farms.

We must never forget the millions of innocent Ukrainians who lost their lives. We must never allow a repeat of this terrible tragedy.

\* \* \*

### THE SONIER CENTRE

**Mrs. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I recently attended the opening of the Sonier Centre, a new partnership between Fanshawe College, the St. Leonard's Society, the Children's Service Network and Sir George Ross Secondary School. The centre is named after Pierre Sonier, a man who during his life was dedicated to the well-being of his family, his community, his friends and especially troubled youth.

In collaboration with the St. Leonard's Society, college students will help manage justice circles involving young offenders. The St. Leonard's Society is already co-ordinating justice circles in the London vicinity. The centre will also help in providing student resources to the Wrap Around Project under the direction of the Children's Service Network.

Both are innovative programs which show how constructive alternate solutions in the justice system can work in addressing the needs of victims and young offenders. Restorative justice principles are successfully incorporated into community based solutions and crime prevention strategies.

I applaud the London partners who are leading the way in my community to make a difference.

\* \* \*

### THE LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT

**Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I congratulate 20 teens and their police mentors for a tremendous job of community co-operation. On May 25 these young residents helped plant the seeds of crime prevention by planting flowers and corn in their neighbourhood of Sunnydale Place in my riding of Kitchener—Waterloo. This neighbourhood has been plagued with unemployment, poverty and daily incidents of violence.

The teens have had enough. The city is donating the plants. The youth are providing the labour. Most important, these young people have provided the initiative. Calling themselves the Lighthouse Project, these teens are also involved in a second project, restoring 75 bicycles donated by the Waterloo Public Interest Research Group. The costs of the restoration are being covered by grants from the Twin Cities Optimist Club.

Congratulations to these 20 teens and their police mentors for all their hard work and hope for the future. They are another great example of how people of the Waterloo region work together through their community safety and crime prevention council.

*S. O. 31*

[Translation]

### CHIAPAS

**Mr. Jacques Saada (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, from May 8 to 12, I had the honour of leading a parliamentary delegation to Chiapas, Mexico. Upon our return, I denounced the fear and destitution these people are living in on a daily basis.

I have the pleasure today of informing the House that the Government of Mexico has formally invited the International Committee of the Red Cross to resume its humanitarian activities in Chiapas. These activities include direct humanitarian relief to affected populations and will be conducted in co-operation with the Mexican Red Cross and the Red Crescent.

Furthermore, the Mexican government will give the international Red Cross direct and full access to all those jailed in connection with the events in Chiapas.

I should point out that the Mexican government's request to the Red Cross represents a major initiative in terms of human rights, one which will bring appeasement, peace and hope to the region.

\* \* \*

[English]

### TED McCAIN

**Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to congratulate Mr. Ted McCain, a computer science teacher at Maple Ridge Secondary School in my riding of Dewdney—Alouette. He has been awarded a Certificate of Excellence from the Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence. Mr. McCain is one of five B.C. teachers to receive this award.

Mr. McCain is a leader in his field. He has been involved in advocating and implementing new technology curriculum in his school and in the province of British Columbia. Courses created by Mr. McCain have become models for technology education across the country.

Being a former teacher, I can appreciate the impact teachers have on our youth. Teachers have the responsibility to prepare their students for life. Mr. McCain obviously excels at this aspect of teaching.

Allowing our students to be competitive in technological fields will prove invaluable as we enter the 21st century. I know the students of Maple Ridge Secondary are fortunate to have Mr. McCain as a teacher.

\* \* \*

● (1405)

### A YEAR IN REVIEW

**Ms. Elinor Caplan (Thornhill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one year ago I was elected the first member of Parliament for the riding of

Thornhill. My constituents in Thornhill, along with other Canadians, honoured the Liberal Party with a second majority mandate. What a wonderful year it has been.

We have the first balanced budget in almost 30 years. In December we saw the creation of the one millionth new job since October 1993. The April unemployment rate was 8.4%, still too high but the lowest in nearly eight years. In the first quarter of 1996 Canada's gross domestic product grew at 3.7%, surpassing economist expectations. Canadians have recorded the largest personal income gains this decade. As the chief economist at the Royal Bank of Canada said, this shows a healthy, robust economy.

I take this opportunity to wish all members of the Liberal caucus a happy anniversary. I also say a very special thank you to the people of Thornhill for allowing me to come to Ottawa and try to make a positive difference.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### CITY OF TERREBONNE

**Mr. Paul Mercier (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the City of Terrebonne is preparing to mark the 325th anniversary of its foundation with grand celebrations.

A seignury under the reign of Louis XIV, a village under the municipal government, Terrebonne became a city in 1880. It has been developing harmoniously ever since, and its charm was never affected. It now has a population of more than 40,000.

As a thriving city with historic structures and vibrant people, Terrebonne is prominent in Quebec thanks to its talented artists, its aggressive business people and its diverse economy.

All Quebecers are invited to experience or experience again, as the case may be, the hospitality of this friendly city and join in the celebrations, which will start on June 23, the day before Quebec's national holiday, and will continue until the day before Christmas Eve.

Happy anniversary, Terrebonne. We love you.

\* \* \*

### LIBERAL GOVERNMENT

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the first anniversary of the second Liberal mandate and of my election in the riding of Laval West, I would like to present an outline of our achievements.

Not long ago, we inherited from the previous government a deficit that was a staggering \$42 billion. This year, our government balanced the federal budget for the first time in close to 30 years.

In early 1994, the unemployment rate was 11.4%. Since then, it has come down by three points. Indeed, in April of this year, it fell to 8.4%, its lowest level in almost eight years.

Not long ago, the issue of Quebec's linguistic school boards remained unsolved. Thanks to our government's effective dialogue, a quick solution was found, to the satisfaction of Quebecers.

Not long ago, the transfer of manpower training was an issue that could not be resolved. Now, the Liberal government—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary Southeast has the floor.

\* \* \*

[English]

### ISRAEL

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, while Jews and Gentiles around the world are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the modern state of Israel, Liberal and New Democrat MPs are choosing to attack this brave outpost for democracy in the Middle East.

The NDP MPs for Vancouver East and Burnaby—Douglas and the Liberal MP for Gatineau all gave their blessing to a recent anti-Israel rally where the independence of Israel was maligned as a “catastrophe”.

The New Democrat MP for Burnaby—Douglas said that Israel's modern rebirth was not a happy occasion but was the start of 50 years of “injustice”.

Shame on these MPs. This is an outrageous affront to Israel's thriving democracy and its willingness to dialogue with Palestinians, some of whom still vow to destroy Israel.

These Liberal and NDP MPs claim to speak for democracy but instead of celebrating Israel's valiant defence of democracy in the Middle East, they have chose to malign it. What a disgrace to this House and to this country.

\* \* \*

### REFORM PARTY OF CANADA

**Mr. Murray Calder (Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party will be kicking off its united alternative campaign to attract new members with meetings this Wednesday and Thursday. But these meetings will be people who are already members of another party, Bloc Quebecois MPs.

The Leader of the Opposition would do well to remember what happened the last time we had a party leader who was so desperate to win government that he formed an unholy alliance with a group

*S. O. 31*

of Quebec separatists. The man was Brian Mulroney and his gift to Canada was none other than Lucien Bouchard.

• (1410)

The Reform Party should remember that western Canadians thanked Mr. Mulroney for that gift by voting out of office every single one of his Progressive Conservatives in the west.

Unless Reformers change their strategy, maybe they will get the same treatment.

\* \* \*

### CANADIAN NATIONAL

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, one year ago today the people of Saskatchewan defeated all but one of their Liberal MPs. It is not hard to see why.

One by one the Liberals have let the cornerstones of rural life in Saskatchewan slip away; no more crow benefit, no more post offices, fewer bank branches and abandoned rail lines.

When CN built its rail lines in Saskatchewan it received land, minerals and money in return for providing a public service for farmers. Now it has sold off the minerals, hived off the land to a separate company, taken the money and run.

CN wants to shut down the Imperial subdivision in Saskatchewan. The process set up by the Liberals allows it to shut down this branch line within 30 days of announcement then call a public meeting before that 30 day period expires.

CN will hold its public meeting tomorrow in Imperial, Saskatchewan and I will be there fighting to keep rail service for our farmers.

What we need from the Liberals is a commitment to farmers. I call on the member for Wascana to join me at that meeting and to join me in calling on CN to place a standstill on further rail line abandonments until Justice Estey has handed—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Beauce.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### REFORM PARTY

**Mr. Claude Drouin (Beauce, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we should take good note of the last move made by the sovereignists, a sovereignist-Reform strategic alliance or, if you prefer, a Reform-sovereignist alliance.

This is some union, some alliance between a party that advocates Quebec's separation and one that led an anti-Quebec campaign during the last election campaign.

*Oral Questions*

These two parties will now even share the same meeting rooms. However, we still do not know which of the two leaders—the leader of the Reform Party or the leader of the Bloc Québécois—will succeed in imposing his views on the Quebec situation.

Before the union is made official, let us say, as is the custom “If any man can show just cause why this union cannot be solemnized, let him speak now or forever hold his peace”.

Will Lucien Bouchard rise or will he forever hold his peace?

\* \* \*

**ALAIN BÉLANGER**

**Ms. Diane St-Jacques (Shefford, PC):** Mr. Speaker, at the request of the people in my riding of Shefford, I am calling attention to the participation of Alain Bélanger in the world-class competition for wine stewards, the Concours du meilleur sommelier au monde, to be held in Vienna on June 6 and 7.

Mr. Bélanger will be there officially representing Canada and I would like him to know how proud I, and all my constituents, are of him.

Mr. Bélanger came second in the Concours du meilleur sommelier du monde en vins et spiritueux de France, and holds the titles of meilleur sommelier du Canada en vins et spiritueux de France, and meilleur sommelier du Québec.

He is considered to be the most serious competitor for the favorite, Éric Beaumart, of France, who has already won this award for France.

We hope that he will be able to bring the world title of meilleur sommelier au monde back home with him, to enhance his career and bring honour to our country.

Good luck, Alain!

\* \* \*

**JEAN THÉBERGE**

**Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of welcoming to the Hill today Jean Théberge, MP for Charlesbourg for a day. He will be here with us for 24 hours.

He won first prize in the MP for a day contest for Charlesbourg riding, winning out over nearly 1,200 other students in Secondaire IV.

During his time in Ottawa, Jean will have an opportunity to gain some familiarity with what MPs do, and will get a chance to see first hand the hectic lives we lead here on Parliament Hill.

He and his brother François will have the honour of meeting with our leader, the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, and all of

the members of the Bloc Québécois caucus. Our Speaker will also have the chance to speak with this young man tomorrow morning.

Jean, on behalf of all of my colleagues in this House, welcome to Parliament Hill.

\* \* \*

• (1415)

[English]

**CLASS OF 1997**

**The Speaker:** Colleagues, a year ago today, all of us here were quite anxious. I want to underline not only the anniversary of the last election, but I also want to salute the 100 parliamentarians who joined us. They are the class of 1997. This is their anniversary. Happy anniversary.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

[English]

**GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the largest service contract in Canadian history has been awarded to Bombardier without competitive bidding. The whole thing was hammered out behind closed doors.

Last November the official opposition sought access to documents on this deal. We filed an access to information request. We asked again in February, in March, in April, in May, and no response.

What is it that the Prime Minister is trying to hide by blocking every attempt to get full disclosure on this deal?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there was a public announcement made by the Minister of National Defence in 1996 when the Government of Canada was trying to find a solution to make sure that the base at Moose Jaw would be in operation. There was pressure put on the government by the premier of Saskatchewan and the premier of Alberta. We made an application to NATO to make sure that the base could be used for training in Canada. There was a public announcement at that time.

It is only months later that the contract was awarded when there was no interest at all by any other company. It is a consortium of many companies, some from Edmonton, Alberta, some from Winnipeg, Manitoba. It is a contract that will create—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, you would think when the government was awarding the

*Oral Questions*

largest service contract in history and giving it to a party with close ties to the Liberal Party and with close family ties to the Prime Minister, that it would—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** We are getting fairly close, my colleagues. Be quite judicious in the choice of words. I ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition to put his question.

**Mr. Preston Manning:** Mr. Speaker, you would think with a contract with these characteristics that the government would endeavour to scrupulously follow the rules, but it did not. It bypassed the rules on competitive bidding. It bypassed the rules on public disclosure of sole source contracts. Now the Prime Minister ignores access to information requests on this deal.

What is it about this deal that the Prime Minister is endeavouring to hide?

• (1420)

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on March 24 the department gave a briefing to the Reform Party on this contract. It was a very important initiative of the private sector to make sure the countries that wanted to train in Canada had the proper services. I invite the Leader of the Opposition to repeat his speech in Moose Jaw, Cold Lake, Edmonton and Winnipeg where a lot of jobs would be created.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to repeat the speech in those places where they voted more for Reform than they ever did for the government. No wonder the private sector was anxious to get this deal. This deal is one in which if profits are made, Bombardier gets to keep them, but if the losses are big enough, the public gets to pick up the tab. It is also a \$2.85 billion dollar project. That is four times the budget of Prince Edward Island.

I will ask the Prime Minister again. On a deal as sensitive and as big as this, why would the government not scrupulously follow all the procurement rules?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we followed all the rules. It was examined carefully and approved by Treasury Board. It was in the best interests of creating economic activity in western Canada. If the leader of the Reform Party has no interest in the economy of western Canada, that is fine. As far as enjoying himself in the dirt, I know that he loves it and I do not expect him to change.

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, there is another rule bender. The former commander of Canada's air command, Lieutenant-General David Huddleston took a job at Bombardier and brokered the multibillion dollar sweetheart deal with the Canadian government, this Liberal government. He took the job only seven months after leaving the air force. This is a clear

violation of the conflict of interest code and the cooling off period, and the minister knows it.

Are there any rules the government did not break when it awarded Bombardier—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of National Defence.

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it has been said time and time again that there were no rules broken. This was handled in the proper fashion. As for the former air chief, all of the rules with respect to conflict of interest were followed. There was no lobbying done by that individual anywhere within the period of time.

Furthermore, this decision was taken about two years ago. In fact earlier this year the Reform Party had every opportunity to look at the records. It was offered to Reform members and they refused to do that. Instead they want to get up today and smear what is a very good deal that creates a lot of jobs in western Canada and saves the base—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary Northeast.

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the facts speak for themselves. The conflict of interest code makes it clear that there is a cooling off period of one year and he violated it. How can the minister deny this is a conflict of interest and that it makes this sweetheart deal to Bombardier look worse than it already did?

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it would be interesting to see if the hon. member wants to repeat that outside the House because there was no violation of the conflict of interest code. All those things are watched very closely.

This is a good deal for Canadians. It saves \$200 million over 20 years. There was no other consortium of companies that would likely put a project of this magnitude together. We had a time deadline in which to get this in to NATO. A decision had to be made or we would have lost Moose Jaw. We would have lost over 5,000 person years of employment in western Canada.

\* \* \*

• (1425)

[Translation]

**LIBERAL GOVERNMENT**

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, one year later, this government, which was supposed to be launching us into the third millennium, is stagnating—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

[English]

**The Speaker:** I appeal to you, my colleagues. We are having a tough time.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

**Mr. Michel Gauthier:** Mr. Speaker, one year later, this government, which was supposed to be launching us into the third millennium, is stagnating, marking time, bogged down, and has apparently run out of ideas.

Will the Prime Minister admit that his government is so unable to take advantage of the favourable economic context, which makes its life easier, that even its members, when questioned by journalists, cannot come up with anything significant this government has done?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, after one year, I am very happy to say that this is the first time in 30 years that Canada has had a balanced budget.

Over the past year, Canada's unemployment figures have been at an eight-year low. Over the past year, we have invested in research and development and helped young people prepare for the 21st century.

Over the past year, we have signed an internationally respected land mine treaty.

Over the past year—

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, rising to boast of the fact that there are now one and a half million children living in poverty in Canada, that 60% of unemployed workers are now ineligible for EI, and that hepatitis C victims are being ignored by this government, shows a lack of compassion that is truly scandalous.

Is the Prime Minister not proving to us that not only his entire government but he himself have run out of ideas?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have invested \$850 million in the child tax benefit. Over the past year, we have created the millennium scholarships, which are going to help people—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, for 30 years, the Government of Quebec was unable to sort out the problem of Quebec's school boards, and it was we who amended the Constitution and helped the Parti Québécois out of a tight corner.

• (1430)

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this government specializes in making bad choices.

It resolved the deficit by making cuts to health care, education, social assistance and employment insurance.

A year after his election, will the Prime Minister admit that he is betraying the Liberal tradition and displaying an appalling lack of compassion toward the disadvantaged when he plunges both hands into the coffers of the social programs?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary. We are going to invest \$850 million on behalf of poor families this July 1.

We have announced that, in the next two years, we will invest another \$850 million on behalf of poor families in Canada.

We have achieved the lowest interest rates in a good long while, something those in difficulty having to borrow money will benefit from.

We have also succeeded—According to what everyone was saying a few years back, Canada was a candidate for the third world—

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Rimouski—Mitis.

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government was, in all pomp and circumstance, supposed to be preparing Canada's entry into the third millennium.

Its only project in this regard has been the millennium scholarships. What a joke.

Does the Prime Minister not understand that, for the past year, the government has focused solely on crisis management and economic tinkering to manage the everyday lives of Canadians?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have raised the ceilings of provincial transfers to \$12.5 billion in order to help them deal with the present situation.

We have managed the country very well.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien:** We have managed the country very well, because, when we were in London, a little while ago, the major European dailies were saying that Canada was at the forefront of all the G-7 countries.

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*[English]*

**HEPATITIS C**

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the health minister failed once again to provide leadership, failed to put resources on the table and to provide a clear mandate to federal bureaucrats to ensure the successful negotiation of compensation for all hepatitis C victims.

Not surprisingly the talks broke down today. The health minister has one more chance. Will he today clearly provide the leadership

*Oral Questions*

to put the resources on the table that will enable the successful compensation package to be completed for all hepatitis C victims?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as a result of federal leadership at the meeting going on in Edmonton as we speak, the working group is examining options that will be put before the ministers for consideration at the appropriate time.

That is a good process. I expect the hon. member and in fact all members of the House will wait until it is concluded and we can judge it based on the results.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely clear that the health minister will not accept his responsibility for the breakdown of these talks.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Why can the Prime Minister not give a clear directive to federal bureaucrats to successfully negotiate compensation for all hepatitis C victims in the same way that he expedited the \$2.6 billion contract with Bombardier?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member ought not to think the talks have broken down. There are no negotiations going on in Edmonton. It is a group of officials working to develop options for the ministers to consider. Those talks are going very well.

