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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, February 10, 1999

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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OFFICIAL REPORT

The tenth line following the (1715) time bullet in the left-hand column at page 11670 of *Hansard*, February 9, should have read:

(Motion, as amended, agreed to)

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 10, 1999

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1400)

The Speaker: As is our practice on Wednesday we will now sing O Canada, and we will be led by the hon. member for Wentworth—Burlington.

[Editor's Note: Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

ELECTION IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and congratulate Premier Brian Tobin and the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador on their successful re-election.

Yesterday voters in that province returned a Liberal majority government, a fourth consecutive Liberal majority, the second under Premier Tobin's leadership.

The people of Newfoundland and Labrador have renewed the Liberal government's mandate to continue its agenda of reducing unemployment, balancing the budget and ensuring that the province receives the full benefit of its present and future resources, including mineral exploration, energy production and a rejuvenated and diversified fishing industry.

It is fitting, in the year commemorating the 50th anniversary of Newfoundland joining the Canadian family, that the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is the victor in yesterday's election.

Joey Smallwood can rest easy. I congratulate Brian Tobin and the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador.

THE SOUTH ALBERTA REGIMENT

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform the House that this afternoon I will be presenting to the Library of Parliament the history of the South Alberta Regiment. The book entitled *The South Albertas: A Canadian Regiment at War*, is the story of five infantry militia units that together formed the South Alberta Regiment and ended the war as Canada's finest regiment in the Canadian armoured corps.

As part of the 4th Armoured Division, the South Alberta Regiment played a major roll in a number of significant battles, including the Battle of Falaise Gap where Major David Currie of C Squadron won the Victoria Cross. Mrs. Currie is with us in the gallery today.

Removed from the order of battle in 1954, the South Alberta Regiment is a sterling example of Canada's militia and a proud part of our military heritage. With 316 casualties, their unofficial motto was "You've been through the mud and the blood and I hope that you reach the green fields beyond". Their record indicates that the South Alberta Regiment deserves nothing less.

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TOYOTA MOTOR MANUFACTURING CANADA INC.

Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada of Cambridge, a leading North American auto manufacturer, recently received the Most Supportive Employer for Ontario award from the Canadian Forces Liaison Council.

As stated by the Minister of National Defence, Toyota was recognized for "performing an important act of patriotism" by supporting its employee reservists who serve with dedication in Canada's Armed Forces.

Toyota has invested \$2.2 billion in a state of the art automotive plant in Cambridge, provided 2,700 quality jobs to Canadians and has generously supported local charities and community organizations.

I know that the people of Cambridge and all members will join me in offering Toyota our heartfelt congratulations.

* * *

WESTERN DIVERSIFICATION

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhon (Winnipeg North—St. Paul, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba welcomes the Cargene Corporation's decision

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to open its new health biotechnology research and development facility in Winnipeg, not England, thanks to a \$3 million repayable loan from the western diversification program.

This program illustrates the commitment of the federal government to advance the economic prosperity of the western and northern regions of Canada.

It is a facility like Cangene's that ensures the creation of jobs for Manitobans, old and young alike.

Manitobans, therefore, find it difficult to understand that another political party has, as its policy, the dismantling of the western diversification program.

The constituents of Winnipeg North—St. Paul salute the federal government for its commitment to sustain this program for Canada's western and northern regions, thereby strengthening our social union as a federation.

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SOCIAL UNION AGREEMENT

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I commend the Liberal government on reaching a social union agreement with the provinces. The agreement is proof that the provinces and Ottawa can work together to build a stronger Canada.

The social union will ensure that our crucial social safety net is preserved and enhanced for today's generation and for future generations.

The health accord is a perfect example of the social union at work. The accord has renewed the federal, provincial and territorial commitment to the five principles of the Canada Health Act, ensuring that Canadians everywhere will continue to have access to the highest quality of medicare. Together we are working in the best interests of all Canadians.

The fact that this agreement was reached just before Citizenship and Heritage Week serves as a reminder of all that we have and all that we should be thankful for. After all, Canada truly is the best country on earth.

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HEALTH CANADA

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Monday's *National Post* reported that Health Canada is dragging its heels on approving the drug TPA in the treatment of strokes and heart attacks.

This is appalling since it has been proven to save thousands of lives in America, yet it is a gamble for those living without the drug in Canada. If a person is one of the lucky few who are admitted to a teaching hospital in which the drug is used they are guaranteed a fighting chance.

I myself stand here in the House of Commons as proof that TPA saves lives. At midnight on October 6, 1990 I had a blood clot travel to the main artery of my heart. I was declared dead for six minutes until TPA was administered and it brought me back to life.

I give full credit to both my doctor and TPA. I would really encourage Health Canada to make the approval of TPA a priority.

The government should be in the business of saving lives. Here is an opportunity to erase its abysmal record of stripping our health care system dry by giving those Canadians suffering from strokes and heart attacks the gift of life.

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WHITECAP DAKOTA SIOUX FIRST NATION

Mr. Reg Alcock (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to tell the House about a model new partnership between a Saskatchewan first nations community, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the city of Saskatoon. This initiative has resulted in jobs, training and improved fire protection for the community.

This week the Whitecap Dakota Sioux First Nation opened a new fire hall and training centre and signed a fire protection service agreement with Saskatoon. This agreement is the first of its kind in Saskatchewan.