Just at the end of yesterday some representatives of hepatitis C groups said they were very satisfied with the progress being made. I think we ought to let that process conclude and then we will know where we go from there.

**Mr. Greg Thompson (Charlotte, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the health minister is absolutely right when he says that no negotiations are taking place in Edmonton. Their position has not changed. They have gone in on this negotiation process with the idea of take no prisoners. The only casualties out there will be the hepatitis C victims.

• (1435)

When will the minister show leadership, stand in the House and say that he will fund these innocent victims?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member does not understand the process. Ministers have asked the working group of officials to meet as they are doing now in Edmonton to examine all the options we put before them and to report back to the ministers so a decision can be made.

In terms of leadership, it is as a result of the leadership of the Prime Minister of this government that we have an offer of assistance being made already to some 22,000 people who contracted hepatitis C through the blood system. As for the rest, let us await the process.

**Mr. Greg Thompson (Charlotte, PC):** Mr. Speaker, indeed I understand the process. My question is for the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister understands as well because he in fact is the one who put the health minister where he is in the front row of those benches.

Will the Prime Minister take some leadership, stand in the House and give the health minister the liberty to go in there with the generosity that has to be extended to these victims, or will he sit in his place and defend the indefensible?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is a good process in place. Discussions are under way among officials in Edmonton. They are examining and fleshing all options which ministers will then consider. I suggest the member await the conclusion of that very good process.

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, in fact in the Edmonton working group meeting yesterday there was a specific proposal put forward by Ontario. It asked that the do nothing option be taken right off the table.

The federal representatives said they had to consult with the Minister of Health. I ask the health minister if they will be permitted to take the do nothing offer off the table.

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is a process going on in which a number of options are being examined by officials. I think the member would be well advised to let that process run its course and let governments act responsibly in this matter.

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the victims were really quite jubilant. They thought progress was being made. Today they have had to leave the meeting dejected because this minister will not take a stand.

How long do they have to go through the process of being one day high and the next day low because this minister will not take a stand?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think the member has touched upon something here. Yesterday the representatives of certain groups left quite happy with the process. Today they are saying something else. I do not think we should assess this issue on the basis of an hour by hour reaction of certain people to the meeting.

This is not a negotiation in Edmonton. It is an assessment and examination by officials who will put facts before ministers for decision. That is the way governments act when they act responsibly.

I urge the member to let this process come to a conclusion. I am confident that it will produce a result that is in the interest of all those who got hepatitis C through the blood system.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government made a bad choice in deciding to have the unemployed and the workers pay off a large chunk of its budget.

Now that the EI fund is accumulating billions of dollars with indecent speed, the Minister of Finance wants to make use of it to lower taxes.

By giving a general tax cut precedence over raising EI benefits or lowering contributions, is the minister not headed for another bad choice?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, is it a bad choice to decrease the taxes of 83% of Canadians? Is it a bad choice to decrease the taxes of the self-employed? Is it a bad choice to lower taxes for those on fixed incomes, for seniors? I think not.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, those who have borne the brunt of the burden of paying off the deficit of this heartless government are the unemployed, the workers, and the middle class.

Does the minister not feel that, before making any general tax cut that would be of most benefit to the rich, proportionally, he should cut EI premiums and raise benefits to the unemployed, 60% of whom are totally excluded from the program?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a bit hard to understand how a member can rise here in this House and speak in favour of raising seniors' taxes, raising the taxes of self-employed workers, raising the taxes on small and medium sized businesses.

The Bloc Quebecois position is simply ridiculous.

\* \* \*

● (1440)

[English]

**HEALTH**

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, Health Canada ignored medical warnings about 25,000 women's breast implants. In 1986 a Health Canada scientist warned the government that the Meme implant was unsafe. The product was not formally banned until 1993, years later.

The government had a legal obligation to protect Canadians; the government is responsible legally. I would like to ask why it took seven years for Health Canada to heed the scientists' warning and do what was right.

**Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the matter is under investigation and therefore it would be inappropriate to comment.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I will tell the House what is inappropriate. It is when a government tries to stall and when a government puts things off for years.

We see frightening similarities between this issue and the hepatitis C crisis. In both cases the government was warned that the health of innocent people was in jeopardy. We see that happening—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Edmonton North.

**Miss Deborah Grey:** The problem is that whatever government it was in the 1980s or the 1990s we see the same problem, that they are irresponsible.

Why is it that the health minister continues to behave this way whether it is hepatitis C or breast implants? When will he admit that they are wrong?

**Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think what is unfathomable is why members of the opposition do not understand due process in law. It is under investigation. Therefore it would be inappropriate to speak to it at this time.

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[Translation]

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Last week, the Minister of Human Resources Development said he was open to changing the employment insurance plan, provided the need for such changes could be established.

In light of the examples we have provided him with, the facts presented to him and the distressing statistics showing that his reform is a fiasco, what more does the minister need to address the problem?

**Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what I have stated is our government's position.

We have known all along that it would be extremely important to assess the impact of such a fundamental reform of the employment insurance system on all citizens, to make sure that the system is serving them well and generating the desired type of employment in those regions where unemployment is the highest.

However, no positive or constructive suggestions to help unemployed Canadians re-enter the workforce have come from across the way. All we are asked to do is to keep them on EI as long as possible.

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, does the minister not realize that, while he is refusing to use the existing surplus in the EI fund to improve the employment insurance plan, he is having the wool pulled over his eyes by his colleague, the

*Oral Questions*

Minister of Finance, who is devising ways to use this surplus to lower taxes?

**Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am always pleased to co-operate with the Minister of Finance.

I was delighted when, last November, we were able to announce a 20-cent reduction in EI premiums instead of the expected 10-cent reduction. We have reduced these premiums four years in a row.

We are cautious managers and we believe that the unemployed will continue to be served well by the Canadian system, especially when it comes to helping them re-enter the workforce. That is what people expect from us.

[English]

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the government said that EI premiums have been going into consolidated revenues, which is a fancy way of saying that it has spent it. In other words there is no surplus in the EI fund. The government spent the entire \$15 billion on things that had absolutely nothing to do with workers' benefits.

• (1445)

When is the minister going to admit that the EI surplus does not exist at all, except in his own confused mind?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if I might, let me tell you what I think the question really is.

Let me quote from the taxpayers' budget of the Reform Party: "To ensure that savings from the reform of UI translate into deficit elimination the Reform Party recommends the establishment of a permanent reserve fund for UI". It goes on to say: "Funds from this reserve would be applied against the deficit". Why the flip-flop?

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, when there is no deficit the money should go into its own account.

Let me speak further to the minister's confusion. Six months ago he said that cutting premiums would create jobs. Last week he said that cutting premiums would not create jobs. Next he will be telling us that cutting premiums will somehow kill jobs.

What are the voices in the minister's head telling him today? When are we going to get a straight answer from the minister?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will tell you what the voices are telling me, and that is that it is all right for the member for Medicine Hat to change his mind. After all, this was written before the marriage with the Bloc.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it seems easier to laugh than to address the real issues.

In order to create this surplus in the employment insurance fund, the Minister of Finance is not only depriving the unemployed of a decent system, but he also continues to target small and medium size businesses that pay proportionally more taxes on employment than major corporations do.

• (1450)

When will the Minister of Finance finally stop targeting small and medium size businesses, and when will he significantly lower employment insurance contribution rates?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member must know that, in addition to enjoying a \$500,000 capital gain exemption, small and medium size businesses also have a lower level of taxation than major corporations in Canada and their counterparts in the United States.

There is also the research and development tax credits. All these initiatives are designed to help small and medium size businesses create jobs.

\* \* \*

[English]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

Canada's north continues to encounter problems with toxic waste. Can the Minister of the Environment tell the House what her department is doing to protect the health and well-being of our northern citizens, many of whom rely on a clean environment for their daily bread?

**Hon. Christine Stewart (Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for this very important question.

I am very concerned about protecting Canadians' environment and health from the contamination created by toxic waste. The current initiatives of my department are to prevent toxic waste from accumulating in the first place. Our environmental assessment legislation and our new amended environmental protection legislation are very important to that effect.

However, we are also concerned about historic toxic waste. We have spent millions of dollars in recent years to help decontaminate sites in the northern territories and we will continue to provide advice to federal departments for the elimination of toxic waste.

*Oral Questions***TRANSITIONAL JOBS FUND**

**Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Human Resources Development gave almost \$350,000 to a food processing company in Newfoundland last year. Since then it has failed to produce any products or hire a single production worker. The president has no experience in the industry and the company is about to go bankrupt. It turns out that he was an organizer for former Liberal MP Jean Payne, and defeated Liberal candidate Rex Gibbons, and the money was approved during the 1997 election.

Why was this allowed to happen?

**Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will look into the particular case that the member has just raised.

The transitional jobs fund has been very well used by this government. There have been many consultations. Members of the House, whether they are on the opposition benches or on the government benches, are being consulted. Provincial administrations are being consulted on every project. There are objective criteria.

To create jobs in areas where unemployment is very high we will continue to work hard.

**Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, what the minister did not tell us is that this company went bankrupt previously. The person who was given this loan used the money to pay off other loans he had been given by the transitional jobs fund. It failed the first time and then he used the money to pay off his other loans and it failed the second time, and the minister still has no answers.

How can the minister allow this to happen?

**Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I challenge the member to say those words outside of the House, to repeat them. It is absolutely extraordinary to criticize people and to put them in the gutter.

Our government has objective criteria and we follow the process very closely. We are very proud to have created more than 30,000 jobs with the transitional jobs fund.

\* \* \*

• (1455)

**HEALTH**

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is shocking that a criminal investigation into Health Canada's approval of dangerous breast implants for Canadian women has taken so long. NDP MP Joy Langan began calling for an investigation nine years ago.

My question to the Minister of Health is not about the current investigation. We want to know why it took citizens to come forward to get the RCMP involved. Why did the minister not launch an investigation? Why has it taken so long to get to the bottom of this tragedy?

**Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak for the administration of the RCMP under the last government, but this government has acted on this information. It is being investigated. That is basically all I can say at this time.

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the breast implant issue is just one example of a dangerously long list of examples of dereliction of duty by this government's health protection branch. We have implants. We have blood. There is BST, nifedipine, toxic toys and the list goes on and on. Let us face it, there is a mess in the minister's department.

Will the minister launch an immediate public investigation into the health protection branch?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the only mess is the mess in that member's question book. She declines to listen to the answers we give. She ignores the facts when we lay them out before her. We have explained each of these issues and she pays no attention to the answers.

The member should be assured that the health protection branch is doing its job. Public safety is a priority for this government and it will continue to be.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM**

**Mr. André Harvey (Chicoutimi, PC):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

Following the conference of Canadian transport ministers, Quebec's own inimitable transport minister, Jacques Brassard, said that Ottawa lacked the political will to do anything about the road system and that the federal government did not have one cent to spend on highway 175 between Quebec City and Chicoutimi.

Could the Minister of Transport tell us whether Quebec's transport minister is right and whether this reflects the conclusions of last Friday's conference in Edmonton?

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** No, Mr. Speaker, on the contrary.

What I said after the meeting with my provincial counterparts in Edmonton is that the issue of increased funding for the national highway system needs to be discussed with my cabinet colleagues and is a matter of establishing priorities. I am prepared to raise the issue with my colleagues.

*Tributes*

**Mr. André Harvey (Chicoutimi, PC):** Mr. Speaker, could the minister tell us whether he is still in favour of increased reliance on private and public sector consortiums to build and improve the national highway system?

**Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my simple answer to this supplementary is yes.

But I must add that I was surprised by Mr. Brassard's comment, because he did not mention highway 175 during the meeting. If we increase funding for the national highway system, highway 175 will be eligible for funding from the Canadian government, subject to the agreement of the Government of Quebec.

\* \* \*

[English]

**PAROLE**

**Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last year the solicitor general introduced provisions permitting accelerated parole for first time non-violent offenders. Unfortunately, some organized crime offenders have used these provisions to get parole before serving one-sixth of their sentence.

I would like to know what the solicitor general plans to do to fix this.

**Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for her question.

First, I would point out that there is already a provision that allows the courts to order that parole not be considered until 50% of the sentence is served. Originally it was thought that would deal with this issue. It has not.

As a result, I have sought the support, and received it, of the justice committee, which will be introducing legislation.

While we are conducting the Corrections and Conditional Release Act review I would invite all members of parliament to participate in that exercise to make sure that Canada continues to lead the world in corrections.

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**VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, in 1955 England and Canada conspired in a cover-up to deny Hong Kong veterans their right to fair settlement with Japan for wartime enslavement. This appalling act was perpetrated by the very country the veterans fought and died for.

• (1500)

Will the Minister of Veterans Affairs call for an investigation, stop stalling and get on with the job of fair compensation for Hong Kong veterans' enslavement by Japan?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during the treaty negotiations in 1952 a compensation package was worked out to honour the incredible sacrifice the Hong Kong Canadian contingent made in that serious battle. We are continuing to work on it. Once the treaty is signed there is no other legal recourse to pursue.

For the hon. member to use the kind of exploitive language he is using does not do proper honour to the people who gave their lives in Hong Kong.

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**THE LATE ROBERT LORNE McCUIISH**

**Mr. Greg Thompson (Charlotte, PC):** Mr. Speaker, in rising to mark the passing of Lorne McCuish my colleagues in the Progressive Conservative caucus extend our sympathy to Mrs. McCuish and to her children and grandchildren.

Their loss of a husband, father and grandfather is difficult. I hope they will draw comfort and pride from the public service that Mr. McCuish rendered to the people of Prince George—Bulkley Valley during his career in municipal government and his service to the people of Canada through his election to the House of Commons.

The measure of a member of parliament is not something easily expressed. The consistently positive election results for Mr. McCuish say much about him and the gratitude of his community for his efforts.

The constituents of Prince George—Bulkley Valley from 1979 to 1988 were the beneficiaries of his feisty, tell it like it is style of politics. I am sure Mr. Speaker remembers that. He possessed a wonderful mischievous personality and was not the least bit squeamish about using it on anyone from big business to his caucus colleagues.

Some of those mischievous pranks are legend in this House and I am sure Mr. Speaker has some memories of them. He had a wonderful sense of humour. We recall one of the famous incidents. I believe that Lorne at one time was a member of the consumer affairs committee. His granddaughter and he one day counted the raisins in the bran flakes because the company that produced these bran flakes was talking about two scoops of raisins. It is a famous story. Lorne said "We opened a lot of boxes of these but we never did find two scoops". Apparently a few days later a truckload of Raisin Bran arrived at his parliamentary office. That is just one of the many things he did. Some of them I cannot mention in the House but he did have a great sense of humour.

*Tributes*

• (1505)

Lorne loved his work. He realized that to love his work he had to have fun at it. He did have fun at politics.

Lorne represented a very large riding, 322,000 square kilometres. He was like the travelling representative. He always visited the remote corners of his riding to make sure he was in touch with his constituents, and in touch with them he was.

In expressing our gratitude for the public service of Lorne McCuish we would like to say thank you to his family for its understanding and for sharing him with the House and with the people of Canada.

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today the government caucus joins with the House in paying tribute to the memory of Mr. Lorne McCuish who from 1979 to 1988 served as member of parliament for Prince George—Bulkley Valley.

Like many British Columbians, Mr. McCuish was born in Winnipeg but was certainly at heart a true British Columbian. He was raised in Vancouver before moving to Prince George in the 1950s. It was there that he became involved in public service to his community. He gave almost 20 years of his life to public service, working for the greater good of British Columbians, particularly those in northern British Columbia, and of course the country at large.

First as an alderman and then as a parliamentarian he served his fellow citizens enthusiastically, energetically and certainly to the best of his ability.

He ran for parliament for the Progressive Conservative Party in 1979 and became the first person to represent the new Prince George—Bulkley Valley riding.

Lorne made it his personal mission to serve the people of his riding fairly and honestly. His neighbours responded to this deep commitment by electing him to the House three times before his retirement in 1988.

Lorne will best be remembered for his tireless commitment to his constituents, not an easy task considering his riding was well over 100,000 square kilometres and at the outset did not contain a single federal government office. The nearest federal building was a Canada employment centre in the neighbouring riding of Prince George—Peace River.

Lorne had a solution to that problem. He decided instead to take the government to the people and he would spend at least one week of every six travelling his constituency throughout northern British Columbia holding accessibility sessions in town halls, schools, libraries, hotels, community centres and church basements.

His constituents both liked and respected him for his commitment and for his feisty, tell it like it is style.

On a personal note, he will certainly be remembered for his sense of humour and for his love of life. He was famous in this Chamber for his practical jokes and indeed he was called one of the most mischievous MPs ever, but that was always done with good spirits and in a lighthearted way. His personal philosophy was always to live life to its fullest, never to take himself or others too seriously and to live every day to the best.

Mr. McCuish was a husband, a father of four and a grandfather of six, a legacy which will last far longer than any accomplishment of those of us in office.

Those of us who represent constituencies many miles from our nation's capital know what Lorne knew, that our work would not be possible without the support of our family and our friends at home.

• (1510)

As both a British Columbian and a Canadian, Lorne McCuish made an important contribution to our society as the member of parliament for Prince George—Bulkley Valley. I convey to the House on behalf of the Liberal caucus and constituents our deepest condolences to his family and to his friends.

**Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, as the member of parliament for Prince George—Bulkley Valley, I knew Lorne McCuish. I met him in 1965 when I joined the Kinsmen club and I feel privileged to pay tribute to our departed former member of parliament who served Canadians from 1980 to 1988 in my riding of Prince George—Bulkley Valley.

Lorne moved to Prince George in the early 1950s after serving with the RCAF in World War II. From there he launched his career as an independent insurance adjuster. Lorne was a tireless worker in the community, having worked for many charity organizations and service clubs, including the Kinsmen club where we met. Lorne's volunteer efforts played a huge role in the building of Prince George into the great city it is now, a great place to live.

He was an alderman for the city of Prince George from 1973 to 1977. During that time he gave freely of his time and energy to help in the planning of the emerging city of Prince George and all the infrastructure that was to come to make it the great city it is.

His integrity and devotion to work were an example to all. Lorne made in his career and in his life many friends and acquaintances. He will be missed by those friends and acquaintances and of course by his family members.

On behalf of the riding of Prince George—Bulkley Valley and the Reform Party of Canada, I send our sincerest condolences to his family and friends and express our gratitude to Lorne McCuish for his many services to Canadians as he served the riding of Prince George—Bulkley Valley.

*Tributes**[Translation]*

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with my colleagues in the House of Commons in paying tribute to Lorne.

I had the honour of serving with him from 1984 to 1988, so I got to know him a little, at least during one term. He had been elected in 1979.

I remember that even before his election he was known as an excellent administrator. He joined the team of Joe Clark, whom he greatly admired. He did an outstanding job of representing the new riding of Prince George—Bulkley Valley. In fact, he was the first member to represent this riding.

During the term when we served together I had the opportunity to work with him on the famous northern pipeline issue on various standing committees such as veterans affairs, consumer and corporate affairs as well as Indian affairs, because his was a very large riding where a number of first nations were established.

He used to say his sole purpose was to serve the people of his riding. That was more than a mission; it was a passion. He did not have national ambitions as he told us repeatedly. His sole ambition was to serve his constituents well. In that sense he had a rather unorthodox approach to the duties of an MP.

He could, for instance, spend one week in the House of Commons and the next in his riding, not at his office but visiting every village, community and organization to get a feel for what people thought, and this for months on end.

He liked to say “There are no government offices in my riding. I am the office for all the departments, by bringing services to my constituents”. He was passionately fond of meeting the people of his riding. He was, moreover, always elected by a heavy majority because people saw him as one of them. They recognized him as a tireless worker.

He was a fervent supporter of Joe Clark. At this very moment I bet he is sending Mr. Clark signals from the other side about a comeback. He was disappointed to see his leader leave but remained faithful to his party. He stayed for the 1984 election because he dreamed of being a government MP for at least one mandate, and he knew that the Conservatives had a good chance of forming the government in 1984.

He leaves his four children and their children to mourn his passing. I would like them to know just how proud they should be of him and how much he taught all MPs about loving our work, doing a good job of it and serving the public before anything else.

• (1515)

I am grateful for his great contribution to democracy and thank him for it. My sincere condolences to all his friends, his entire family, and the members of his party.

*[English]*

**Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to represent the New Democratic caucus in remembering Lorne as a member of parliament and as an alderman in the city of Prince George.

I learned a great deal from Lorne McCuish. He was elected in 1979 and I was elected in 1980. He taught me a great deal about how a member of parliament ought to operate, particularly in the constituency. We shared a hallway. I spent many an evening with Lorne McCuish. We talked about politics and work in the House of Commons and in various committees.

He was from Prince George and I am from Kamloops which meant that we spent many a flight together flying across Canada. I can recall countless evenings in Vancouver. In those days we were required to stay over because there were no same day flight connections to our respective communities from Ottawa.

As others have indicated, I remember Lorne as a very humorous individual. He always wanted to play a joke. The first time I saw him play a joke was when we were flying from Ottawa to Vancouver. I asked him how he avoided getting into conversations with people he did not want to talk to. Sometimes you sit beside a person who for whatever reason you would just as soon forget having a conversation with. He told me a secret. I do not know if he ever did it but I thought it was very funny. He said that I should take 10 inches of cord with me and when I decided I did not want to talk to somebody I should hang it out of my mouth. He said that nobody would ever talk to a person with a cord hanging out of his mouth and I suspect he was probably right. He would say things like that continuously. He was a man of great humour.

I was talking with him one day about doing constituency work. As others have indicated, he would take one week out of six and go back to his constituency, a very vast area. He held what he called availability sessions for people to come out and meet Lorne. He was a very approachable individual. He asked me to come along and join him for one of these visits, which I did. We got in a little trout fishing at the same time.

I remember walking with Lorne down the streets of Vanderhoof and Fort St. James. He knew every single person by name. If he did not know them he would sort of mumble and they would think he knew their names. I thought that was a rather ingenious approach.

He was very popular and popular for an interesting reason. He was prepared to say no to people if he could not help them. He did not pretend he could help them. Nor did he slough it off. Delegations would come from our part of central British Columbia. To be fair I would try to be kind of nice to those folks but he would just say “No, we cannot help you. We are not able to do anything. We are not even particularly interested in trying to help you with that problem because we do not believe in it”. I had not met anybody like that. It was very refreshing. It demonstrated that you do not always have to agree with people for them to respect you or for them to vote for you.

*Government Orders*

I can think of a great number of things I learned from Lorne McCuish. On top of that he was a very genuine, nice person. He often spoke of his family very warmly. I know he wanted to spend more time with his family. When he decided not to seek re-election it was because he had decided it was appropriate to spend time with his family and he actually meant it. A lot of people just say that. In the Lorne McCuish style he meant that he wanted to spend more time with his children, his wife and his young grandchildren.

On behalf of the New Democratic caucus, I extend sincere condolences to Lorne's family, in particular his wife, his children and his four grandchildren. We remember him fondly. He added a great deal of humanity to this place and I know his constituents loved him.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1520)

[*English*]

### PARKS CANADA ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-29, an act to establish the Parks Canada Agency and to amend other acts as a consequence, be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Wild Rose.

It gives me great pleasure to speak on something that is dear to my heart and that is parks. The last time I spoke in the House was on the Saguenay bill. This time I am speaking on Bill C-29 the Canada parks agency act that offers to a degree a newer and more reformed approach to maintaining our national treasures.

Canada is a nation blessed with natural wonders. I represent the riding of Calgary East, a stone's throw away from the humbling beauty of Banff, Jasper and Yoho national parks. I can say confidently that Calgaryans and all Canadians are proud of the national parks. Our country's beauty is rarely paralleled in any other nation and that can be seen in our bustling tourism industry.

Our national parks and sites attract over 24 million visitors a year and contribute over \$2 billion annually to the economy. My hope is that this bill will allow our national parks to flourish while at the same time free off cumbersome government bureaucracy.

Bill C-29 calls for the creation of a new agency, the Canada parks agency. In this case I see some merit in the establishment of the parks agency. Let me explain why.

Parks Canada is currently responsible for our country's 38 national parks and among other things 131 national historic sites. It manages over 225,000 square kilometres of Canada's natural and cultural heritage and employs roughly 5,000 people. At present, responsibility for Parks Canada falls under the Department of Canadian Heritage through the Secretary of State for Parks and reports to the heritage minister. For this reason the new agency will be held accountable through the minister to parliament.

No doubt this will contribute to more efficiency and will hopefully lead to a decrease in the fees Canadians pay to gain access to our national parks. I have heard from my constituents on numerous occasions that the costs of visiting places like Banff and Jasper are becoming too high. These are treasures of Canada and belong to the people of Canada. We have an obligation to the people of Canada to make it as affordable as possible for families to take advantage of the beauty of this nation. It belongs to them.

It is nice to see once in a while something positive come from the other side. A parks agency is one such proposal, although we do have some reservations on this. The parks agency will be able to raise and keep its own revenues. It will have access to a \$10 billion parks and historic sites account which it will have to repay to the crown with interest from revenues generated, making the agency accountable. As well third party operators will be permitted to administer certain facilities hopefully providing increased revenues and efficiency.

This new financial independence will allow revenues generated to flow back into the parks and sites. This means that new parks will be created and those already in existence will be better served and maintained.

The agency will be able to bargain directly with its employees and CEO and will have the authority to appoint employees and to establish terms and conditions of employment for agency staff. Hopefully this will afford the agency the flexibility to develop a human resource regime that is more responsive to the agency's operational environment.

The auditor general will be able to audit the agency at his discretion.

Bill C-29 also commits the agency to hold consultations on a biennial basis. This will allow Canadians to share their views on the agency's program and to participate in its management direction.

• (1525)

As well, the agency will consult directly with parties that may be affected by any new fees. As I mentioned before, Canadians are getting a little upset at the high cost of park entrance fees.

The bottom line is that parliament, the auditor general and most importantly, the Canadian people will be able to hold this new agency accountable. What we have here is a bill asking for the

creation of an agency that will be self-sufficient, more efficient, more flexible and fully accountable.

It is also my hope that this agency will contribute to the maintenance and enhancement of Canada's natural environment.

I have been fortunate enough to visit many parks around the world. As a matter of fact I was born near the foot of one of the more famous sites in the world, the Ngorongoro crater in Tanzania. Because of these reasons, national parks are very dear to me. It is important to protect the environment and our treasures not only for the Canadian people but for the world. We are the custodian of these national treasures for the people of the world. This is why this is very dear to me.

I would like to see the responsible management of these resources for future generations. I would caution that I want to see responsible management of these great treasures for the people of the world.

I have gone across the world and have seen great parks but I have also seen parks which have fallen in disarray. It saddens me when I see that happening. Therefore, when something such as this parks agency is proposed, then I feel there is merit to it and am willing to support it.

The official opposition is committed to having our national parks and heritage sites administered in an accountable, efficient and cost effective manner. For the reasons outlined, I see little reason why I should not support Bill C-29.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-29 since it will directly affect Banff National Park which is in my riding of Wild Rose.

The purpose of this bill is to establish the parks Canada agency to administer and protect national parks, historic sites and other heritage areas. Ideally the rationale for a parks agency is that it would simplify the organizational structure, improve administrative efficiency and allow more flexible staffing and financial procedures. At first glance there are a few positive aspects to this bill.

First, the new agency will remain accountable through the Minister of Canadian Heritage to parliament, as all agencies should be accountable to someone.

Second, the new agency will fall under the Access to Information Act. It can be audited by the auditor general, unlike agencies in other pieces of legislation which the auditor general does not seem to be able to touch such as the infamous and protected Canadian Wheat Board.

Third, Bill C-29 was supposed to commit the agency to consultations on a biennial basis and to consult directly with parties that may be affected by any new fees. As of last night's amendments,

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this will now be in the form of round tables held by the minister. Obviously the government felt that more power must be kept within the cabinet.

Fourth, the agency will be more efficient. It will be able to raise and keep its own revenues, bargain directly with its employees, permit third party operators to administer certain facilities, and allow the CEO to set terms and conditions of employment.

Finally, the agency will have access to a new \$10 million parks and historic sites account. Any funds drawn from this account will be repayable to the crown with interest.

All in all, Reformers are committed to having our national parks and heritage sites administered in an accountable, efficient and cost effective manner.

• (1530 )

We support the agency's objective of cost recovery, while at the same time ensuring that fees at Canada's national parks and heritage sites do not become prohibitively expensive. This is one amendment that should have passed. I wish it had passed.

The majority of MPs voted down a motion that would have set up a two-tier park price whereby local area residents would pay a lower entrance fee. The lower fee was turned down, despite warnings that soon only the wealthy would be able to afford park prices.

Fees have risen dramatically in Banff National Park over the past five years. Many of the letters I receive about this particular issue concern the increase in fees. The people of that area are not happy. Seniors groups are extremely unhappy.

Time and time again carloads of seniors have driven to Banff just for a nice afternoon out, but they turned around when they reached the gate because seniors cannot afford to pay the fees. Tourists from all over the world have noticed a big increase in fees.

The main problem with this bill is its lack of detail regarding how the agency will be financed and run, what the administrative costs of operating the agency will be and what portion of that cost might be financed by user fees. All of this detail will not be known until the agency is set up. I believe that detail should be taken care of prior to that happening.

As of now it has been reported that the agency is counting on receiving \$70 million from user fees in fiscal year 1997-98 and an increased amount in subsequent years. Therefore the agency will have to know exactly what consumers are willing to spend on our national parks and heritage sites because any miscalculation could hinder its functioning.

The one main catch to this bill was highlighted last evening when the Liberal amendment designed to ensure bilingual services

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in Canada's national parks was passed. I know that many of the people in Banff will really be upset, and so they should be.

I often wonder why this Liberal government does not stop and realize that, for example, Banff has one of the highest number of new citizens. These immigrants come to Banff. Probably nine out of every ten are of oriental background. There are numerous people who want to make that area their home. They are immigrants and they speak neither French nor English.

People from Japan, Korea, Vietnam or some other country choose to make Banff their home. They want to work there. They went there as immigrants, they settled there and they love it. However, they will not even be able to get a job cutting the grass in the park, painting a fence or building protection around trees because they are not bilingual. How ridiculous are we going to get in this parliament? We are constantly passing laws that insist people must be bilingual in order to work.

This is Banff. A number of people out there do not speak French. There are number of people who do not speak English. There are a number of people out there who are very fluent in a number of different languages. There are a lot of good capable workers, however, members on that side of the House insist that they be bilingual. It is getting just a little ridiculous.

I think of the days when I was on the farm. One of the best milkers who came to take over the milking operation on our farm could not speak a word of English. We could not even communicate for a while, except by motions, but did he ever do a job for us on that farm, and we could hardly communicate.

To pass a law that says that is the way it has to be is really getting completely out of reach. Immigrants continually come to this country. Many settle in the west. Many of them land in Banff National Park. It will be very difficult for them to understand why, when they want to make Canada their home, when they want to contribute to the economy by working for a living and paying taxes, they cannot work because they do not speak both English and French.

• (1535)

What kind of mentality would come up with that kind of regulation? Government members do not give it any thought, except when the time comes to vote on it and they jump up like little puppets and vote as the whip tells them to vote. Otherwise they will pay a healthy price for disobedience. They continue down the same old path of not really caring what the bill is about or how it will affect individuals. They only care what the whip says because they are good little Liberals and will always do what they are told.

As long as they keep doing that this country is going to keep going down the tube. They are going to continue to chip away at

these small areas and tell individuals that if they do not speak French and English they cannot get a job. It is ridiculous.

When is this government going to come to its senses? Banff National Park is a beautiful place to work. It is a beautiful place to earn a living. If these people can communicate in Japanese and in other oriental languages they are going to be of real benefit to the park. But they probably will not even be able to work for the park because, the way I read it, they have to be bilingual. Is that not so? They have to be bilingual.

Congratulations, Liberals. Congratulations to all the trained seals on the back rows who keep approving bills when they do not even know what they are about. They ought to open up their brains and their minds to learn about what is going on.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is from Alberta and in his territory there are large numbers of parks and wilderness areas. He knows very clearly the problems that our parks have had recently and also the problems they will face in the future.

He mentioned that the moneys that will be used to ensure that subcontractors are bilingual will cause a major problem within our parks. The ability of local people to earn revenues will be hampered. In fact, the ability of the parks to function and generate revenues will be hampered. They will not be able to safeguard the flora and fauna, which in many cases is under siege.

Does the member feel that the money that is going to be lost by this ridiculous amendment the government is putting forward could best be spent in trying to preserve our parks? If so, how would he preserve our parks? What would he do, if he were the minister, to make a more intelligent parks agency act?

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question.

There seems to be an attitude on that side of the House. They do not seem to understand that the national parks of this country belong to the people of Canada. They do not belong to the Liberal government. They do not belong to the government of the day, they belong to the people of Canada.

Therefore, the people of Canada should be able to enjoy these parks and that enjoyment should be affordable. But the government squanders money on areas like bilingualism. The government is going to make sure that the people who work in the parks are bilingual. Those who are not bilingual will be totally confused and very upset. They very much want to work for the parks because they have a talent. That is why they were attracted to the mountains and to the parks. But this legislation will prevent that from happening.

The people of Canada should be able to enjoy their property in a better way than they do today. Fees chase them away. Fees are up

because certain costs have to be met. Part of the cost is due to the fact that we have ridiculous legislation which says the workers have to be bilingual.

I hear a lot of nattering from across the floor, but I do not think they have even been to Banff. They do not know what they are talking about. I live in that country. I know what I am talking about and I can guarantee that there are going to be a lot of unhappy people in Banff National Park.

I congratulate those members on their big blunder.

• (1540)

**Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask my hon. friend, since we seem to have a lot of wildlife in the House and certainly an endangered species on the other side, some of which are green, and there is certainly a lot of old growth, if maybe this could not be the next park. We already have official bilingualism in the House. Maybe we could confine it here, rather than have it spread to the Northwest Territories, British Columbia and other places where there is absolutely no sense in having it.

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more. The hon. member is right about one thing. There are some old animals in this House.

Probably the most important thing that the member mentioned is that there is an endangered species on that side because they continually shove things down the throats of Canadians. Canadians do not like it. They are getting tired of it.

I am going to continually insist that Canadians pay attention to that mighty bunch over there who say to the farmers in the west "You will do it with the wheat board, or else". They are the same ones who tell the people in Banff National Park "You want a job with parks and you can't speak French or English? My, my my".

The Liberal members should shake their heads and wake up.

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I really enjoy listening to my friend from Wild Rose. I just want to know whether he has cleared his position with his new ally, the premier of Quebec, Lucien Bouchard.

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, that is a brilliant question. It is about as brilliant a question as I hear coming from the other side of the House. Why do you not pull your little chain and see if your light will come on?

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

**Some hon. members:** Question.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** On division.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed)

\* \* \*

### NUNAVUT ACT

The House resumed from June 1 consideration of the motion that Bill C-39, an act to amend the Nunavut Act and the Constitution Act, 1867, be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to speak to Bill C-39, an act to amend the Nunavut Act. This legislation will transfer powers to the new Nunavut assembly. It will implement measures for territorial elections and the appointment of senators.

I am going to talk to a number of issues today, but I want to address the long history of dealing with the aboriginal people in a way which has created a welfare state. This dependency has compromised the health and welfare of aboriginal people to a great extent. They have some of the worst health care in this country.

This bill will allow the government to appoint senators for the Nunavut region. That concerns democracy. Should the people who represent the people of Nunavut be appointed or elected?

• (1545)

We have always maintained that the election of individuals representing the people should be the way to go. An appointment circumvents the democratic principles of the country and prevents individual members of the community from getting the person they want as opposed to the person a prime minister would like to have.

If the Prime Minister would take a courageous leadership role in ensuring that from now on senators would be elected by the people and for the people, he would be doing an enormous service to institute an element of democracy in the House that it so desperately needs.

For years we in the Reform Party and others in the community have asked for a triple E Senate, an elected, equal and effective Senate, a Senate that would bring power to the people, not power to the leadership of a political party. We have asked for that repeatedly. If the Prime Minister would take that initiative he would be demonstrating enormous courage and leadership. I implore him to do that.

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With respect to the powers of the Northwest Territories, those powers will be transferred to Nunavut through the bill. I want to get to the heart of my speech, the real reason I wanted to speak on Bill C-39.

For decades we have created an institutionalized welfare state. The institutionalized welfare state has been put forth through the Indian Act, an act that is discriminatory. It balkanizes, increases prejudice and keeps the boot on the neck of aboriginal people by preventing them from having the ability and the power to develop, to be the best they can be and to be masters of their destiny.

We have circumvented that by creating a separate act for a separate group of people. That attitude has compromised the health and welfare of hundreds of thousands of aboriginal people and will continue to do so as long as we treat aboriginal people as separate and distinct members of the country.