What this means is that Whitecap no longer has to rely on services from 30 kilometres away. Now, with its own fire hall, truck, equipment and trained volunteers, the community has the same basic level of fire protection service that other Canadians have. This is a good example of partnership as outlined in the federal government's aboriginal action plan "Gathering Strength".

On behalf of the government I congratulate the chief of Whitecap and the mayor of Saskatoon for working together. With the help of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, this partnership is providing tangible improvements to the community.

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● (1405)

[Translation]

2003 CANADA WINTER GAMES

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the Chaleurs and Restigouche regions of New Brunswick have been selected to host the 2003 Canada Winter Games.

[English]

This announcement was made possible by the relentless work of the local 2003 Canada Winter Games bid committee. The efforts of the committee, chaired by Brian Theede, bore fruit last night with the confirmation of the 2003 Winter Games being awarded to our region.

[Translation]

The economic fallout from the Games, estimated at \$30 million, will be most welcome in our area. The publicity generated by an activity of such scope will have major long-term economic impacts on the region.

I am sure the region will exhibit its usual hospitality, and that the experience will be an unforgettable one. We look forward to seeing everyone there in the year 2003.

* * *

COLOMBIA

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in less than a week, there have been reports from Colombia concerning a murderous attack by paramilitaries, the murder of two human rights activists, and the kidnapping of four social workers affiliated with the Canadian Catholic organization Development and Peace.

According to a spokesperson for that organization, the kidnap victims were monitoring the actions of paramilitaries in the regions where land is being confiscated. It appears that they were taken in order to sabotage the peace talks between the Colombian government and the guerrillas.

Twenty-five thousand Colombians have protested in the streets of Medellin against the misdeeds of the paramilitary forces. The Bloc Quebecois joins its voice to theirs in demanding that the four people being held hostage by the paramilitaries be freed and the peace process in Colombia resumed.

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[English]

BELL CANADA

Mr. Benoît Serré (Timiskaming—Cochrane, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year BCE, the mother company of Bell Canada, realized net profits of \$1.6 billion after a raise in basic rates was approved by the CRTC.

The increase was supposed to finance enhanced services in rural Canada. In the meantime, in my riding of Timiskaming—Cochrane, 5,000 customers served by Northern Telephone, a wholly owned subsidiary of Bell Canada, are still on party lines.

Five thousand customers are still living in the fifties with party lines and rotary phones, which means no fax machines, no Internet and consequently no jobs.

Bell Canada, should be ashamed of itself. It benefited from a monopoly but failed to fulfill its responsibilities. Shame on Bell Canada. It made \$1.6 billion in profits and instead of increasing services it laid off people.

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I say shame on Bell Canada. I will continue to repeat this statement as long as the problem is not solved.

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HOMELESSNESS

Mr. Eric Lowther (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has created a class of working poor in Canada. Many angry Canadians rallied on the Hill today and their message was loud and clear.

Liberal economics are putting Canadian families and individuals out on the street. When will this government admit that it is wrong to tax a family making far less than \$20,000 a year? When will this government stop draining our social system of its resources, preventing Canadians from helping those who need help the most?

The Liberal government does not hesitate to give out millions of dollars to Canada's largest corporations but laughs when it comes to relieving the pressure on those in real need.

The Prime Minister has talked to the imaginary homeless but some real homeless people are outside still waiting to talk to him. The Prime Minister's absence was noted and so is the government's inability to implement economic and social programs that will allow every Canadian to have a home.

For a country so rich in resources, only the regressive policies of this Liberal government prevent every Canadian from having their needs met.

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[Translation]

SOCIAL UNION AGREEMENT

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite the Government of Quebec and the sovereignists to give careful thought to the advantages of the recent framework agreement on social union.

The sovereignists have decided to turn it into an issue, but they must not forget that the people did not give them a mandate to prepare Quebec's independence.

The people of Quebec want their government to look after their interests, without the usual excessive partisanship that is the annoying trademark of the sovereignists.

The social union is nothing less than a new approach to Canadian federalism reflecting change in our social policy and the needs of Canadians.

I invite the Government of Quebec to sign this agreement as soon as possible.

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• (1410)

SOCIAL UNION AGREEMENT

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian social union agreement is entitled “A Framework to Improve the Social Union for Canadians”.

As Sainte-Beuve put it, “Happy lovers adapt willingly to any framework”. This is the way I would describe the unhealthy atmosphere that led nine provinces concerned about us to sign an unconditional surrender, after being starved by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

The agreement dwelled as well on the obligation to eliminate barriers to Canadians’ mobility. “To eliminate” means “to reject”, “to remove”. This is a word that unfortunately goes well with the regrettable attitude of the nine provinces concerned about us, which dropped Quebec without a moment’s hesitation.

One word, however, is missing from this agreement, inspired by the minister. It is the word “to eat away” as in “to eat away the powers of the provinces”.

* * *

ELECTRIC VEHICLE PROJECT

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on January 25 was announced an innovative and ambitious project for the acquisition of electric vehicles in the Montreal area.

The purpose of this Montreal 2000 project is to form a network of between 15 and 20 organizations interested in buying 40 electric vehicles that will become part of their fleet and be used on a regular basis.

This two-year project, estimated at more than \$3 million, was made possible through concerted efforts by industry and government partners. The \$500,000 in federal assistance will come in part from the climate change action fund, which was established to assist Canada in meeting its Kyoto commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

This is the kind of action the Canadian government encourages in the Montreal area.

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[English]

BELL ISLAND FERRY

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John’s East, PC): Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring to the attention of this House, and to the attention of the Minister of Transport in particular, a very serious incident that occurred last week on the Bell Island ferry service in the riding of St. John’s East.

The ferryboat *Hamilton Sound*, fully loaded with vehicles and 75 passengers, lost a ramp in heavy seas during what should have been a routine crossing. Luckily the ferry made port without any serious injury or loss of life.

The operation of the Bell Island ferry service is very much a local matter, but the safety of ships at sea is also a matter within the jurisdiction of the Minister of Transport. I call upon the minister to investigate and to act on the incident so the people of Bell Island can be assured they will have a ferry system that can operate safely under local traffic and weather conditions.

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STUART ENERGY SYSTEMS

Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on February 8 the Minister of Natural Resources addressed the ninth annual Canadian Hydrogen Conference in Vancouver. On behalf of the federal Ministers of Industry and the Environment the minister announced an investment by the federal government of \$5.8 million in Stuart Energy Systems, a Canadian company developing a system for improving the refuelling of hydrogen fuel-cell powered buses. The total cost of this project is estimated at \$17.7 million and will create 250 jobs.

This is a superb example of federal departments working together to support Canadian companies in developing more environmentally friendly forms of energy and technology. It also helps us to meet our Kyoto commitments. Congratulations to Stuart Energy Systems for helping us move in the right direction.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Cliff Breitzkreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, let me tell a story from *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*. Picture this: A young woman jetting around the world, testing five star hotels to make sure they are ritzy enough for her uncle’s first class vacations. This young woman travelled first class herself when she was lining up luxury suites for her uncle in Italy last year. She spent more than 10,000 loonies on first class airfare.

Who is this jet-setting young woman and who is her uncle with his champagne taste for the high life?

No, it is not the Sultan of Brunei. It is not Bill Gates. We are talking about young Caroline Chretien jetting around the globe to check out fancy hotels for her uncle. He has come a long way from being the little guy from Shawinigan.

Maybe that is the real reason the Prime Minister did not go to King Hussein’s funeral. Bill Clinton already booked the royal suite, so Caroline Chretien radioed back “Don’t bother coming, Uncle. Room service is better at the Chateau Whistler”.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

• (1415)

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, about one hour ago the chief of defence staff was forced to take the blame for the Prime Minister's poor judgment regarding King Hussein's funeral. What a humiliating day for our military.

Why was the chief of defence staff forced to take the fall for our Prime Minister's mistake?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we wanted to go there. It is very clear that the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of National Defence and my office worked together to try to organize it so that the Prime Minister of Canada could be there. There was an advance team.

Unfortunately I could not be there. I do not want to blame anybody. Everybody did their job. I wanted to go there. I am terribly sorry that I could not be there. If there is any blame to give, I am here to take the blame.

I wanted to go there and I did not make it. I am sorry but it is a fact of life.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in fact the Prime Minister just said not once but twice I am sorry but and came up with an excuse. The Prime Minister is incapable of saying I am sorry, period.

On APEC, on hepatitis C and on some of these other things the Prime Minister just continues to blame anyone else but himself. Now he is blaming the Jordanians and our Canadian air forces.

I would like him to stand up in his place and simply say the words, I am sorry, period, and not I am sorry but, but, but.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the member had listened she would have learned that I said *je suis désolé*. I am sorry. I wanted to go there and I am sorry I could not go there.

I said to the ambassador I am sorry I was not there.

[*Translation*]

I am sorry, in both French and English.

[*English*]

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, again there is proof in *Hansard* forevermore: "I am sorry but it was someone else's fault other than mine"—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Miss Deborah Grey: That is definitely true. It is not good enough.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Miss Deborah Grey: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry but the Prime Minister could go and he knows it.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

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

Miss Deborah Grey: I would love to, Mr. Speaker. Only after 24 hours of badgering did our chief of defence staff now come forward and say "Well, it was our fault".

Why is the Prime Minister—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: We are going to hear the question right now.

Miss Deborah Grey: Mr. Speaker, why is the Prime Minister soiling our military's reputation to try to save his own?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I said that I do not want to blame anybody. I said I wanted to go there and I could not make it. I said *je suis désolé*. I repeat, I am sorry, and in case that is not enough, it is written.

The Speaker: I would ask hon. members not to use props.

• (1420)

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we now know that the military could have placed the Prime Minister in Jordan for King Hussein's funeral. Everybody now knows that the Prime Minister is blaming the Canadian forces for his bad judgment. He continues to stubbornly stick with that unbelievable explanation.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Will he immediately table the flight logs and other pertinent correspondence between the Prime Minister's Office and the Department of National Defence to back up his story?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, General Baril made a statement and I made a statement. There is nothing to add. We all wanted to make sure that the Prime Minister of Canada would be there. Between the time that it was known that the king was dead and the time that the funeral was to start, there was not enough time for the Prime Minister to be there so the Government of Canada and the people of Canada were represented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Oral Questions

There were a lot of other leaders that could not be there. In fact, from the Americas, only the President of the United States could go there.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, one hour ago I witnessed a humiliating scene over at the Department of National Defence, the Prime Minister using the chief of the defence staff as his fall guy for the Prime Minister's own flawed decision.