It is possible and advisable to ensure that aboriginal people are integrated into Canadian society and not assimilated. Assimilation would destroy the incredible culture and language they have to teach all of us. Integration will enable them to become integrated, functional members of Canadian society.

Let us look at the situation in New Brunswick today where aboriginal people are flaunting the law and cutting down trees. The response from those aboriginal people is that there is no way they will allow anybody to take away their chain saws. For the first time in their lives they have been able to earn a living, generate funds and provide for themselves and their families.

The result has been a dramatic decrease in substance abuse and violence. The community is stronger. Individuals have a sense of community. They are pursuing that course because they have the ability to generate the revenues, the funds and the wherewithal to be masters of their destiny and to take care of themselves, as opposed to the situation we have today where aboriginal communities are forced to look to the government to be their paternal father, the one who will take care of them.

We in the House are members of different ethnic groups. If any of us were to come under the Indian Act and be forced to ask permission from the Government of Canada to do a number of things, what would happen? If we were forbidden to own land or we had to ask permission to get services, what would happen? If we had a separate group of services and opportunities different from the rest of the country where things were given to us instead of our being forced to earn it, if instead of being given the opportunity to take care of ourselves and the chance to have the tools to take care of ourselves, and if money were given to us, what would happen?

• (1550)

We would suffer from alcohol abuse. We would suffer from other substance abuse. We would suffer from sexual abuse and violence. Our communities would be in tatters. If a system were created

where things were given freely to no matter whom, it would erode the very soul of a person. As a result the society the person lives in would be eroded as well.

The situation on some reserves is appalling. In my job as a member of parliament I have investigated allegations by members of reserves who have said that the resources their reserves are earning are disappearing. It is alleged that those moneys are being taken by members of the reserves.

Generally aboriginal and non-aboriginal people in leadership positions are alleged to be taking moneys that should be going directly to the people for education, health care and treatment programs and to enable them to have the tools and the power to stand on their feet.

The minister of aboriginal affairs said there was no problem and that if I had a problem I could go to the RCMP. The result is that the people on the ground, the average aboriginal people in the trenches, are being hammered.

An aboriginal woman on a reserve I visited said that moneys which were supposed to go into schools had been taken by the leadership of her reserve. If she went to the leadership she would be ostracized in her society. If she went to the department of Indian affairs it would tell her to go to the leadership.

What should that woman do? Her children will be educated in a school that does not have the resources because the money has potentially been stolen. Such people are caught between a rock and a hard place.

This is not uncommon. When I investigated allegations of misappropriation of funds on a reserve in my riding the minister said I could go to the RCMP. Before that happened the people who were allegedly doing it, individuals on the reserve in positions of power, threatened to sue me to shut me up.

What happens to aboriginal people in that community who are seeing the money disappear and do not know where it goes? There is no accountability. There is no responsibility. There is fear that if they complain they will be ostracized within their community or worse.

They come to me. I go to the minister. The minister says that it is not a problem and asks me to go to the RCMP. With the resources going into the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development a significant amount of money is potentially in the wrong hands. The Canadian taxpayer would be completely appalled by that.

What are we doing? We are pursuing a course that will balkanize our country. What will the Delgamuukw case that came down in British Columbia do? It will drastically undermine crown ownership of 94% of B.C.'s land mass; put almost insurmountable hurdles in the way of the provincial government over land resource decisions; supplant common law with a new system of law in

which equal credence is to be given to aboriginal cases, to the aboriginal perspective; and replace the longstanding rules of evidence in civil cases with two sets of rules, one for aboriginal cases and one for other cases.

The aboriginal title as defined by the court may be supplanted by other forms of land tenure only if there is rigid testament by the government and only if compensation is paid. It failed to confirm in constitutional terms the right to make laws where they are fully vested in either parliament or provincial legislatures. It turned over to the federal government the right to exclusively legislate land management for natives on lands found to be covered by aboriginal title.

The Delgamuukw case also prompted the first nations summit for an immediate freeze on development of land resources anywhere in British Columbia. What did that do for aboriginal people who want to earn a living? It destroyed the ability of that land to be utilized for aboriginal people and for non-aboriginal people.

• (1555)

The attitude in the Delgamuukw case and in the federal government as in previous federal governments has been to divide, which does not bring aboriginal and non-aboriginal people together in an environment of mutual respect and tolerance, with a vision and goal of pursuing a common and united purpose for the betterment of the health and welfare of all people. It pursues a course that will balkanize our country and will tear apart aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities.

What has been the outcome? As I mentioned earlier in my speech the health care parameters are appalling. I have worked in emergency rooms and visited aboriginal reserves. The incidence in some reserves of fetal alcohol syndrome approaches 60 per thousand live births. The unemployment rate can be 50% or higher. The incidence of diabetes is three times higher than that for non-aboriginals. The incidence of infant mortality is much higher than for anyone else. The birth rate is nearly 3% higher than in other communities. The tuberculosis rate approaches third world levels. Why?

Does the federal government not understand that the pursuit of separate developments is apartheid in Canada? Does it not realize that will only fail? If its actions are to work we would have seen that by now. Instead we have seen a decline in the health and welfare of aboriginal people.

Members should walk for a few minutes through the inner city of Vancouver and through some aboriginal communities. They will see a scene that is reminiscent of a third world country. This is not to say that some aboriginal communities do an outstanding job of providing for themselves and their people. They have managed to

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do it because they have the ability to work with surrounding communities and the power to be the masters of their own destiny as we are in our communities.

What is so wrong with giving aboriginal people the same municipal type powers as those of other communities? What is so wrong with ensuring that the traditional rights, responsibilities, goals, objectives and cultural needs of aboriginal people are to be preserved in perpetuity?

It would ensure that aboriginal people could engage in the cultural activities they have always engaged in for the betterment of their society. What is so wrong with that? Instead we have a situation of separate development, balkanization of my province of British Columbia and balkanization of our country.

Nunavut may proceed in that direction. Furthermore who will pay for it? Will the moneys be generated there? The federal government and the Canadian taxpayer will foot the bill for separate development that has been demonstrated so clearly to fail.

I cannot emphasize enough that the apartheid, the attitude of balkanization of the country, the Indian Act and the department of Indian affairs and its goal of creating separate development for separate peoples will compromise everyone but particularly aboriginal people.

My colleague from Skeena has spoken eloquently many times and produced many different constructive solutions to the government along the lines of aboriginal affairs under the umbrella of mutual respect, understanding and tolerance, with an objective to move forward to develop as individual societies linked together with the common purpose of a united, positive and healthier future.

The government is doing a separate development which, without accountability, will only increase the problems of aboriginal communities today. If for once I could get the minister of Indian affairs to sit in the House or to come with us to see what is happening in the reserves, in the trenches, she might change her tune. It does not serve her to meet the aboriginal leadership alone, because the aboriginal leadership has a certain goal. It is forced perhaps by circumstance to pursue an objective that is politically correct, given the current politically correct attitude we see today. It is this politically correct attitude that we have toward aboriginal people, this attitude toward separate development, that is causing enormous problems for aboriginal people.

• (1600)

Aboriginal people want their culture and language to be preserved. They want to be able to work. They want to be able to take care of their own. They want to be able to stand on their own two feet. They want to be masters of their own destiny and they want to

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interact peacefully with non-aboriginal people. That is the objective we should have. Those are the people we should be meeting with, because if we do not the problems we see today will only get worse.

It breaks my heart to see the situation on some aboriginal reserves with the situation I mentioned before of the incidence of diabetes, tuberculosis, premature death of children, the squalor, the destitution and the hopelessness these people have. Furthermore, it is simply not necessary that this occurs.

We have to change our attitude. If there is to be a creation of separate mini states within a province, say in British Columbia through what the Delgamuukw case would provide, what is going to happen when 110% of the land mass of British Columbia is called for and staked out by aboriginal people?

We cannot go back in history 110 or 120 years and try to use that to justify what is happening today. We have to move forward and look forward. We have to repair the damage of the past, but we can do that only by moving and looking forward.

It is imperative that we are able to use our resources to help the aboriginal people to help themselves and move forward in a constructive united front for all Canadians. If we do not, the blood will be on all our hands.

**Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened quite carefully to my hon. colleague from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca. I am struck by a couplet of Pope: "A little learning is a dangerous thing; Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring". I am very disappointed in my colleague. I have always felt he is a man of honour and a man of some intellect, but he has talked a deal of nonsense this afternoon.

I am not sure how much he knows about the bill. I was in Nunavut two weeks ago today. The weather was a little colder than here. Eighty-five per cent are Inuit and speak Inuktitut, which will be the official language of Nunavut. There was a feeling of springtime, a feeling of confidence and a feeling of looking at new things. Nunavut will be proclaimed April 1, 1999 and the Inuit have been working some 20 years toward this point.

There was a referendum and a vote in 1982 in which they expressed their strong approval for continuing; the same again in 1992.

Does the member not realize there is a distinction or difference between aboriginals and reserves and what the act is going to provide in the eastern Arctic? Much of what he says is quite true. Being a member of the aboriginal affairs and northern development committee for the last two and a half years, I know they are true. I also know he does not appear to know what he is talking about with respect to Nunavut. I do not suppose he is going to admit that.

• (1605)

The report of the committee on aboriginal peoples made the comment about respect, recognition, sharing and responsibility. It is the Inuit themselves who want this act to be proclaimed and who want to govern themselves. They will be a public government so they will obviously be accountable and they will obviously be assimilated. I do not like the term, but as far as that goes they will be assimilated about as much as the people of British Columbia or Prince Edward Island have been assimilated into the Canadian mosaic. That is what this act does. That is what the department has been working toward. I would like the member to acknowledge that.

**Mr. Keith Martin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. The question that really has to be asked is whether the carving up of Canada will help aboriginal people. Who will pay for the development of Nunavut? Who will pay for its establishment and bureaucracy? Where is the accountability?

I use Nunavut as an example of what might happen in British Columbia with the Balkanization and the carving up of British Columbia into mini states. That is exactly what will happen. It is what will happen with the division of a province into separate mini states with separate laws, rules and regulations.

Aboriginal people want to be masters of their own destiny. They want the power to do that. But can they not do that within Canada? Can they not be equal partners in a country in which we are moving forward together? This government and previous governments have taken away power from the people and put them out separately in another field to develop by themselves, to go through different rules and regulations for their own development. As a result, many resources have not reached them. As a result, we have created an institutionalized welfare state. That is the biggest crime of all and that is what has to be addressed today.

**Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to discuss a point used during the hon. member's speech. I consider him to be a very constructive member of parliament who definitely wants to contribute in a very positive way to the process.

In 1993 Reformers were first elected in substantial numbers primarily in the western provinces. When they came to the House they said they were interested in providing opposition politics and in contributing to the process in the most constructive manner possible.

Last night I found myself in a very difficult situation. Before I voted on Reform's amendment to Bill C-39 I looked at our rationale for voting against it. The rationale we were given initially was that Reform wanted an elected senator for Nunavut. As someone who fundamentally believes we need more democracy in the political system, I believe that senators should at the very

least be elected. I would love to have supported the Reform amendment last night.

The amendment was that this House decline 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. Had I supported Reform's amendment I would not be able to support Bill C-39. I was forced to vote against having an elected senator because of how Reformers chose to word their amendment.

I ask the hon. member to work in a more constructive way within his caucus. If the intent of Reformers is to be constructive, when they make amendments of this sort they should use language that would actually guarantee the election of senators, as was done in Alberta. They should not decline the progress of a very important bill. That is not constructive politics.

• (1610)

**Mr. Keith Martin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Fundy—Royal who has always put forth quite a number of intelligent suggestions in this House in the past.

In the crisis taking place today among aboriginal communities there are three things that can be done, scrap the Indian Act, have a phasing out of the department of Indian affairs, and those moneys can be put into developing programs for the aboriginal people to deal with issues such as counselling, substance abuse, economic development, giving the aboriginal people the tools to become employable and take care of themselves.

As my hon. colleague from Fundy—Royal knows from his experience in the maritimes, the people in New Brunswick are chopping down trees. That is illegal and they should be dealt with accordingly but the lesson behind that is that these people now have the ability, albeit illegally, to take care of themselves. They have the ability to work. They have the ability to earn money. They have the ability to take care of themselves and their families. As a result, we have seen a dramatic decline in some of the social ills that are being predatory on aboriginal communities.

If we can do that it would be the greatest gift we could offer aboriginal people in giving them the powers to work with us to build a stronger country.

On the Senate amendment, the member knows very clearly that we have pursued a course of a triple-E Senate for a long time. I am encouraged that he supports that principle and I hope he will continue to work with us to making that a reality.

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party likes to talk about listening to grassroots. The most recent polling on the Senate shows that more Canadians would like to abolish the Senate rather than reform it.

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If we elect a senator, does that not lock into place the existing Senate, the existing powers, the existing representation which is very unfair to our region of western Canada for example? If we are to do that how do we persuade Ontario, for example, to accept the idea of equality and yet leave meaningful powers with the Senate to make it effective?

All during the constitutional process during the last decade that was the most difficult question to answer, and there is no answer in my opinion to that. It goes right back again as to why I think more and more Canadians are now looking at the abolition of the Senate.

It would take a longer dissertation to make my questions even more clear and I think he would need more time to answer them but I would like a brief answer.

**Mr. Keith Martin:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member from the NDP asks some very good questions. The first thing that has to be done that can be done is to grandfather those members who are senators today and nothing will change for them.

However, establish a plan right now that all new senators will be elected and will come on the basis of regional representation.

Although the member clearly says it will be very difficult for provinces such as Ontario and Quebec that have the lion's share to accept that, or New Brunswick which has a disproportionate number to British Columbia, that is where leadership comes in. That is where doing the right thing will demonstrate to the Canadian public that this House is not a house of elusions but a house of leadership.

Grandfather current senators. New senators would fit into a system of proportional representation where senators would be elected on the basis of an equal number for each province.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to seek consent from the House to present some petitions. We omitted petitions this morning. These petitions deal with the repeal of Bill C-68. I would like to get consent to take a minute to present them. There are quite a number of petitions.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** No.

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### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bill, to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-16, an act to implement an agreement between Canada and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, an agreement between Canada and the Republic of Croatia and a convention between Canada and the Republic of

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Chile for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income.

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• (1615)

**NUNAVUT ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-39, an act to amend the Nunavut Act and the Constitution Act, 1867, be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, following up on the intervention of my hon. colleague and friend from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, I was not going to talk a lot about Senate reform, because I know that we have covered that off very well already. But in response to the questions that my hon. friend from the New Democratic Party asked, I would say that scrapping the Senate is the easy way out.

The reason that polls show Canadians are in favour of abolishing the Senate is that they feel so frustrated and so angry over a Prime Minister who is only too willing to use the Senate for his own political partisan purposes, much as we had previously with other prime ministers, including the one immediately preceding this one. Canadians are really sick to death of this. I can understand that frustration. I can understand why the polls would indicate that they would just as soon see it abolished as have the ridiculous situation that we have right now which has no legitimacy whatsoever.

I would argue with my hon. friend and I would take this to Canadians and engage in a national debate that if we abolish the Senate, we lose any opportunity in the future for having the Senate provide a sense of regional balance and fairness within this great country of ours where we have a democracy which reflects representation by population. This is an opportunity to have representation by region as a control mechanism or as an overriding safety feature to ensure that the interests of the regions are not overridden by the provinces with large populations, particularly those in central Canada.

It is very important that we engage Canadians in this debate. Yes, at the end of the day we will follow the wishes of the country, but if it were laid out for them and if it were done properly, I am convinced that Canadians would support it.

I thought that was really worth dealing with prior to getting into the substance of my remarks.

A member of the Progressive Conservative Party made a remark during the course of debate. I know it was not on camera and it was not on the microphone, but he was quite right, and the member is still sitting here. He said that this bill and the whole creation of

Nunavut is not about creating a new territory, it is about creating a new province. The member understands that well. I certainly understand it well. And there are certainly some legal and constitutional experts out there across the land who understand it.

That is one of the main concerns and one of the main objections I have to this bill and to the bills that preceded it which gave rise to the territory of Nunavut. In effect it does create a new province in everything but name.

Mr. Speaker, you would know I am sure that it is not proper, it is not right and it is not legal for the federal government to create a new province or for this country to see a new province created without provincial consent. That is right in the constitution. A new province has been created in everything but name, and it has been done in a very underhanded and deceitful manner.

The original bill which gave rise to the creation of Nunavut back in the early 1990s was passed through the House. Did it take a week? Did it take three days? No. It passed first reading, second reading, report stage, and third reading in one day. Only one lone dissenting voice voted against this bill and that was Reform's member for Beaver River. Other than that, it went through the House as fast as any bill has ever gone through the House from beginning to end.

Let us consider for a moment what this bill does. I am sure my hon. friend from the Progressive Conservative Party would be interested. I hope he is listening.

• (1620)

This bill creates a new province or pseudo province as it does not use the term province. It does so at the expense of the Canadian taxpayer to the tune of \$300 million. That is the cost of implementation, or at least that is the budgeted or projected cost. By the time the Liberal government gets done with it who knows what it is really going to cost because as we all know that is the way things work around here.

There was a tax program that was going to be the program to end all programs. Mr. Speaker, I am sure you were in the House when the former Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Mr. Tobin, introduced it. It was a program to end all programs for the east coast, \$1.9 billion. This is it, it will never happen again. Where are we now? We are looking at TAGS two. Just a little aside to remind everybody that the government continues to budget money for programs and then down the road it goes way over the cost. It is likely to happen here as well.

There is \$300 million to implement Nunavut. It is a fairly large area but how many people are we talking about, half a million people, or 200,000 people? No, we are talking about a population of 25,000, including children, people below the age of majority. There are hundreds of communities across this land and hundreds

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of communities in Ontario that have more population than what Nunavut is going to have once it is created.

Can you get any more ridiculous than that. Can you get any more ridiculous than to spend \$300 million creating a territory that is going to have a population of 25,000? It is going to create a legislature. It is going to have all the trappings of a territorial government. It is going to have its own environment building, its own fisheries department and its own department of Indian affairs. All those buildings are going to be somewhere, probably in Yellowknife. Who knows where it is going to be, but for sure it is going to have all trappings of this federal government somewhere in the new territory of Nunavut. The long suffering Canadian taxpayer is going to enjoy the right to pay for this politically correct nonsense in perpetuity because in perpetuity it will last.

The amount of \$300 million for 25,000 people would be a real knee slapper if it were not so serious, if it was not creating a new province through the back door in such a deceitful manner. It is such an affront to the Canadian taxpayers who are going to be asked to put out hundreds of millions of dollars, billions of dollars over time to pay for this.