I do not believe the Canadian forces are to blame here. The Prime Minister has a responsibility to clean the air.

I am asking the Prime Minister again if he will table in the House the logs and the correspondence that existed between his office and the Department of National Defence now?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have clearly explained the situation. There was no flight for the Prime Minister. There was one that took the Minister of Foreign Affairs and some members of parliament to the funeral. They represented Canada very well.

These are the facts. I do not want to blame anybody. I am sorry. I wanted to be there. I said that to my staff and to everybody last week, but I could not make it.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Prime Minister has found a scapegoat. In the case of the GST, it was the Minister of Canadian Heritage. For APEC, it was the RCMP. This time, it is the Canadian Armed Forces.

Does the Prime Minister realize that, in his haste to ridicule the forces and their commander in chief in order to cover up his errors in judgment, he is undermining the credibility of institutions such as the armed forces and, in particular, the office he himself holds?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker. I indicated clearly that the decision to go there had been taken last week.

The Department of National Defence, the Department of Foreign Affairs and the PMO did everything they could, but it was physically impossible for me to get to Amman. That is why the Minister of Foreign Affairs and members of the House represented me and Canada at King Hussein's funeral.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, by saying that he had not anticipated an urgent requirement, did General Baril not reveal that neither the PMO nor the Prime Minister had informed him of the need for possible urgent action, because an early return from Vancouver was possible. I imagine that, if the entire world knew that King Hussein was on the verge of death, so did the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister apparently did not. He did not say there was an urgent requirement. Is this believable? Can this be?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister does not have to tell the Canadian Armed Forces what to do. They are capable of acting on their own, and it is their responsibility to ensure that I can get places when I wish to do so.

• (1425)

It was indicated clearly last week that the Prime Minister wished to go to Jordan. The Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of National Defence were informed accordingly. A PMO team had already gone on ahead to Amman to prepare the way. Unfortunately—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Repentigny.

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of being part of the Canadian delegation to the funeral of King Hussein of Jordan.

According to my calculations, from the time the PMO was notified until the start of the ceremonies, and taking into account the nine hours of flight time between Ottawa and Jordan, there was still nine hours leeway.

How can the Prime Minister explain that, with nine hours to spare, he could not have got from Vancouver to Ottawa, when a flight normally takes about four and one-half hours?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, according to the information provided by the Canadian forces, it was impossible.

I do not know how the hon. member does his calculations, but I know that I needed two hours to get to Vancouver, another five to Ottawa, and then thirteen to get to Amman, plus the seven hours of time change. All together that makes considerably more than the 22 hours there were between the time the King died and the start of the ceremonies.

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will explain my calculations.

I was at Repentigny at 8.30 a.m. on Sunday when I was told I had to be in Ottawa for 11 a.m. to get the flight out. That being physically impossible for me also, I asked if the flight could be held until 12.30 p.m. I was told it could. And I am not the Prime Minister.

How can the Prime Minister explain that it did not occur to him to have the flight held for another hour or two to allow him the time to get to Ottawa to join us, since our flight arrived at Amman a good three hours before the start of the ceremonies.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my office was informed that it was impossible to make the

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necessary arrangements Sunday morning to allow me to get from where I was in British Columbia to Ottawa in time to catch the flight to Amman.

The decision was not mine. This is what was decided by those who were responsible, who acted in good faith. They concluded that it was impossible, and I could not get to Amman. It is as simple as that.

* * *

[*English*]

HOMELESSNESS

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we had a very serious situation on Parliament Hill today. The Prime Minister refused to meet with a delegation of Canada's homeless. He preferred a more heavy-handed approach: the homeless need shelter, throw them in jail; the homeless need help, bring on the riot squad.

Why did the Prime Minister refuse to meet with homeless people? Why was the RCMP brought in instead?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Works and Government Services has offered to meet with them. He is the minister responsible for this problem in the government. He sent a note and he organized a meeting with one member. He was willing to meet with a delegation of the protesters. Apparently they are not available this afternoon to meet with him.

We are very preoccupied with this problem. It is a very difficult problem involving the provincial, municipal and federal governments. The minister made a statement yesterday showing all the activities that the government has taken to move forward.

• (1430)

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister knows perfectly well that he was asked 35 days ago for this meeting today. His minister offered to meet with those protesters after they left town.

Instead of meeting with them and listening to their desperation, instead of responding to their pleas, the Prime Minister brings in the riot squad.

Will the Prime Minister admit he was wrong? Will he accept the challenge of the homeless, to meet with them on their terms? Has the Prime Minister got the decency and the guts to do that?

The Speaker: Colleagues, we all know today is Wednesday and sometimes we run over a little in our words. It is not a question of any of us having courage in this House. I will permit the hon. Prime Minister to answer the question.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the New Democratic Party likes to use extravagant words in the House of Commons, as she is doing now.

I would have appreciated last week if she had had the good sense of respecting the tradition of the New Democratic Party and stood in the House to defend the charter of rights.