It has to be assumed that these are somewhat intelligent people in the government, but why would they create this territory at such a huge expense? Why have they done it?

The only conclusion I can come to is it is nothing more than a bandage, a poorly considered politically correct response to the massive failure of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. That is really what this is.

That department has had a demonstrated track record of failure for over three decades. Year over year there are increases in unemployment. Year over year there are increases in dependency. There are increasing rates of social pathologies on reserves across this country where the infant mortality rate is double the national rate, where suicide is seven to eight times higher than it is in non-aboriginal communities, where more aboriginal youth go to jail than go to university.

The government in its politically correct scramble to try to find a way of obfuscating and hiding its own failure is creating Nunavut as a politically correct response. It says this is the way of the future for people in the Northwest Territories.

• (1625 )

What we are seeing here is a bureaucracy that is in the process of swallowing itself whole. Frankly, I think the Canadian public, largely as a result of work that the official opposition has done over the last few months but even before that, has common sense and is slowly coming to the conclusion that the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is a fraud of enormous size.

I think Canadians are understanding that more than \$6.2 billion goes into the top end of this department yet few benefits trickle out the bottom end to grassroots people living on reserves.

I think the Canadian public is beginning to understand that the department of Indian affairs is not much interested in accountability within its own organization as the auditor general has continued to point out year in and year out for decades. This department has no interest in the truth. It is a department which has no interest in looking at the real problems of aboriginal people and trying to find constructive ways of dealing with those problems.

It is the simple things. We live in a country that recognizes, albeit with a whole long list of Liberal governments in a very muted way, private property rights. Our Liberal forebear Mr. Trudeau did not have the courage to put it in the constitution. It is not in the charter of rights and freedoms although everything else is in there. No private property rights are in there.

We do have as a foundation to our economy the notion of private property rights. Way, way back when Mr. Diefenbaker was prime minister it was put into law. We do follow that in most areas of the country.

There is not the right to private property on reserves. That is a huge impediment for aboriginal people. They cannot mortgage their property. They do not own their property. They do not own their own house.

If a family breaks up, there is no process like there is in non-aboriginal society for courts to determine who is going to have custody of the family home and so on. That does not happen in aboriginal communities.

A person cannot open a grocery store or a corner store. They cannot open a gas station on an aboriginal reserve and arrange the capital at a bank because they will be laughed at. The bank will not lend them money against a piece of property that they do not own. It is ridiculous.

In response to the historical and contemporary failure of the department of Indian affairs, the government comes up with these kinds of absolutely ridiculous ideas regarding how to deal with the problem.

We are parliamentarians. We are supposed to be able to come here on behalf of the constituencies we represent and we are supposed to have access to information.

I have a simple question. How much money has the federal government spent in the Northwest Territories over the last decade? I would like to know the answer to that.

I would like to know how the federal government would defend that expenditure against the population in the Northwest Territories. I would like to see that expenditure per person applied to all of

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Canada in a theoretical sense to see what kind of expenditure the federal government would be engaged in if it expended money on the same basis for all Canadians. I am sure it would be a sum all the countries in the world could not afford, let alone poor little Canada with a population of 30 million.

• (1630)

The whole idea is crazy beyond any words I could use. It is just ridiculous to spend \$300 million to create a territory with a territorial government, its own legislature and its own non-elected senator for a population of 25,000 people.

It is one more opportunity for a partisan prime minister to reward his Liberal friends as he is wont to do and as we have seen recently with the appointment of the Liberal senator in British Columbia who just happens to be a long time crony, former business associate and a good Liberal recognized by everyone in British Columbia. It is another opportunity for the Prime Minister to do the same thing in Nunavut.

We in the Reform Party would like to see a little more sense and a more rational approach to the expenditures of federal funds, of taxpayers' money. We would like to see more careful husbandry of scarce resources.

The government says it cannot find the money to compensate hepatitis C victims. Yet it finds money to award contracts in the amount of \$2.8 billion to its friends in Bombardier. This is the kind of nonsense that drives Canadians to distraction and has driven the Reform Party into being. In the last election we sent 60 members to this place.

I tell those people across the way as I told them in the last parliament that they should look out. Their day is coming. Canadians have had enough of this nonsense. The \$300 million for 25,000 people because it is politically correct and it is such a do good, feel good kind of thing are coming from Canadian taxpayers. They are paying attention. They are catching on and the Liberals' days are numbered.

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to my friend in the Reform Party on the question I was asking before. What he wants to do is to elect a senator from Nunavut. The people right now are leaning more toward just straight abolition of the Senate and saving \$50 million a year rather than trying to bring in a triple E Senate.

Even if he wants to bring in a triple E, I would like to ask him how that would be done. We have been stuck with an appointed Senate for a long time. We have a federation unlike any other in the world with one province which has almost 40% of the people. Another province with 25% of the people is unique and distinct in terms of a different language and culture. How do we persuade those two big provinces that they should have the same number of senators as Prince Edward Island in order to get a triple E Senate?

Even if that were to happen and the provinces agreed to it, what kinds of powers would be given to that Senate? I suspect the powers would be so insignificant, so ineffective and so irrelevant as to wonder why we need a Senate first place. We are stuck. How do we put a round post into a square hole?

This is a very real problem. We have dealt with it for many years in parliament when constitutional issues have arisen. New Brunswick has 10 senators and British Columbia has 6. New Brunswick has about 600,000 people while British Columbia has between two million and three million. New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have between them 20 senators. We have 24 in the four western provinces. How do we persuade them to reduce their number of senators and have an effective Senate that makes the Senate worth while to justify spending that \$50 million per year?

If we keep going around and around in a circle like a dog chasing his tail, in another 50 or 60 years we will still have an appointed senator from B.C., an appointed senator from Prince Edward Island and so on.

Are we not better off trying to abolish the Senate? That is the way in which public opinion is moving and the Reform Party tells us that it is a grassroots party that wants to listen to public opinion. I would be very interested in knowing how he would square that circle.

• (1635)

**Mr. Mike Scott:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. The member is being honest in his question. He honestly believes in what he is putting forward, which is unlike the Liberals. They do not honestly believe most of what they say. We know that. They come in the House with these canned speeches and read them off. Half the time they do not even know what they are saying.

This member asks an honest question and I will try to give him an honest answer. He talks about the fact that there are different regions in the country with different representation right now. I think we would all agree, perhaps everybody except the Prime Minister and a handful of his closest friends over there, that the Senate has no legitimacy whatsoever right now, none whatsoever.

It is nothing more than patronage heaven for good little Liberals who have done what the prime minister wanted them to do over a long period of time. It is like going to heaven for them. It is exactly like going to heaven. That is the only way I can describe it. It has no legitimacy whatsoever.

However it is precisely because of the regional concerns of Atlantic Canada, for example Nova Scotia or Prince Edward Island. It is precisely because of the concerns of provinces like British Columbia and Alberta that do not want to be overridden. If we could imagine a triple-E Senate being in place at the time the Liberal government implemented the national energy program in the late seventies, it probably would not have gone forward. We do

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not know because we do not have the benefit of seeing history repeat itself with changed circumstances. The reality is that if there were a triple-E Senate in place when that policy of the Liberals was put in place, it is very likely it would not have gone anywhere.

This is the type of example I can offer of why we should not abolish the Senate. Abolishing the Senate has an appeal to it. I agree we should get rid of it. We are not supposed to talk about the other place, but it represents the most despicable part of Canadian policies and nothing more. It could be much more. How will it get there? It will be when Canadians decide it is time.

We are coming to that point right now. Canadians are coming to the conclusion that we need fundamental changes to our democratic institutions. It is no accident that Reform sent 60 MPs here after the 1997 election. It is not just because people like the name. It is because they like the principles upon which the party is founded. One of the four pillars is democratic institutions being reformed.

I suggest to the member that if the NDP, the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party are not on that wavelength, if they will not tell Canadians that they are in the House of Commons to fight for democratic reform, at some point sooner or later, and I believe it is will be sooner, Canadians will give political parties that espouse changes the authority to make them in a general election. That is coming.

The member asks how. I ask him to stay tuned and he will see it happen.

**Mrs. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very puzzled by the way the hon. member talked about talking to grassroots people and trying to do what the grassroots people want us to do. We had a plebiscite and the people voted for division of the Northwest Territories.

I do not know how the member could get away from saying that this is what the grassroots people want. The Reform Party says that we have to listen to the grassroots people. This is what they want. They have also stated that they want to be able to make their own decisions. They want the people who make those decisions to be knowledgeable of the departments and the programs they are working with.

• (1640)

The member talked about the department of Indian affairs in Yellowknife. Yellowknife is not even in Nunavut. That is exactly what we are trying to get away from in creating Nunavut. We want to be able to make decisions because we know what the people need.

He talked about the Senate. We already have a senator. Another member said that we would grandfather any senators who are already in place. Nunavut already has a senator so I gather Reform

is saying that senator will be grandfathered. I do not see why this has to be an issue with the Nunavut government.

When I think of how the rest of Canada was created it got assistance from the government. People from the east were given plots of land in the west so they would move there. The country was created by people being given help by the government to get started.

Who knows where we will be in 20 years? However we need assistance at the beginning as every other Canadian was given assistance at the start of the rest of the country. I am a little puzzled as to where the member is coming from. Perhaps he could answer that.

**Mr. Mike Scott:** Mr. Speaker, as I said in my intervention, Nunavut has a population of approximately 25,000 people. The riding I represent has approximately three and a half times that population. If a plebiscite were held in my riding that asked the people if they would like \$900 million of federal government assistance to create a new territory, I would venture to say they would probably vote for it. What about the people who have to pay the bill? That is the crux of the issue.

Going to the grassroots in terms of aboriginal people we are talking about going to people in reserve communities and asking how we can introduce democratic and fiscal accountability into these communities. Lord knows we are certainly hearing from enough grassroots people telling us that it does not exist right now. That is the crux of the issue when it comes to plebiscites or talking with the grassroots.

The member cannot suggest in any kind of rational way that because she has the endorsement of 25,000 people who live in Nunavut she has the right to reach into the wallets of taxpayers of Halifax, Vancouver, Toronto and Prince George to take \$300 million to pay for it. That does not add up. I go back to the hon. member with that by saying it is a non-starter. She cannot do that.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Order, please. It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, the Banks; the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Immigration; the hon. member for Vancouver East, Poverty.

**Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to Bill C-39.

The last time Bill C-39 was under consideration was during the week before the House recessed. Unfortunately, on the day in question, I was busy in my riding. I felt badly missing the beginning of the debate, but I was happy to learn on my return that

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debate was not over and so today I have the opportunity to go at it anew.

As has often been said, the bill amends the Nunavut Act and the Constitution Act of 1867 permitting Nunavut to have a senator. I will have something to say later on the Senate, and I will also consider a number of what I consider gratuitous remarks by members of the Reform Party.

I recall the speech by their leader, who was the first, at second reading of the bill, to talk on Nunavut and who never once used word "Inuit". He spoke for nearly two hours on the Senate. I found it totally deplorable and I note that we are continuing in the same vein today.

• (1645)

I think that I will suggest to my colleague, the member for Abitibi, that when we have a first meeting with the Reform Party, we should fill them in a bit on the aboriginal and Inuit issue. We are at opposite ends of the spectrum on this one and later on I plan to respond to certain statements that have been made today.

The bill provides for a harmonious transition toward the new territory of Nunavut. In 1993, the issue of the territory of Nunavut and self-government was worked out. Since we also know that there are provisions in this legislation for a legislative assembly to be in place as of April 1, 1999, we cannot wait until the day before to say that an election may now be held.

If the legislative assembly is to be operational effective April 1, action must be taken now, and the people of Nunavut then allowed to decide when they will hold it, as long as they are ready to fly on their own by April 1, 1999. I think that is what we are looking at today. We are not necessarily looking at Senate reform, or land claims. We are looking at allowing the people of Nunavut to govern themselves beginning April 1, 1999.

We are also looking at transferring the administrative powers of the federal and territorial governments to the government of Nunavut. This legislative election will precede the installation of the legislative assembly on April 1, 1999.

What will the purpose of this election be? Its purpose will be to elect people to represent the Nunavut Inuit. As many have said, 85% of Nunavut's population is Inuit. The Nunavut parliament will therefore be largely Inuit. The purpose of the election will be to make the legislative assembly operational.

The bill will also allow the transfer of government services, and this is important. It is important because, for too long, the Department of Indian Affairs has settled matters directly from Ottawa. This is basically still the case, because the Indian Act gives them this power. The Inuit are not covered by the Indian Act. This legislation does not apply to these people because, in Inuit

communities, they have municipal governments. Nevertheless, the federal government has a responsibility since everything above the 60th parallel falls under its jurisdiction.

It is important to ensure that, as soon as this devolution of powers takes place, the Inuit will have their own public service. This point was made at second reading but I want to make it again: The government must ensure that, when the Nunavut legislative assembly becomes operational, on April 1, 1999, the people of Nunavut will have duly elected representatives walking through the front door of the legislative assembly, as well as a public service capable of assuming its new responsibilities.

Ottawa will no longer be in charge. The purpose of the bill before us is to allow the people of Nunavut to take charge and break away from their age-old dependency on Ottawa. This is very important.

We already have indications of what kind of government they want to have in Nunavut. There is much talk locally of an extremely decentralized system. We must understand that, in such a huge region, some communities are hundreds of kilometres away from one another.

They are already talking about a given community assuming certain responsibilities on behalf of all the others. That is interesting because this goes to show that the people of Nunavut and the Inuit are prepared to take charge. They already have a vision of the type of government they want.

In the discussion on the composition of the legislative assembly, there was a debate about having half the elected members be women. Those are debates we have had here for a long time, and ones we have great difficulty in putting into practice. Yet they are already addressing this issue.

Bill C-39 calls for an amendment to the Constitution Act of 1867, because one senator has to be added. I shall be stating the clear position of the Bloc Quebecois on this. We have already called for the abolition of the Senate.

• (1650)

We have already had an entire opposition day on a motion to abolish the Senate and I intend to develop the Bloc Quebecois position a bit further on why we agree a senator for Nunavut should be appointed.

From all the testimony we heard in the aboriginal affairs committee, the people who appeared before the committee, whether they represented the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Nunavut Implementation Commission, which is currently in charge, Nunavut Tunngavik company, which is sort of administering the funds until the Inuit really assume power, as well as the representatives of all the Inuit in the country, and Inuit Tapirisat of

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Canada, were unanimous in saying that it is absolutely essential for this bill to be passed.

No amendments have been moved. We want our dream to become reality quickly. These people have been negotiating an agreement for 25 years. They have succeeded in doing so, and now they are anxious, like any other free and democratic society, to take charge of their own destiny and to move forward.

So a new territory is going to be created in Canada, after 25 years of work. Moreover, the bill is a bit the end result of the land claims and of discussions on self government. The negotiations, the agreement reached and the legislation passed in the House of Commons in 1993 meant these people had achieved their objective.

For the objective to be fully met, the legislative assembly must now begin to function as of April 1. I think that will happen.

It is easy to say the Indian Act will be scrapped. Even the aboriginals oppose the scrapping of the Indian Act, because so long as there are no discussions on self government and land claims or on the financial independence of this type of society, they will be forced to rely on outdated legislation.

It is therefore our responsibility to create the conditions that lead to self government and that help resolve land claims that will make financial independence possible.

We have two reservations. I mentioned the first during second reading in the House of Commons, just before the bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. I spoke, among other things, about the Belcher Islands, and I am happy to see colleagues here who were with me. All the committee members went to Iqualuit not so long ago, either last week or the week before.

We were told in Nunavik and in Nunavut of the importance of the boundaries of Nunavut and Nunavik. Understandably, for our viewers things are a bit confusing. But Nunavut is the eastern part of the Northwest Territories that will have a new legislative assembly as of April 1, 1999, while Nunavik is the northern part of Quebec. There are boundary waters along these two territories, which explains why negotiations are still going on.

We were told that the issue had been settled in the case of the Belcher Islands. The Quebec Cree and the Nunavik Inuit feel that the Belcher Islands should be part of Nunavut. But there are other islands around, and there are other waters around Nunavik, and this is why people say it is important to continue negotiating.

The Cree made it an issue when they appeared before the committee. They told us that they have been negotiating since 1977 for the ownership of certain islands that are very close to their territory. But the federal government did not act on their claim.

The same goes for Nunavik. We are told that negotiations with the federal government broke down in 1993. The people from Nunavik say they should have ownership of certain islands which are not part of the continent, but which should naturally be part of Nunavik.

I urge the minister to reopen the negotiations with the Quebec Cree and the Nunavik Inuit. I promised these groups that I would pressure the minister to reopen negotiations as soon as possible, so that this unresolved residual aspect of land claims can be settled once and for all.

• (1655)

I think that the minister must sort this out and I urge my Liberal colleagues to speak to their minister so that an agreement can be worked out for the islands and the pack ice bordering the territories both of Nunavut and of Nunavik, and the Cri territories.

I see my colleague opposite, who is responsible for the Quebec Cree. I am glad to hear him say he is in total agreement and I am sure he will join me in trying to persuade his minister to see that this gets sorted out.

The Bloc Québécois' other reservation concerns the Senate. As I mentioned earlier, we are calling for the abolition, pure and simple, of the Senate. As long as this is not done, and should a new territory be formed, however, we are not prepared to be so objectionable as to say that, since we are opposed to the Senate, we are opposed to adding a new senator.

In the present context, I think that people must be treated fairly. If a new territory is created and if it is entitled to be represented in the Senate, we should not stand in the way. Nor should we say that, because of the Senate, we will stand in the way of Nunavut or use a major political problem to prevent people from attaining the fullest form of self government possible. Our position differs radically from that taken by the Reform Party.

Where we are in agreement, however, is when we say that, since senators are accountable to the Prime Minister who appointed them, it amounts to nothing more than a cosy little nest, with people flying out during election campaigns in search of funding here and there. It is an institution that is costing us \$50 million a year.

Not only is our position clear; it is based on representativeness. When you mention senators to the people of Quebec, they are not interested. When they hear that the annual bill for the Senate is \$50 million, they say they have no further use for it. Our position is therefore clear, but we are not going to take the Nunavut Inuit hostage and say that we will resolve the problem of the Senate by not voting in favour of their plan, the way the Reform Party is doing right now.