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac, PC): Mr. Speaker, in 1990 the current finance minister chaired a task force on the homeless. He promised a Liberal government would hold a national conference on the homeless and provide more money for social housing.

Nine years later, like so many other broken Liberal promises, all the task force recommendations have been forgotten.

Given that the number of homeless Canadians has skyrocketed since this government took office in 1993, will the Prime Minister commit today to new measures to reverse this serious problem?

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me continue to read the list I started yesterday of the things the government is doing in housing for the homeless.

Over \$12 million from RRAP will be targeted to upgrade an estimated 1,450 units for those at risk of becoming homeless.

The Government of Canada and the city of Calgary are currently planning the use of the additional 1998-99 RRAP funds and loan insurance to support the development of rooming houses for the homeless and low income Canadians. CMHC will be hosting a national housing research committee discussion group on the homeless—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Tobique—Mactaquac.

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac, PC): Mr. Speaker, what the minister is talking about is not enough for the Canadian homeless. I know the Prime Minister always likes to speak to his homeless friends.

Why did the Prime Minister not speak to the homeless people this morning who travelled to Ottawa to meet with him today, although it is a great day for skiing?

Did the Prime Minister discuss homelessness with the premiers last week? If not, when will he meet with other levels of government to devise a comprehensive plan to solve this serious problem?

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year I announced the extension of RRAP. The government put in \$250 million. Last December the government put another \$50 million in the program to help the homeless.

Some of the provinces are participating, some are not. If they would participate we would have more money to do more.

Oral Questions

Maybe the hon. member should speak to some of his Conservative friends like Mike Harris in Ontario who are not participating.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last night the Prime Minister was quoted on this sad situation with the king: "The army told me they could not take me there so I could not go".

I am asking the Prime Minister to prove that, to file the logs here in the House from the plane that was waiting for him in Vancouver to prove his story now.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there was a statement issued by the Department of National Defence which confirmed what I said yesterday.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I flew to Jordan on exactly the same type of plane the Prime Minister could have taken. It was 12 hours from the moment that plane took off from Ottawa until we were on the tarmac in Jordan, and 4 hours from the time I was notified until that plane took off.

I have the logs of that plane. We need now the logs of the plane the Prime Minister could have taken.

• (1435)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult to give him the log of a plane I did not take.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for months, we have been warning the government that its cuts to health care would have disastrous effects everywhere. It paid no attention, and now we can see the results.

The same is true for employment insurance. We repeatedly warned the government that it was creating a real social drama with its so-called reforms.

Will the Minister of Human Resources Development finally get the message and improve his system to quickly repair the damage his reform caused as happened in health care?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as members know, we undertook a major reform of employment insurance and, each year, for the next five years, I will be tabling a report in the House measuring the real impact of our employment insurance reform.

However, what I note is that the employment insurance reform and the other programs of the Government of Canada have led to the creation of 87,000 new jobs in January alone.

The youth employment strategy led to the creation of 44,000 of these jobs for young people. Perhaps the Bloc should pay closer attention to the situation in Quebec where, unfortunately, while 87,000 jobs were being created in Canada, 1,000 jobs were lost in Quebec.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in addition to scrapping the employment insurance plan, the Minister of Human Resources Development is allowing the Minister of Finance to siphon off the plan's surplus in order to lower taxes for the wealthy.

Will the Minister of Human Resources Development get on with his job, assume his responsibilities and stand up to the Minister of Finance in defence of the unemployed? He is paid to do this, not write books.

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we created the youth employment strategy, which the Prime Minister himself announced in December, and which will operate on a permanent basis. We note that last year there were 150,000 new jobs for young people, the best performance in 20 years. We have a standing Canadian job creation fund in the country's finances.

I can tell you I am proud to be part of a government that wants to help people escape unemployment and find a job, unlike the members on the other side.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, under this government Canadians truly are paying more and getting a lot less.

This year the average taxpayer will pay \$1,800 more in taxes than they paid when this government came to power. That is a lot of groceries. On the other hand, the government has ensured that Canadian taxpayers will get \$1,150 less in health care than they did in 1993.

How can the government deny for a second that Canadians really are paying more and getting a lot less?

Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in every budget since we have taken office it has been our priority to try to reduce taxes.

We have done this in a consistent and responsible manner. In the last budget we reduced taxes for 13 million Canadians and completely eliminated taxes for 400,000 of the poorest taxpayers.

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We will continue in the forthcoming budget this responsible and balanced course.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, is that really the minister's story, that taxes are going down in Canada? We know that \$38 billion more every year now comes out of taxpayer pockets and goes to this government, \$1,800 per taxpayer.

Where does this minister get off spinning a yarn like that? How can he deny for a second that Canadians are paying a whole lot more and getting a lot less from this government?

Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our growth is evidenced by what has happened in terms of jobs. Last year Canada created 449,000 brand new jobs. In January of this year there were 87,400 brand new jobs.

There are 1.5 million more Canadians who are working today than there were five years ago since we took office. This is the type of growth we are proud of.

* * *

• (1440)

[Translation]

FARM SAFETY NET INCOME PROGRAM

Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the national safety net advisory committee is proposing a series of concrete measures to ensure that the \$900 million in the farm safety net income program announced by the minister will all be spent, and spent in a way that best helps our producers.

Does the minister intend to implement all the committee's recommendations so that Quebec producers benefit, or does he not?

[English]

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in coming up with the criteria and defining how up to \$9 million of federal support will be given to those producers who need it, we listened to the advice of many people. We listened to the advice of the safety net advisory committee, the provinces and colleagues on both sides of the House. We will do our best to make that fair and equitable across the country.

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since Quebec has already taken steps to help its producers, particularly in the pork sector, can the minister assure us that Quebec will not be penalized in any way in the implementation of the farm safety net income program?

[English]

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can give the hon. member full assurance that they will be treated equitably, the same as any other farmer in Canada.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the reality in this country is that the government has hiked taxes 37 times. Even after the budget next week with a \$2 billion proposed tax cut, taxes are still the biggest component in any family's budget load.

Why is the government continuing to tax Canadians more and giving them less in services?

Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have continuously cut taxes. We made major tax cuts in the last budget, \$7 billion over three years. The minister has indicated that our forthcoming budget will have tax cuts as well.

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister talked about 400,000 taxpayers being eliminated from the tax rolls. We do not want to hear about the people who have moved out of the country or have died. We are talking about the 14 million people who have to stay here and pay these exorbitant taxes. The reality of living in Canada is that we are paying more and getting less.

What we would like to know is why can the government not understand that people want the government to cut taxes, not health care.

Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we have to know where the Reform Party is coming from. This is the party that over the three years in its prebudget submission proposed \$54 billion of new fiscal measures.

What has it done? It is predicting there will be growth in our economy for each of those years of 5.5%. It is absolutely no wonder that it wants to unite with the Tory party which has won the governor general's prize for fiction for its budgets.

* * *

[Translation]

ABORIGINAL LIVING OFF RESERVE

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

In October 1998, the federal government announced that the labour force agreements signed with the Congress of Aboriginal

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Peoples and the Native Women's Association were expiring. These two groups represent an off-reserve aboriginal population of more than 800,000, who will now be excluded from the training program.

How can the Minister of Human Resources Development justify the fact that he has yet to meet with officials of these two organizations to discuss renewing and restoring funding to these programs in the next federal budget?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the responsibility for labour and manpower issues, we have signed a new agreement with the Government of Quebec.

The Canadian government does not have sole jurisdiction over aboriginals living off reserve. That concerns us. I have met with a number of aboriginal leaders and it is extremely important that we make sure the best possible services are provided to these aboriginal people living off reserve, so that they can join the labour force.

It is one of our concerns, but we do not hold all the cards. The Quebec government has been holding some of them since this historic agreement was signed.

* * *

[English]

YEAR 2000

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board.

There are fewer than 215 working days until the year 2000. I know the minister has given us his assurance in the House regarding the government's preparedness for the Y2K on the operability of the government's computer systems, but what concrete third party proof can he give the House that the government's payment systems will be fully operable when the clock strikes January 1, 2000?

• (1445)

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the international group, the Gardner Group, is universally known and has been assessing the various countries. It has for the last few months repeatedly been saying that Canada is now the second country in the world, behind the United States, in terms of preparedness.

Also for January we now have the latest report for the level of preparedness of departments for their government-wide mission critical systems and the departments are on average at 84% of preparedness. They give us assurances that they will be ready for the year 2000.

TAXATION

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary keeps telling us the government has cut taxes. Has he heard anything about the CPP \$10 billion tax increase he stood up and voted for? Does he know about the impact of bracket creep which every year takes a billion additional dollars out of the pockets of hardworking Canadian taxpayers?

How can the minister stand in his place and tell us he has cut taxes when in fact as we speak the government is raising taxes on Canadians through bracket creep and the CPP?

Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I could not be prouder of the measures our government took in concert with the provinces in order to ensure the continuity and ongoing viability of the Canada pension plan.

I look at the Reform Party proposal to hold the line on all existing programs, including seniors pensions. As if there are not going to be more and more seniors in Canada who require more and more support over the next three years. I would not be cutting seniors pensions the way the Reform Party is. We have preserved them.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party would take every low income senior off the tax rolls who should not be paying taxes today but is because of bracket creep. We would take every low income Canadian off the tax rolls who should not be paying taxes but is because of bracket creep.

How can the minister continue to stand in his place and justify a tax system which taxes people without their even knowing it through this pernicious tax grab called bracket creep?

Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have continuously reduced taxes and we have said there will be more forthcoming.

In terms of the \$54 billion in new tax measures that the Reform Party has proposed for the next three years, it has not come clean on exactly which programs it would cut. This is irresponsibility of the worst order, but unfortunately that is what we have come to expect from the Reform Party.

* * *

DEVCO

Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it has been over 10 days since the Minister of Natural Resources made his drive-by announcement killing over 1,100 jobs in Cape Breton.

Today a delegation of labour leaders, representatives of Devco workers, is meeting with representatives of all parties with a

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simple question for the minister: Why did he reject their reasonable proposal for the future of Devco given that the corporation had previously approved the plan?

Will the minister now agree to have the union proposal reviewed and costed by an unbiased third party in consultation with the union?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the union proposition was put to me informally when I met with the union on January 11. I was provided with a written description of what it had in mind.

I subsequently had that proposal very carefully analysed. The information revealed that under any of the various scenarios, which I am sure were put forward with the best of intentions, but under any of the various scenarios proposed by the unions, Devco unfortunately would continue to be a losing proposition because the arrangement was simply not economical.