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I repeat what I said earlier. I was extremely disappointed when the leader of the Reform Party, the leader of the official opposition, spoke for two hours about Senate reform. We all wondered if he had the wrong bill. It is true, however, the Standing Orders allow us to focus on a narrow aspect, even a single word. If the word "Senate" appears in the bill, this gives someone the opportunity to speak about the Senate without getting to the bottom of the problem. I criticized the leader of the official opposition at the time, and still do, for speaking for two hours on Senate reform without ever saying the word "Inuit" once.

Today I must also correct my two colleagues who spoke earlier. The hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca told us that in British Columbia 110% of the land is being claimed. True, but I do not believe that the aboriginal population there, which is incidentally very large and spread over 225 different communities, is going to tell the people of Vancouver to vacate their homes, to go back to Europe or the east, and then take over those homes. That is not what it is all about. When someone says things like this, it encourages myths and bad attitudes toward native people and is a completely gratuitous act.

Lets us look at how things were settled in British Columbia, with the Nisga'a for instance. The Nisga'a were claiming a huge territory. They settled for 7% of their claim. So, if the Nisga'a claim becomes a precedent for British Columbia, the people will not be getting 110% of that province, but 10%.

Then he told us that the territory will leave Canada. That is not the case at all, either. To my knowledge, Nunavut will still be Canadian territory. It will still belong to Canada. I am sure it is funny to hear that coming from a sovereignist, because everyone is aware of what our option is, but we are open to questions of self-government.

Wanting more autonomy, that is an approach we are familiar with in Quebec. We have worked on that a long time, built on it, built our party on it. It is perfectly normal, therefore, for the Bloc Quebecois to say "So, you want more autonomy, we are agreeable to your having more". Our way of seeing it is Quebec sovereignty, and their way is self government within which they would have a legislative assembly.

• (1700)

I think it important to correct my two colleagues, who always seem to be trying to throw oil on the fire when it comes to the aboriginal question. I find this particularly regrettable.

We are somewhat at odds with the Reform Party position on the whole issue. Knowing along which lines the House usually divides on the aboriginal issue, I think that the Reform Party will find itself isolated, because the issue, as the Bloc Quebecois sees it, is very clear, as I have just explained.

The Bloc Quebecois thinks that it is constructive to debate greater self government. It is also a vote of confidence in the aboriginal peoples. You will never hear Bloc Quebecois members saying that they do not want to give aboriginals or Inuit certain responsibilities because they cannot handle them. That is not our approach. We think that these people, who occupied these lands long before we did, have their own approach. They had legal, political and financial systems. They had everything they needed before the Europeans arrived and upset their systems.

Today, when people tell us they are capable of governing themselves, they must be given an opportunity to do so. One way of doing this is to give them powers and responsibilities, and ensure that they have the necessary instruments to make it on their own. This is why we insist they be given funding for training, to make sure they will be ready April 1.

I have nothing against giving significant sums for Nunavut—\$300 million or \$225 million—for agreements with the Micmacs or with the Nisga'a or the Cree. This is one way of putting an end to dependence on the federal government and to the practice of saying "Here are millions of dollars. Next year we will evaluate your needs and send more millions of dollars".

Once people are given self-government and a territory sufficiently large to permit financial independence, I am sure they will be able to take charge.

The Bloc considers the matter of Nunavut, like the native issue, a constructive one, a debate of confidence in the native peoples and of the issue of greater autonomy for them. On this, the Bloc will continue to follow them, unlike, unfortunately, our friends in the Reform Party.

**Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the remarks of the member for Saint-Jean. He is familiar with the Inuit situation.

When we talk of Nunavut, of the Inuit of this region, of Nunavik or Nunavut, we are always talking about economic development. The people in the south are always questioning the financial support they are given.

I know that my colleague has a lot of experience—he has done an excellent job on the committee for a number of months, and I appreciate it. Could he describe the economic situation and talk about purchases, house construction, the sources of vehicles, of perishable and non-perishable goods?

**Mr. Claude Bachand:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my colleague, the hon. member for Abitibi, for giving me the chance to speak. I believe he is familiar with my concerns about the cost of living in the far north. He is very much aware of it because he shares my opinion that the cost of living up there is exorbitant. My

colleague also knows some people who will be coming to tell us how things operate there.

During the 35th Parliament, I raised the problem in order to tell people that it made no sense at all for the cost of living in the North, whether in Iqaluit or in Kuujuaq, to be twice as high as it is here. The average income up north is half what it is here. So that means the cost of living is really four times greater. Up north, a quart of milk costs \$2, three liters cost \$8, while here they cost maybe half that. These people have only half our income as well.

The Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs is currently holding a quite extensive examination of economic development. When I spoke before, I referred to the fact that sometimes that carton of milk or other essential item had passed through 21 middlemen before the aboriginal people bought it at their local Northern Store.

• (1705)

If you traced that milk from the beginning until it was purchased in the Northern Store, it sometimes had passed through 21 intermediate steps, which was not logical. Everybody along the way took a little cut, which ended up making the price exorbitant.

I think we must get to the bottom of this. It is part of economic development. It is one way to help the people of the North by trying to find some way they can obtain their staples at a reasonable price.

[English]

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure and an honour to rise in this House to speak on Bill C-39. I have a great deal of interest in this debate. I have listened to it for five or six hours but I have to admit I am not interested in a lot of the discussion that ensues about dragging the debate into other areas and other jurisdictions. I am not interested in the term Balkanization. I am not interested in filibustering and I am not interested in how this affects the Senate.

What I am interested in is what this bill says to the people of Canada about a very historic occasion in this country. This is the first time in over 50 years that we are presenting a new territory, bringing a new territory into the Canadian mosaic. This is a very historic occasion and it is one that as a member of the Indian affairs and northern development committee I am very proud to have participated in.

I think it is time to quickly summarize what this debate is about. The Nunavut Act will create a new territory on April 1, 1999 in the northeastern and central regions of what is currently the Northwest Territories.

This process was initiated in the 1960s. It has been a long process and it has been a long debate. I am sure the people who

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started that debate in the 1960s would be very weary of it if they were still here. Some of those early participants are still here.

The creation of Nunavut was set out in the Nunavut land claims agreement signed on May 25, 1993 by then Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. The government of Nunavut will be a public government reflecting the demographics of the area which is 85% Inuit. The official language will be Inuktitut.

During the debate of this bill, during the process of this bill through parliament we made some additions. We made some changes. Amendments to the Nunavut Act were necessary to allow for a smooth transition for April 1, 1999 to ensure the continuation of services.

Because of the complexity of the regulations, the original bill required amendments to ensure this would take place. The amendments allow for additional seats for both a new member of parliament and a new senator to represent the territory.

As well, this legislation removes any uncertainty regarding basic services like drivers licence registration and courtroom proceedings to allow them to continue after April 1, 1999 in an uninterrupted manner.

These are the specifics of the bill. These are the nuts and bolts of what we are talking about here. This is not an occasion for members of parliament to get up, filibuster and ask questions that have no relevancy whatsoever to the piece of legislation we are trying to discuss.

Bill C-39 is an historic piece of legislation that will create the third territory in Canada. It is a step toward provincial status for all territories, Yukon, NWT and eventually Nunavut.

Amendments to the Nunavut Act and the Constitution Act were necessary to allow for an election prior to April 1, 1999 and to make a seat available in the House of Commons and the Senate to reflect and provide representation for this new territory.

This is an historic event in the development of our country. I want to let the citizens of Canada consider that for a minute. This is not a time for politicians to stand up, filibuster and talk about issues that are certainly interesting and important, I admit, but which are not relevant to the debate. If we are to have debate in the House of Commons surely we should have relevant debate.

• (1710)

Another thing for which there seems to be a misunderstanding is the size of this new territory. Nunavut will encompass 2,242,000 square kilometres. Approximately one-seventh of that is under Inuit title under Inuit land claims. That land claims area is Inuit controlled land. The rest of that territory belongs to the people of Canada. It is crown land. This is not one huge land claim.

*Government Orders*

I have listened to comments today. Obviously members have not read the act. I have heard the debate go on and on about 25,000 people and what it is costing the people of Canada. What has it cost the territories of Canada to belong to this nation? How much have we taken from Yukon? How much have we taken from the NWT? How much have we taken from the eastern Arctic in mineral royalties, mining rights, oil and gas revenues? How much have we taken in taxation dollars? How much has been contributed? A lot.

I think it is time to allow a bit of common sense to enter the debate. We are talking about maturity here. We are talking about the maturity of a nation. We are talking about having three territories. Surely it is time we can be proud of this historic occasion and the very fact that on April 1, 1999 Canada will have a new territory. I think it is an historic occasion and a wonderful event.

On those words I take my seat and I hope the filibustering has stopped.

**Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Saint-Jean and my colleague from South Shore. I have been in the House all afternoon and I hoped we would get around to talking about Nunavut and what it means to this country and to the people of Nunavut, and my two colleagues have done that.

I would like to put on the record one or two points about this Senate which seems to have consumed our friends from the Reform Party, that our need for reforming the Senate is somehow more important than our need for having our aboriginal people become part of this great nation, I mean a real part.

There is a senator from Nunavut, Senator Willie Adams, in the other place. He was appointed in 1977. He was not appointed by the present Prime Minister. There is a Yukon senator, Senator Lucier. What we will have to do is appoint another senator for the western Arctic, Northwest Territories, the territory that Mr. Adams represented all these years. With the split another senator is necessary.

I am reminded in this historic debate, as my colleague from South Shore has said, of a comment by a former colleague, Elijah Harper, the former member for Churchill. I remember him standing in his place at the other end of this Chamber and telling the then third party in the House that it just did not get it. My colleague from South Shore tried to put that across in gentle terms. I am not prepared to be quite so gentle. Quite clearly it does not understand.

The chief representative for that party on the standing committee, where we have done a lot of good work on this in my opinion, spoke for a minute and a half. Then like a trained dog he proposed the amendment, completely unknown to anyone else in the committee, his colleagues or anyone who worked with him. We have spent hours debating something that is secondary or tertiary or maybe quaternary instead of the important parts of the act.

• (1715)

One of the Reform speakers said to scrap the Indian Act. We have tried scrapping the Indian Act on more than one occasion. We tried to scrap it when the present Prime Minister was the minister of aboriginal affairs. We tried to scrap it two years ago. The aboriginal community do not want to scrap it.

One of the previous speakers spoke about ownership on the reserves and ownership of land. My colleague for South Shore and I visited villages, both aboriginal and Inuit in the northern part of Quebec. We also visited Iqaluit just two weeks ago.

I ask my hon. colleague whether in those villages that we visited he found a forward looking, positive attitude, a feeling that they were going to get somewhere with their rights as aboriginals, with their homes, health care and institutions. That is what this act is about.

I hope that every member of the House will allow Nunavut to come into being as a fully functioning member of the Canadian federation. I expect all worthy members who see the Canadian federation as first in the world, as I do, will support it.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Oxford for his question.

Very succinctly I would say it is an extremely progressive and very forward looking attitude. It is almost an ebullience of wanting to become a realistic part of Canadian society and an equal partner in Canadian society.

We have a group of people who have always paid taxes. They have always contributed to Canadian society. They have always been full-fledged members in Canadian society. Today I found some of the disparaging comments that have been made or tendencies leaning toward that direction a bit irritating and quite annoying.

We have an opportunity with aboriginal people in Canada with a land base that is sufficient for them to actually be responsible and in control of their own destiny. We have a larger land base over which they have political influence. We have a window of opportunity to be equal partners in our own land. That is an important statement they will be able to make when this is over.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Anybody who introduces petitions behind the scenes does so very cowardly and I have the right to submit these openly. I ask for the consent of the House to submit openly the great stack of petitions I have on the repeal of Bill C-68.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The incredibly persistent hon. member for Yorkton—Melville has asked the House for unanimous consent to revert to the presentation of petitions.

*Government Orders*

Does the member have unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Unanimous consent is not forthcoming.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

As a member am I not entitled to some reason why the Liberals are—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** No. Resuming debate.

• (1720)

**Mr. Dick Harris:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order.

It is abundantly clear that law-abiding firearm owners all across this country want to—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** That is not a point of order.

Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Call in the members.

• (1805)

[*Translation*]

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 189*)

**YEAS**

Members

Adams	Alarie
Alcock	Assad
Assadourian	Augustine
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar)	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Baker
Bakopanos	Barnes

Beaumier	Bélair
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Bennett	Bergeron
Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)	Bevilacqua
Bertrand	Blaikie
Bigras	Bonin
Blondin-Andrew	Boudria
Bonwick	Brien
Bradshaw	Brown
Brison	Bulte
Bryden	Caccia
Byrne	Caplan
Calder	Casey
Carroll	Cauchon
Catterall	Chan
Chamberlain	Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Charbonneau	Coderre
Clouthier	Collenette
Cohen	Copps
Comuzzi	Dalphond-Guiral
Cullen	Debien
Davies	Desrochers
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
DeVillers	Discepola
Dion	Doyle
Dockrill	Drouin
Dromisky	Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)
Dubé (Lévis)	Dumas
Duhamel	Eggleton
Easter	Finlay
Finestone	Fontana
Folco	Gagliano
Fry	Galloway
Gagnon	Girard-Bujold
Gauthier	Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Godfrey	Goodale
Godin (Châteauguay)	Gray (Windsor West)
Graham	Guarnieri
Grose	Guimond
Guay	Harvard
Harb	Herron
Harvey	Iftody
Hubbard	Jennings
Jackson	Jordan
Jones	Keddy (South Shore)
Karetak-Lindell	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Keyes	Kraft Sloan
Knutson	Lastewka
Lalonde	Lavigne
Laurin	Lee
Lebel	Leung
Lefebvre	Lincoln
Lill	Loubier
Longfield	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
MacAulay	Malhi
Mahoney	Mancini
Maloney	Marceau
Manley	Marchi
Marchand	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Marleau	Matthews
Massé	McGuire
McCormick	McLellan (Edmonton West)
McKay (Scarborough East)	McWhinney
McTeague	Mercier
Ménard	Minna
Mifflin	Murray
Mitchell	Nault
Myers	Nystrom
Normand	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Brien (Labrador)	Pagtakhan
O'Reilly	Parrish
Paradis	Peric
Patry	Peterson
Perron	Phinney
Pettigrew	Pickard (Kent—Essex)
Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
Pillitteri	Pratt
Power	Proctor
Price	Provenzano
Proud	
Redman	

*Private Members' Business*

Reed  
Robillard  
Saada  
Sekora  
Solomon  
St. Denis  
Stewart (Brant)  
St-Hilaire  
St-Julien  
Szabo  
Thibeault  
Torsney  
Turp  
Valeri  
Volpe  
Wasylycia-Leis  
Whelan  
Wood—207

Richardson  
Rocheleau  
Scott (Fredericton)  
Shepherd  
Speller  
Steckle  
Stewart (Northumberland)  
St-Jacques  
Stoffer  
Telegdi  
Thompson (Charlotte)  
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)  
Ur  
Vanclief  
Wappel  
Wayne  
Wilfert

outstanding contribution of Lieutenant Colonel William (“Billy”) Barker (deceased), V.C., World War I flying ace, and hero of Canada and the Commonwealth.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to debate this bill today. Unfortunately this bill was not made votable. First I thank the members who will be speaking on behalf of this motion today.

Yesterday I was flipping through some clippings and I came across a book review in the *Globe and Mail* of November 8. There was a very appropriate caption. This review was on the book written by Wayne Ralph called *Barker VC: William Barker, Canada's Most Decorated War Hero* which was released this past fall.

The heading for this book review was “The greatest air ace you’ve never heard of”. Below that in bold was “How Canada’s most decorated hero slowly became an unknown soldier”.

Is that not appropriate when we talk about Lieutenant Colonel Barker, VC? I want to tell this House and the Canadian people why we are debating this motion at this time. This has been a personal project of mine since 1996. As a former mayor of Dauphin I began writing all the politicians associated with heritage, certainly the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the historic sites and monuments board of Canada requesting that national historic significance be conveyed on Lieutenant Colonel William Barker, VC.

● (1810)

For those who do not know anything about Lieutenant Colonel William Barker, VC, which is not a surprise to Canadians, this man was the most decorated soldier, not Canadian soldier but soldier, of the first world war, in the world. Yet we are not familiar with his name.

I wrote to the historic sites and monuments board. I received a negative response from the executive secretary, Mr. Friend. He refused to acknowledge Barker’s outstanding contributions during the first world war. He said: “Lieutenant Colonel Barker’s post-war career does not appear to have been remarkable”.

I will give a couple of pieces of evidence to show how remarkable his post-war career really was. It appears to me with this kind of response that Mr. Friend did very little research, certainly his department did very little research.

Lieutenant Colonel William Barker was the first president of the Toronto Maple Leafs, installed in 1924. He was also the first acting director of the Royal Canadian Air Force at its founding in 1924. If that is not an incredible post-war career, I do not know what is.

If the historic sites and monuments board did its job, I would not be standing here today to talk about this. If the minister took an interest in this subject I would not be standing here talking about it. Unfortunately no one on the side of government took an interest.

**NAYS**

Members

Abbott  
Bailey  
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)  
Casson  
Cummins  
Epp  
Grewal  
Hanger  
Hart  
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)  
Jaffer  
Kerpan  
Lowther  
Mark  
McNally  
Mills (Red Deer)  
Obhrai  
Penson  
Reynolds  
Schmidt  
Solberg  
Thompson (Wild Rose)  
White (Langley—Abbotsford)

Anders  
Benoit  
Cadman  
Chatters  
Duncan  
Goldring  
Grey (Edmonton North)  
Harris  
Hill (Macleod)  
Hilstrom  
Kenney (Calgary-Sud-Est)  
Konrad  
Lunn  
Mayfield  
Meredith  
Morrison  
Pankiw  
Ramsay  
Ritz  
Scott (Skeena)  
Strahl  
Vellacott  
White (North Vancouver) —46

**PAIRED MEMBERS**

Crête	de Savoye
Duceppe	Fournier
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
O'Brien (Labrador)	Proud

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

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**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**LIEUTENANT COLONEL WILLIAM BARKER**

**Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, Ref.)** moved:

That the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage prepare and report a bill to this House, in accordance with Standing Order 68(4)(b), no later than ninety (90) days following adoption of this motion, that will create a memorial recognizing the

I have been asked by the media why am I so interested in this topic, whether it is because he was born in Dauphin. Obviously I am interested because he came from Dauphin, Manitoba. But more important, I am interested because as a country we need to recognize the real heroes of this country, people who have put their lives at stake so we can be free and enjoy the standard of living we have today.

Lieutenant Colonel William Barker was the most decorated soldier not only in this country but in the Commonwealth of Nations during that period. He is remembered not by Canadians but by our European allies, people in Great Britain, in France, in Italy. He is a household name in England but not in his own country.

Canadians have heard of Billy Bishop because of the CBC production which most of have seen at one time or another. Ironically Bishop, as famous as he was, paid William Barker the ultimate accolade and labelled him the greatest fighter pilot the world has every known. Is it not astonishing that most well known fighter pilot and war hero in this country, Billy Bishop, labelled Lieutenant Colonel William Barker, VC the greatest fighter pilot the world has ever known? It is amazing. Yet no one seems to know who Lieutenant Colonel William Barker is.

I want to read a couple of paragraphs from an article written by William W. Walker on the same topic. He asked was this just one Canadian going overboard on the ability of another fellow countryman. If Barker deserved Bishop's appellation of the greatest, why is he almost unheard of today? That is a fair question.

Barker seemed to shun publicity about himself and his exploits. He left no memoirs in contrast to many of the aces who meticulously set down their autobiographies.

• (1815)

There are no known definitive biographies of him or even of the RCAF. The air ministry at Ottawa has only the barest history of one of the most illustrious warriors of World War I.

Perhaps the reason there is only fragmentary information about Barker stems from the fact that he had very little use for systems and no patience for protocol. His job was fighting and killing Germans. It was an employment he pursued with relentless, wholehearted enthusiasm. He lived for the thrill of the chase in combat and for the final blazing minute of the kill which was the pay-off, the *raison d'être* of the fighter pilot. Each victory spurred him on to new goals. In the air he was as courageous and reckless as any of the young hellions skimming the clouds over France and Germany.

However, once out of the cockpit he seemed more withdrawn, sombre and reserved. He was different from his more lively compatriots who liked all the carousing and wenching they could crowd into the short hours between flights. Most of them reasoned that death would join them in the cockpit soon enough, so why not live it up.

### *Private Members' Business*

As the squadron commander, Barker was always concerned about his charges. He was anxious to teach them the combat tactics that would enable them to survive. When occasion demanded he would celebrate and drink with them, but unbridled celebrations and uninhibited acts so typical of the flying Galahads just did not fit in with his personality. Compared with some of the more flamboyant young blades like Lufbery, Udet and Frank Luke, Barker was quite restrained on the ground.

Barker's score of 58 was not the highest, but he pioneered fighter pilot tactics that were widely used in the second world war and he blueprinted a plan for fighter armaments that was used by the British in the battle of Britain in 1940. Few airmen have left such a legacy.

I will read a short passage written by Peter Warren, a Manitoba freelance journalist and broadcaster. He asked this question in his column: "Why is this Dauphin man the unknown hero for Canadians? My God, he took a British cabinet minister and dropped one of the allied spies behind enemy lines in August 1918".

Barker was told by King George V at his investiture on March 1, 1919 that he had set a new record by receiving six gallantry awards, two more than the king had previously presented to any soldier in the British empire.

Mr. Warren raises this question: "Somebody out there help me explain". I do not know if there is an explanation, except that this country has basically ignored Lieutenant Colonel William Barker. Government after government has forgotten his contribution.

As Canadians we tend to look elsewhere for our heroes, across the border and across the ocean. We are a relatively young nation. As a young nation matures we need to recognize and learn from our history. One lesson we must learn is to acknowledge our heroes, those who can be positive role models for all of us.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask for unanimous consent to make Motion No. 251 a votable motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River has requested that the motion standing in his name be considered a votable motion. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** There is not unanimous consent.

• (1820)

**Mr. David Pratt (Nepean—Carleton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first I would like to offer my congratulations to the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River for his initiative with respect to Lieutenant

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Colonel William Barker. I think he has certainly done a service to Canadian history and Canadian heritage by moving this motion.

The House may be interested to know that I have a very similar motion on the Order Paper. Whereas the motion of the member for Dauphin—Swan River talks about a memorial, my motion talks specifically about commemorating a statue to Lieutenant Colonel William Barker.

It is worth mentioning that the hon. member was instrumental in getting Dauphin airport renamed as Lieutenant Colonel William Barker airport. Again, for that, I think the member deserves congratulations.

The history of the first world war has many heroes and many villains, but from a Canadian standpoint I think that William Barker's name stands out as being one of Canada's pre-eminent heroes.

I became interested in Lieutenant Colonel William Barker's story as a young boy growing up in Nepean when I read a popular history book called *Knights of the Air* which talked about the great first world war aces like Bishop and Barker. It was not until just last fall that I saw a book by an author named Wayne Ralph who lives in B.C. who had done what I considered to be probably the most definitive history on Lieutenant Colonel Barker.

The book struck me as portraying a very sad story. Barker was well known to the Commonwealth and well known to the Canadian people during the first world war because of his exploits. However, tragically, after the war he ended up having some personal problems. Lieutenant Colonel Barker managed to get himself back on his feet again, but on March 12, 1930 he was killed in a very unfortunate air crash on the Ottawa River just a few miles from these parliament buildings at the Rockcliffe airbase where he was test flying a plane for the Fairchild company.

At his funeral in Toronto there were apparently 2,000 soldiers who served as an honour guard. There were 50,000 spectators at his funeral. Today Barker's name has been all but forgotten in the annals of Canadian history.

I find that very unfortunate because I think a country certainly needs its heroes and Barker was clearly one of ours. The Americans have popularized their heroes over the years. Hollywood has done a tremendous job of instilling patriotism in the hearts and minds of many Americans based on the exploits of people such as Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, John Paul Jones and many other famous American heroes. We do not have that in Canada. We have not had the glorification of our heroes to the extent that the Americans have.

What was Lieutenant Colonel Barker's record during the first world war? As the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River has mentioned, he was credited with quite a number of air victories.

The hon. member mentioned 58. I believe his record was 50, according to Mr. Ralph's biography.

Perhaps Lieutenant Colonel Barker's most famous action occurred within two weeks of the war's end. If I could, I would like to refer directly to the Victoria Cross citation that William Barker received. I would like to refer to it specifically because I think it outlines why Barker had the reputation that he did during the first world war.

• (1825 )

The citation reads: "His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to confer the Victoria Cross on the undermentioned officer of the Royal Air Force in recognition of bravery of the highest possible order: Captain, Acting Major, William George Barker, DSO, MC, No. 201 Squadron, Royal Air Force".

On the morning of October 27, 1918 this officer observed an enemy two-seater over the forêt de Mormal. He attacked this machine and after a short burst it broke up in the air. At the same time, a Fokker biplane attacked him and he was wounded in the right thigh but managed, despite this, to shoot down the enemy airplane in flames.

He then found himself in the middle of a large formation of Fokkers which attacked him from all directions. He was again wounded in the left thigh but succeeded in driving down two of the enemy in a spin. He lost consciousness after this and his machine fell out of control. On recovery, he found himself again being attacked by a large formation and, singling out one machine, he deliberately charged and drove it down in flames.

During this fight his left elbow was shattered and he again fainted and, on regaining consciousness, he found himself still being attacked but, notwithstanding that he was now severely wounded in both legs and his left arm shattered, he dove on the nearest machine and shot it down in flames.

Being greatly exhausted, he dove out of the fight to regain our lines but was met by another formation which attacked and endeavoured to cut him off. But after a hard fight he succeeded in breaking up this formation and reached our lines where he crashed on landing.

This combat in which Major General Barker destroyed four enemy machines, three of them in flames, brought his total successes up to 50 enemy planes destroyed and is a notable example of the exceptional bravery and disregarded danger which this very gallant officer always displayed throughout his distinguished career.

Major Barker was awarded the Military Cross on January 10, 1917, the first bar on July 18, 1917, which means he won that award twice, the Distinguished Service Order on February 18,

1918, the second bar to the Military Cross on September 16, 1918, and a bar to Distinguished Service Order on November 2, 1918.

I think members can certainly grasp from the account of that particular action that Barker today would be referred to as a super hero. However, he has been all but forgotten.

At the end of the first world war he was definitely Canada's most decorated war hero. He held the Victoria Cross, the Distinguished Service Order and bar, the Military Cross and two bars, the French Croix de Guerre, two Italian silver medals for valour and three mentions in dispatches.

It is also worth mentioning that in terms of his later career, as the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River has already mentioned, he was appointed as the first acting director of the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1924. He was, as was mentioned, the first president of the Toronto Maple Leafs hockey club in 1927-28.

Interestingly enough, his name was so well known that he was used as a character in one of Hemingway's books, in his famous short story *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*.

Canada has a forgotten hero and his name is Lieutenant Colonel William Barker. I think this nation must in some manner commemorate his name. He is buried in Mount Pleasant cemetery in Toronto in a crypt that bears the Smith family name. Something must be done to ensure that the name of Lieutenant Colonel William Barker lives on and that his exploits and daring are understood by future generations of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Motion M-251, introduced by my colleague from Dauphin—Swan River, in Manitoba.

The objective of this motion is the creation of a memorial recognizing the outstanding contribution of Lieutenant Colonel William Baker, a first world war pilot and hero of Canada and the Commonwealth.

• (1830)

We agree in principle, but all the facts must surely be checked. This Canadian hero downed 53 enemy planes during the first world war and was awarded the Victoria Cross, the Military Cross, French and Italian military distinctions, six citations for acts of bravery from George V and other distinctions. Surely, he deserves recognition by future generations.

I do not doubt the facts, but personally I cannot verify them. The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada was created for this very purpose in 1919, and we should call on this board, in this

instance. I will therefore speak about this board in order to add weight to the bill that will be introduced.

Since 1979 the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada has advised the government on the commemoration of individuals, of historical sites and events of national interest and the mounting of plaques to inform Canadians about their history. Over time and with changes to Canadian historiography, the board widened its scope to include military, political and geographical subjects and to the broader subjects of our social and economic history.

In reality, the board advises the minister on the commemoration of people, events, sites, structures and locations representing aspects of Canada's history of national importance. It also indicates the level of commemoration it deems appropriate, be it the installation of a plaque, the sharing of expenses with a third party or, more rarely, the acquisition or development of a site by Parks Canada.

It can provide information on important persons, places and events of the past, on the principles and techniques of site construction and preservation, and on heritage legislation. Each year, it receives over 200 requests, 50 to 70 of which result in studies by the historic services branch.

It has always viewed its plaque installation program as an educational activity in the broadest sense of the term. To date, it has installed over 1,100 commemorative plaques throughout the country. These are a testimony to its dedication to educating the public. An interesting fact is that it has broadened its definition of heritage to include cultural neighbourhoods, gardens and landscapes.

I therefore agree that the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada should be called upon for advice. We could also follow the example of the Fondation des Amis de René Lévesque, in Quebec City, which is now raising funds in order to erect a monument in his memory.

We all know that not only was Mr. Lévesque a World War II war correspondent, but that he was a member of the Liberal Party of Quebec before founding the Parti Québécois and becoming premier of Quebec. He was therefore a very important person.

In 1960, he was the father of the quiet revolution and the father of the nationalization of electricity in Quebec; he was also instrumental in helping the Quebec Liberal Party regain power in Quebec after decades in opposition.

We also owe him the great democratic legislation on party fundraising, which eliminates slush funds, limits contributions and allows the public to participate in the financial control of the parties.

René Lévesque was also the driving force behind the constitutional reform undertaken in the 1980 referendum to save Canada. It

*Private Members' Business*

is well known that he was trying to achieve sovereignty association in order to put an end to this idea of a federation justifying a centralizing and dominating government.

I could go on for hours talking about René Lévesque and quoting him as an example, but I will stop here for now and conclude by saying that this great man has no lack of feats to his credit, yet it will be his friends who will be putting up a memorial.

I therefore urge the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River to take the advice of the Canada Historic Sites and Monuments Board or follow the lead of the Fondation des amis de René Lévesque regarding this memorial.

• (1835)

[English]

**Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on this occasion to speak to Motion No. 251 to create a memorial recognizing the outstanding contributions of Lieutenant-Colonel William Billy Barker, a World War I flying ace and hero of Canada and the Commonwealth.

Billy Barker was born in Dauphin, Manitoba. He died in Ottawa on March 12, 1930. He was a cohort of Billy Bishop. I remember Billy Bishop through a work of art basically, a play written by John Gray called *Billy Bishop Goes to War*. It was an important play that helped me to understand in a very real way what it meant to go to war.

Billy Barker was a cohort of Billy Bishop, just another young scared boy probably of the age of many of our children who went off to war. It is very important to remember people such as Billy Barker and Billy Bishop. It is important that we acknowledge their contribution to the military and to World War I. It is important for Canadians to recognize heroes who served in the armed forces, both men and women.

As the member of parliament for Dartmouth I represent a community with a long and proud military tradition. I have met many of the heroes of today in the military, the peacekeepers, the sailors and the soldiers who make tremendous sacrifices for peacekeeping, national security and such things as environmental clean-up and natural disasters.

Many people right now in Canada are very aware that these people are heroes when they manage to put sandbags around their houses and save their homes or save their children or save their lives from fires. We have many heroes today in the military.

I am also aware that there is a parliamentary committee crossing the country right now looking into the situation of people in the military and addressing the fact that perhaps DND and the Canadian government are not at the present time recognizing the heroes we have here and now. I have also talked with people, peacekeepers who have come home from various war zones with their health is

ruined. They are trying to cobble together veterans assistance and basic disability payments. We have to be aware of them also when we are talking about recognizing heroes.

How do we recognize our heroes? There are ways. There are memorials. That is one way. I would say that a memorial for such a person as Billy Barker is an important way to do it.

I also urge that we continue to recognize heroes on a daily basis by recognizing the values that people such as Billy Barker fought for. These are values such as democracy, equality, freedom of speech, freedom from fear, freedom from racism and freedom from injustice. I again say that we have to recognize people in the here and now.

As well I recognize a massive commitment to such things as education of our young people about the contributions of Canadians to politics, war, peace, culture, humanitarian efforts and strengthening our communities. I take this opportunity to talk about some of the real heroes right now in our country.

Today I had the privilege of taking part in the buddies celebration in the centre block of the House of Commons. Over the past year, 18 young people with special needs have been on the Hill every week working in MPs' offices with their staffs. This buddies program gives young people with disabilities a chance to build self-esteem, learn job skills and be part of the world of work.

We have some heroes today, people like the teachers at Ridgemont High School, Ilse Turnsen and Pat Mainwaring, who have put together this program to allow disabled people to fight for their rightful places in our communities. They are heroes of the here and now.

I have in my office once a week a young boy named Capnello Bueti, who is trying to be part of our world of work and I appreciate that.

• (1840)

In closing I reiterate my desire to show the living practical commitment to the values of people such as Billy Barker for all the many years ago he sacrificed for the kind of society we want to live in. In terms of memorials to people such as Billy Barker let us remember by doing, by educating and by committing our public resources to the struggle against such things as poverty, hunger, inequality and racism. As well let us remember by example Billy Barker in the present.

**Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I remind the House that this is Canada. In some respects perhaps Billy Barker did not do so badly for not having recognition when we remember that Billy Bishop got the recognition as the kid who could not miss.

In the National Film Board treatment of Billy Bishop's career it was posed that Billy Bishop lied about the victories that gave him the Victoria Cross. This was the subject of a great debate in the

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Senate. There were protests around the country on the fabrication of the story that maligned one of our first world war aces.

I welcome the opportunity to speak to the motion. I find it slightly flawed in only one respect. It celebrates only Billy Barker and his roots coming from Dauphin, Manitoba. I appreciate why the member for Dauphin—Swan River wants to celebrate a local hero. The problem is that we have to be a little careful in that respect because the same may be argued with respect Billy Bishop who was born in Owen Sound and certainly ought to have a similar memorial. So it should be argued with respect to various other military heroes of various communities across the country.

That being said, what is so fine about bringing the issue before the House of Commons is that it is not a just question of Billy Barker. It is not just a question of Billy Bishop either. What we are remembering about these two men is the tremendous contribution that Canadian first world war fighter pilots made to the first world war. They were legends in their own time. It was a different era. It was the last era of military chivalry. The best knights of the air were Canadian pilots Billy Bishop and Billy Barker.

I remind the member for Dauphin—Swan River that there are other less well known heroes but heroes nevertheless. I refer to Wop May who went on to be one of Canada's most famous bush pilots and Roy Brown who was remembered as the man who shot down Baron von Richthofen, the Red Baron.

Billy Bishop is famous because he was the surviving ace with the most victories at 72. Richthofen was the ace of the second world war with the most sheer victories before he was killed, some 80 victories.

I have read the autobiography of Billy Bishop. I recommend that all Canadians read it to get into the mind of an individual who reflected the spirit of chivalry that existed on all sides in the air battle during the first world war. It also reflects the Canadian independence of spirit that made Canadian soldiers both in the first world war and in the second world war some of the most admired soldiers of any nation in the world. Certainly that was the case with the fighter pilots of the first world war.

Fortunately, I assure the member for Dauphin—Swan River, there is one very excellent memorial to Billy Barker, Billy Bishop, Wop May and Roy Brown. It is a series of novels by Donald Jack that are loosely called the Bandy Papers. *Three Cheers For Me* is one of the titles and there are several others.

I say to all Canadians that if they want to read good Canadian literature about Canadian fictional heroes taken from the real life stories of the real heroes they should read the Bandy Papers by Donald Jack. They are some of the most amusing reading I have ever read.

• (1845 )

They are very insightful. They build on the wartime careers of both fighter aces. They describe the struggles these two men had. How do I describe it? The British were not great champions of independence. In fact one of the problems of the recognition of the first world war fighter pilots of Canada was that the British were very loath to recognize the colonials for what they did as colonials. In fact they would only acknowledge anyone who was flying the British roundels as a British pilot. They would not acknowledge that Canadians were actually the lead pilots in the Commonwealth forces during the first world war.

I will digress for a minute. If members of the House would like to get an idea of what it was like in Billy Bishop's day or Billy Barker's day, I recommend they go to the Canada warplane museum here in Ottawa. There is a ride available on a Stearman biplane. For \$40 one can fly over Ottawa.

I had the great good fortune last summer when my son and I went out to the warplane museum and we took a ride in the biplane. It is quite incredible. We flew over the parliament buildings and over the river. We had this great sense of slow motion and this great sense of being next to the sky, next to the air. We could see what inspired those Canadian pilots of so many years ago. For anyone who wants that thrill, that thrill is available.

To come back to the point, my problem with the motion is simply that it does not go far enough. I wish it were a votable motion and that we could amend it to honour all the Canadian first world war flying aces. I agree with the member. We cannot leave it to bureaucrats, to academics who are sitting out there surrounded by weird senses of personal power.