Mrs. Michelle Dockrill (Bras d'Or—Cape Breton, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. The government's recent announcement regarding Devco is devastating the Cape Breton economy as we speak. In 10 days real estate is down 20%. It also leaves hundreds of workers with 25 years and more of service ineligible for pensions.

To restore at least some trust, will the minister tell union leaders in Ottawa today that he will agree to set up a labour-management committee to deal with this crisis?

• (1450)

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I was in Sydney for the announcement I indicated that the management of the corporation would indeed want to review the human resources package that was included as part of our announcement with union representatives. Some of those discussions have already been held. Obviously, if there are ways to tailor that package in a way that is more beneficial to the employees within the financial parameters that have been set out, every creative idea would be considered. Some of those discussions have already started.

* * *

APEC INQUIRY

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, on February 3 the chair of the RCMP Public Complaints Commission, Justice Ted Hughes, wrote to the solicitor general urging the federal government to pay the legal fees for the students. He has called on the government to approve the funding in order to ensure a fair hearing in the hope of finally levelling the

playing field and improving the quality of the proceedings. This request follows a similar one from the original panel.

In the interests of justice, will the solicitor general approve this reasonable request immediately and bring some integrity and credibility to the APEC hearings?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I did receive a very detailed letter from Mr. Hughes. I and my officials are reviewing this letter and will respond to Mr. Hughes.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, delay, deny and distract. Cameron Ward, a lawyer representing six of the complainants at the APEC inquiry said yesterday "The value of this hearing will rest in part on whether the Prime Minister actually testifies".

In light of the fact that security at the APEC summit cost \$13 million and the inquiry itself is costing additional millions to the taxpayers, does the Prime Minister not want Canadians to know the truth about this matter? In the interests of fairness, will he speak from the heart? Will he testify at the APEC hearing?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is entirely between the Prime Minister and the commission.

* * *

NATIONAL REVENUE

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue.

A leaked document reveals that a number of Canadian environmental organizations are acting as a front for huge American corporate and family trusts. Millions of dollars are funnelled into Canada every year.

Today we find that the Sierra Legal Defence Fund and the David Suzuki Foundation among others are counting on this money to finance a smear campaign and manipulate share prices of Canadian based Redfern Resources to scare off investors and kill a mining project in northern B.C.

Why is the minister extending charitable status to these organizations? When is he going to commit to removing it for these environmental terrorists?

Hon. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member may know, a study was recently done, the Broadbent study, which looked at the whole area of the voluntary sector. We as a government are very interested in looking at that.

Our department is following the jurisprudence at the time to determine that those charities which are registered fully follow the law and the courts in support of the decisions we have made in terms of registration of charities.

Oral Questions

This is an area we are very interested in looking at. Certainly we have to modernize and update our legislation. We welcome the report that has come forward and look forward to looking at it.

* * *

[Translation]

TECHNOLOGY PARTNERSHIPS CANADA

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

In 1998, Technology Partnerships Canada invested \$166 million in the aeronautical sector. That is about half of what it invested 10 years ago, and only \$10 million more than the royalties reimbursed by the companies.

When will the minister acknowledge loud and clear that today's jobs are the result of yesterday's investments in this sector, and that the present underfunding of Technology Partnerships Canada represents a serious threat for the jobs of tomorrow? What will be in the budget?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the facts the hon. member is presenting. I agree that it would be important for us to increase the funding available to the Technology Partnerships Canada program, but the government always has to set priorities. I am sure that next Tuesday the Minister of Finance will be presenting a budget that will balance the various priorities very well.

* * *

• (1455)

[English]

PUBLISHING INDUSTRY

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to cultural protection and specifically Bill C-55, this government seems to have a split-run policy. When the Americans are playing the bullies, the minister plays the great nationalist. At the same time, the government likes secret meetings and now proposes an amendment that cabinet and not parliament determine the future of Bill C-55. Canadians want some clarity on this issue.

Will the Minister of Canadian Heritage now commit to make Bill C-55 the law of the land, call the Americans' bluff and stop setting our cultural policy behind closed doors?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to thank the hon. member and her party and the hon. members of most parties for the strong support they have shown. I also want to thank in particular my hon. critic who yesterday displayed an incredible openness when he had

meetings on this issue with representatives of the magazine industry.

That being said, we are certainly committed to proceeding with this bill. The amendment that we have put forth today is the standard amendment in most bills that have been brought before the House. Frankly, what it does is it shows that we on the Canadian side are operating in good faith. I only hope our American allies choose to also operate in good faith.

* * *

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK OF CANADA

Mr. Jim Jones (Markham, PC): Mr. Speaker, Liberals can run but they cannot hide from being accountable for misuse of grants and loans. Yvon Duhaime, a financially challenged convicted criminal, admitted that he received assistance from the Prime Minister's riding staff in applying for government funding.

I ask the Prime Minister, did he or a member of his staff intervene with the Business Development Bank or any other department to obtain dollars for Yvon Duhaime?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have made it clear in the House before that the process for dealing with loans authorized by the Business Development Bank of Canada is one that is entirely within the control of that organization.