It does not matter a fig what Billy Barker did after the war. It does not matter a fig what Billy Bishop did after the war. They were heroes during the war. They were special heroes. They were heroes who were admired the world over. Can we in Canada not do anything better than condemn one of those heroes with a National Film Board production called *The Kid Who Couldn't Miss* which actually maligned one of our heroes?

I hope the minister is listening to this. I hope all Canadians are listening to this because I congratulate the member for Dauphin—Swan River. However, it should not be just Billy Barker, it should be all the Canadian fighter pilot heroes of the first world war.

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Motion No. 251 introduced by my hon. colleague from Dauphin—Swan River. This motion was first introduced by my hon. colleague in October 1997 and is in furtherance of efforts which he made as mayor of Dauphin, Manitoba prior to his election to parliament.

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The actions of my hon. colleague illustrate the best elements of election to the House, whereby this House becomes a means to address concerns that caused a member to decide to stand for election.

By this motion my hon. colleague seeks to have the House recognize by way of a memorial the valour and contributions to our history of Lieutenant Colonel William Barker. Lieutenant Colonel Barker was awarded the Victoria Cross for his valour in World War I. It is regrettable this motion is non-votable since a vote would demonstrate to Canadians how parliamentarians view memorials to personal sacrifice and contributions to the freedom of Canada and the world.

On the other hand we have the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River to thank for making the effort to raise this issue in the House, such that our views of Lieutenant Colonel Barker's accomplishments may be part of the permanent *Hansard* record and thus part of the permanent historical record of Canada.

Actions such as those of the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River become extremely important as a means to counter tendencies to forget valorous actions, or to diminish such accomplishments on the basis that they are associated with violence and war.

Memorials are an important means by which we learn about and remember our history. Most Canadians are connected to these famous people, these heroes, in one way or another.

In addition to Will Barker, I personally think of a relative, Harry Amy of Saskatchewan, and aboriginal Tommy Prince of my riding in Manitoba.

● (1850)

Will Barker was a farm boy born in the Dauphin Valley of Manitoba in 1894. As a boy, Will became a crack shot and helped to put food on the table with his skill. His grandfather put money down on his shooting ability in competitions at local community events. Will never let him down.

In 1915 not far into World War I, Barker enlisted with the First Canadian Mounted Rifles. His ability with a gun soon caught the attention of his superiors and he was given air reconnaissance duty as an observer in the second seat of the plane manning the cameras and guns. But Barker wanted to fly the plane.

On November 8, 1916 he was reassigned to the Royal Flying Corps and on January 12, 1917 began flight training. After two dual trips, one of 50 minutes and another of five minutes, Barker soloed and received his flying certificate on January 18. On February 14 Barker was graded a flying officer.

William Barker completed both ground and flight training in three weeks at Oxford University. The normal time for ground training alone was six weeks. Although Barker was recognized for his heroism in the air for shooting down some 50 enemy planes and balloons, he was known as a leader who would never leave behind any member of his squadron. No flyer died under his command.

When Wayne Ralph, author of *Barker VC*, asked another of Canada's air aces, Ken Guthrie, whether he liked Barker, he replied "Like Barker? I liked him, more than liked him, I practically adored him". The closing paragraphs of Wayne Ralph's *Barker VC* go as follows:

Unlike Britain and the United States, Canada did not build a 'Tomb of the Unknown Soldier' after the Great War. It took us 19 years to put up a national war memorial. We do not have a national military cemetery, our 100,000 war dead lie buried in foreign soil. If it is true, as one Canadian philosopher has noted, that Canadians seem to like their heroes smaller than life, then Barker is sadly irrelevant.

Outside of Canada, however, he is still remembered. Almost all the magazine articles and narratives about Barker in the past 20 years have been written by British or American writers who still like their heroes larger than life, and don't mind them having a darker, more complicated side.

Canadian historians and writers quickly erased everything that made Barker a human being, especially his physical and psychological pain. We were left this cartoon image of a warrior—his life before and after October 27, 1918 (the day he won the Victoria Cross) only a footnote. His interment in the private Smith family crypt, without even a bronze plaque to mark his place, was the final footnote.

Our most decorated war hero gradually became our unknown soldier, except, most importantly, in the hearts of the men and women who had loved him.

I take great pleasure in speaking today in memory of Lieutenant Colonel William Barker. I certainly would like to support the motion of my colleague.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** As is the practice with Private Members' Business, the last five minutes of Private Members' Business is reserved for the member moving the motion. The hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River has the last five minutes. If he speaks, that is it. So if anyone else would like to get on, there are seven minutes of debate, and 12 minutes in total remaining.

**Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank all the members of the House who rose today to speak in support of Lieutenant Colonel William Barker, VC.

What we have heard today is that there is certainly support for Canada's most decorated soldier of World War I and a true hero of this country.

The point was brought up that other people have been discounted. That is not the intent of this motion. The intent is not to discount other heroes like Billy Bishop whom I consider to be a

hero as well. I would welcome an amendment to include all air aces. I have no problem with that whatsoever.

• (1855)

As a nation it is an indication of our maturity to start recognizing the true Canadians and heroes who have risked their lives and have made contributions to this country. This generation has a renewed interest in learning about Canada's history. We had almost thrown that out the window as well in terms of history.

Lieutenant Colonel William Barker played a large part in Canadian history. There is something really wrong when other countries of the world know who our significant Canadians and Canadian heroes are and we in this country do not. It was brought up numerous times that there are many people to recognize in this great country of Canada.

There is Dr. Norman Bethune who is known better in China for his contributions to that country. If it was not for another television production, Canadians would not know who he was.

I just came back from a parliamentary exchange trip to Taiwan and did I make a discovery. I found out that we have another Canadian hero who has made immense contributions to the country of Taiwan. His name is Dr. George MacKay from Oxford county in Ontario. It was Dr. MacKay who started the school system, the medical system and the agricultural system. He had a huge influence in the development of that country. Does anybody in this country know who he is? I do not think so.

On May 13 of this year the town and the RM of Dauphin, Manitoba at least took the first step to formally recognize Lieutenant Colonel William Barker. The regional airport was dedicated and renamed in his honour. We were fortunate on May 13 that after the ceremony the famous Canadian Snowbirds, and we all know who the Snowbirds are, dedicated their air show in his honour. I know from the ceremony the air force holds Lieutenant Colonel Barker in high regard and always has. The three grandsons and one great-grandson of the late Lieutenant Colonel William Barker were in attendance at the ceremony.

I really do not want to take up much more time. This is long overdue. Canada needs to grow up and recognize all people who have contributed not only to the development of this country but to many countries around the world.

**Mr. John Bryden** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if I can get unanimous consent to rise on debate for about 30 seconds in order to move an amendment to the motion before the House?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member for Wentworth—Burlington has, as the House knows, spoken to the motion. Because the original mover of the motion had the right of reply, technically the debate on this motion has ended.

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In order to have a motion moved, it would be moved on debate. The member for Wentworth—Burlington is asking that the time for debate be extended and that the member be recognized on debate for the purposes of moving an amendment to the motion. He will be finished within 30 seconds to one minute.

Does the hon. member for Wentworth—Burlington have the unanimous consent of the House for this purpose?

**An hon. member:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Unanimous consent is not forthcoming.

There being no further members rising for debate and the motion not being designated as a votable item, the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

• (1900)

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

### BANKING

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on May 8, I asked the Liberal government to support my motion before the industry committee to hold hearings into the impact of the bank mergers on small business, consumers and rural Canada. The minister misunderstood my question, believing it was a private member's motion.

There is a new math in Canada. It is the math of mergers. It is not the math we learned when I went to school. In this math the rich get richer, the poor get poorer, the big get bigger, the small get smaller, the centre gets the cream and the regions get overlooked. Here is what it adds up to for the people in my riding.

Of the 42 bank branches in Regina, 33 belong to one of the merger partners. Customers and employees can read the writing on the wall and it is not good news.

Lesson number one in the math of mergers is bank branches. The Royal Bank has nine branches in Regina and the Bank of Montreal has eight. Will the new bank really keep 17 branches in Regina open? Will the second megabank really keep 16 branches open? I think not.

These are the questions people are asking. In the math of mergers, 9 plus 8 will not equal 17 branches and the CIBC and TD

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merger of 9 plus 7 will not equal 16 branches. When some of those branches close, jobs will go with them.

Lesson number two in the math of mergers is executive's salaries. Look at the salaries of top 19 executives of the 4 banks that want to merge. They have combined salaries and bonuses of almost \$50 million and unexercised share option gains worth almost \$222 million. That is a total pay package for 19 people of over a quarter of a billion dollars. In the math of mergers, that would also pay the salary of 10,000 bank tellers.

Here is the catch. When the bank executives negotiate the mergers, the market goes up and the value of their unexercised stock options goes up. Once the mergers are approved, the tellers lose their jobs.

Lesson number three in the math of mergers is bank profits. The banks say they need to merge to become profitable and compete in the global marketplace. The last week's second quarter earnings report show they are certainly already profitable. Earnings increased 15% at the Royal Bank, 19% at the Bank of Montreal and 28% at TD. Meanwhile depositors get dinged with one service charge hike after another.

I should mention there was a year about 10 years ago when the Royal Bank as a corporation actually paid less tax than one of its tellers.

Lesson number four in the math of mergers is fewer banks equal more consumer choice, or at least some people like the C.D. Howe Institute today are trying to make that argument.

The Bank of Montreal has even written me a letter making more or less the same promise, but CIBC chair Al Flood was a little more frank with the Toronto *Star* editorial board. He said last Wednesday: "We've got more consumer choice and corporate choice if we leave it the way it is, but I think it's too late for that".

The NDP is the only party saying that the bankers' math does not add up. You do not cut the number of banks without risking the number of branches and the number of jobs. You do not build incentives for bank executives to hike their salaries with mergers and expect them not to take the opportunity. You do not get more consumer choice with fewer banks.

Opposition to the bank mergers among small businesses and consumers in Saskatchewan is growing every day. The provincial government is taking steps to strengthen our credit unions so they can step in to fill some of the void in rural Saskatchewan.

The bankers' math does not add up and Canadians are going to want a thorough audit. That is why the NDP has been pushing for immediate hearings with all five political parties into the impact the bank mergers will have on Canadians. We are sorry the government and the other parties do not share that sense of urgency.

**Mr. Gerry Byrne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the announcements by the Royal Bank and the Bank of Montreal and subsequently by the CIBC and TD of their intentions to merge have changed the potential landscape of the financial sector in Canada, as referred to by my hon. colleague opposite.

These mergers, however, will not proceed without the approval of the Minister of Finance and not unless the government is convinced of the benefits to Canadians.

• (1905 )

The government is concerned about the level of competition in the financial services sector. It is concerned about the impact of potential mergers on access to services by Canadians and possible implications for employment. Consumers, in particular those in rural areas, have expressed concerns about the possibility of reduced choice or higher fees as a result of these mergers. Small businesses are also concerned with the potential loss of face to face contact with their bankers if branches are closed.

The Minister of Finance will consider the advice of the director of the competition bureau, the office of the superintendent of financial institutions and of the task force on the future of financial institutions in determining whether to allow any merger in the banking sector to occur.

I assure the hon. member and all members of the House that Canadians will be involved in this very important process. Public consultations will be held to give Canadians the opportunity to express their views before any decision is made on these mergers. The hon. member has the opportunity to participate in that debate.

## IMMIGRATION

**Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, on May 13, I wrote the minister of immigration a letter and on May 14, I asked a question in the House with regard to a gentleman in Vancouver named Mr. Iraz Rezaei who runs an immigration consulting firm and who is facing 18 criminal charges for the way he conducts his business. The charges against Mr. Rezaei are eight counts of forgery with passports, six counts of attempted organized illegal entry into Canada, two counts of counselling false refugee claims, one count of threatening and one count of assault.

When I asked the minister the question in the House her answer was the normal one she gives, that she does not talk about specific details of any individual case. This was not a case. This was an individual breaking the law in Canada and who is now using the Internet to expand his business. He is sort of laughing at us with the negative publicity he is getting. He is saying it has actually increased his business.

The minister also wrote me a letter. Amazingly enough, I received it today. It is dated May 25 but it arrived today. Once again the minister says she will not talk about the case because it is a criminal case, that he is innocent until proven guilty and that they

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are not going to do anything. As the minister knows, if a lawyer were charged with such offences that lawyer would be suspended during the investigation. Yet this man is allowed to continue doing his business. That is because there is no regulatory body.

The minister's letter states: "You are likely aware that there are currently no regulatory bodies or regulations governing immigration consultants and that CIC officials are currently examining the very complex issue of how best to encourage competency and integrity in persons who represent our clients", the people who come to Canada as immigrants or refugees. She states: "Officials will be presenting options on how to address this very important issue in the near future".

The near future is not good enough. We have been looking at the near future in this department for years and years. The minister also said: "I am sure you can understand that, due to Canada's privacy legislation and because the case is before the courts, no further comment would be appropriate".

The privacy legislation in Canada was not brought in to protect criminals, those who violate the laws of Canada. It is right in the act that for the Canadian good ministers can go around the Privacy Act. Certainly with a gentleman like this, with all these charges against him, with what is happening in his business, with the demand of the people in the city of Vancouver and the province of British Columbia, the minister should give us the full details concerning this case.

While negotiations are going on with the provinces on this issue, the minister should tell Canadians that her department will not deal with immigration consultants, period, until the licensing issue is solved. Let us put them right out of business until they have licences and until there is a body that can govern what they do.

Innocent people are coming to Canada. The federal government immigration office is in downtown Vancouver. That is where people get sworn in to become citizens and where they go for interviews. It is a very nice building with all the typical government signage on it, welcome to Canada. Right across the street is this gentleman's business. It has big signs in every language "free immigration consultant". We all know he is not in business for free.

I know Vancouver like the back of my hand but there are those just coming to Canada, a strange country for them. A new citizen or a refugee may come to this country and be told at the airport to go downtown. He will see this sign across the street that says free help. Looks nice and warm. It has his own language written on the sign. He will tend to walk in there before he goes in to see those big government guys. They are not used to free governments like ours. They are not used to officials who work to the benefit of those who are trying to come here. They get sucked into this man's office. He is there. He sucks them in. He finds out where their money is and he is making lots of money. It is time the minister acted.

• (1910)

**Ms. Maria Minna (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to answer the question of my colleague from West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast.

The Immigration Act provides for the removal from Canada of any foreign national found guilty of serious criminal activity. I think that is pretty clear. Any person facing charges in Canada's judicial system is however presumed innocent until proven guilty. In any instance where an individual has been convicted of a serious offence under the Criminal Code departmental officials monitor the case to ensure that enforcement action is taken when warranted.

At present there are currently no regulatory bodies, as the hon. member mentioned, or regulations governing immigration consultants. Citizenship and Immigration Canada officials are currently examining the very complex issue of how to best encourage competency and integrity in persons who represent immigrants or refugees.

In view of the fact that this is an area involving provincial jurisdiction, departmental officials have been in contact with provincial authorities. In addition, departmental officials have been consulting with other federal authorities as well as with the legal community.

The issue of immigration consultants has also been a subject of discussion during the recent legislation review consultation. Subsequent to these consultations departmental officials will be presenting the minister with options on ways to address this important issue directly.

While I understand that the hon. member does not agree, we still have to abide by the Privacy Act. With regard to charges brought against specific individuals, I am still unable to discuss details of any specific case in public.

I agree with the hon. member that it is an issue which has to be addressed. As I have previously stated it is provincial jurisdiction, not just federal. It needs to be addressed across the country and negotiated with all provinces. This is what the department is attempting to do as we speak.

## POVERTY

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a whole stack of reports has documented what too many Canadians already know as a daily reality. Poverty is increasing in Canada.

The latest report of the National Council of Welfare paints a devastating picture similar to other reports from Campaign 2000,

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the Canadian Council on Social Development and the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

I have raised this serious matter many times in the House and pointed out that while the Minister of Finance talks about growing economic optimism millions of Canadians are desperate as a result of high unemployment, low wages and lower welfare rates.

Cuts to social assistance, education, health care and EI only make matters worse. The information from the National Council of Welfare report is a condemnation of the government's record. It shows that the gap between the rich and the poor is increasing. Three billion dollars have been slashed since 1996 and poor people are paying the price. Some 5.2 million Canadians are living below the poverty line. They stand in food line-ups, homeless and raising kids on welfare that keeps them in poverty.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission has drawn attention to this government made travesty. The chief commissioner pointed out in her 1997 annual report that the Canadian Human Rights Act made no mention of poverty and did not include social condition as a prohibited ground of discrimination. She went on to say that in the broader context poverty was a serious breach of equality rights which she believed had no place in a country as prosperous as ours.

Also she said that it was difficult to argue that poverty was not a human rights issue given the devastating impact it had on people's lives and that we must not forget that article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stated that everyone had a right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services.

I have introduced a motion in the House that would amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to include social conditions as a grounds for being prohibited from discrimination.

Will the government take action to reduce poverty by setting targets that are achievable? Will the government admit that the too often announced child tax benefit falls far short of being an anti-poverty strategy? It eliminates the benefit to families on welfare. It is not indexed. It has more to do with keeping wages low and unemployment high.

All this is taking place in an environment of media and political attacks on the poor. Just last week the Reform Party member at the human resource development committee launched into an attack against poor people.

• (1915)

We need political leadership from the government and all political parties to agree that unemployment and poverty are serious matters crying out for change in government policies.

We need a fair taxation system. We need proper income distribution. We need corporations to pay the billions of dollars in deferred income taxes. We need the government to restore our social programs. We need to set targets to aggressively reduce unemployment and poverty.

**Mr. Gerry Byrne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in reply to my hon. colleague, the government is very concerned about the situation of low income Canadians. We are particularly sensitive to the situation faced by some of our children and youth.

In the February 1997 budget the government committed \$850 million to create an enriched child tax benefit. This new investment will give much needed support to the 1.4 million Canadian families and will help more than 2.5 million Canadian children.

In the February 1998 budget the government committed another \$850 million investment over the course of our current mandate fulfilling its promise made to Canadians. This will bring the total Government of Canada investment into the well-being of our children to almost \$7 billion per year.

The government's commitment to provide more income support for low income families will enable our provincial and territorial partners to redirect savings into social assistance. Those savings can go into complementary programs and services with the goal of helping welfare parents become fully employed. This is the basis for the national child benefit system.

Building on this co-operation, last January the government agreed to work with the provinces and territories to develop the national children's agenda. It will be a broad comprehensive strategy to address the important needs of Canada's children, especially those in particular need facing poverty.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.16 p.m.)







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