In this case, because the level of the loan was such as it was, the decision was not made at the local level. It was made at the head office level by a vice-president whose responsibility it is to determine whether or not such loans should be given. There is not even an order in council appointee who was involved in determining that process.

Furthermore, I want to emphasize that this money was not only loaned by the Business Development Bank of Canada, there were also loans from the Caisse Populaire, a private sector lender, determining that this was a project worth supporting by private sector funds.

* * *

YEAR 2000

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Foreign Affairs and its 140 missions abroad provide crucial information and services to Canadians, services that are dependent upon international communications facilities.

What assurance can the Minister of Foreign Affairs give that his department is prepared for the millennium and is thereby meeting the needs of Canadians worldwide for the year 2000 and beyond?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no question of the responsibility to ensure that Canadian interests abroad are protected in this very complicated situation and need to be advanced. We have developed a number of contingency plans to ensure that there can be communications

services. For example, we have secured emergency satellite channels to make sure that all 140 missions will be in direct contact with Canada to protect Canadian consular interests and trade and security interests abroad if something happens in the year 2000.

* * *

FIREARMS

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this government has a double standard. The justice minister tells firearms owners not to fear registration, but her government has declared certain registered firearms prohibited and will not pay compensation to thousands of dealers whose property will eventually be confiscated.

In August the government announced it will give El Salvador \$130,000 for a firearms buy-back scheme. Will the minister explain why firearms owners in El Salvador get compensation but law-abiding firearms owners in Canada do not?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot comment on the program that the member refers to in El Salvador, but I will certainly follow up on that with my colleague who is responsible for CIDA.

Let me say that it has been a longstanding policy of this government in terms of firearms in fact either to provide grandfathering provisions for those who presently own various kinds of weapons, or in limited circumstances, very limited circumstances, to provide compensation. That policy continues.

* * *

• (1500)

[Translation]

POVERTY

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the homeless are demonstrating outside the Parliament Buildings, while at the same time the government is amassing over \$16.5 million daily in the employment insurance fund.

This government, which presents itself as the champion of the poor, is in fact the champion of poverty. The number of children in Canada living in poor families has increased by 60% in the past ten years.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister finally get moving and ensure that the coming budget contains the funding and other measures required to combat poverty?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has already taken action. We created tax credits for poor families. We put \$1.7 million into that. This is a system

Routine Proceedings

that did not exist two years ago. The government has already committed the sum of \$1.7 million, the biggest contribution to any program since we have been in government.

* * *

[English]

HOMELESSNESS

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today hundreds of homeless people came to Parliament Hill with a very simple mission. They wanted to tell the Prime Minister of the pain and the reality of being homeless in Canada. They were turned down in a meeting.

Will the Prime Minister demonstrate commitment and care today by ensuring that in the upcoming budget there are adequate resources to ensure that homelessness does not exist in Canada? Will he provide the funds in that budget to provide emergency shelters and housing?

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her question.

In the first week of January I met in Vancouver with the mayor of Vancouver and a group of people who are trying to help the homeless. CMHC has provided RRAP funding for a rehabilitation housing project on the east side for the Washington Hotel and the Sunrise Hotel in the member's riding. Thirty thousand dollars was provided for the Home Mutual Aid Society for a proposal to develop a low income housing project.

I would like to say to the member, who is an NDP member, that in British Columbia there is an NDP government and it is not participating in the RRAP.

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 17 petitions.

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[English]

SOCIAL UNION

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):

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Mr. Speaker, the framework to improve the social union for Canadians was signed on February 4, 1999 by the Prime Minister of Canada, all but one of the premiers and the territorial leaders after more than a year of negotiations which were superbly co-chaired by Saskatchewan's intergovernmental affairs minister, the hon. Berny Wiens, and our colleague, the Minister of Justice and chair of the cabinet committee on the social union.

I am pleased and honoured to pay tribute in the House to the immense service that the member for Edmonton West has rendered to our country.

• (1505)

This framework agreement has been very well received across the country, but there is still concern about the fact that the Premier of Quebec did not sign the agreement. There is a fear that Quebecers may not reap the benefits of the agreement to the same extent as other Canadians. This is a legitimate concern which I would like to address here today.

[*Translation*]

Although the premier of my province did not sign this framework agreement, the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Hon. Jean Chrétien, has promised to make sure his fellow Quebecers benefit from it as much as possible. This is good news for Quebecers and for other Canadians. I will demonstrate this by examining a number of the major elements of this agreement.

The agreement comprises seven parts. The first sets out a number of principles committing governments to promoting greater fairness, equality and respect for diversity throughout Canada. The Government of Canada is naturally committed, within the limits of its constitutional powers and jurisdictions, to ensuring that Quebecers benefit from the promotion of these fundamental values as much as other Canadians.

The second part is about mobility. It commits governments to eliminating harmful or unreasonable barriers to the free movement of Canadians throughout Canada. The Government of Canada, as the only government elected by all Canadians, is determined that Canadians be considered Canadians everywhere in Canada. This is an essential element of Canadian citizenship. The objective is obviously not to have "one size fits all" public policies and government practices throughout the country. Rather, the objective is to give all Canadians equal access to our country's rich diversity.

The Government of Canada hopes that the Government of Quebec will participate in these negotiations on mobility in order for Quebecers to benefit fully from them.

The third part commits governments to keeping Canadians better informed and to acting with greater transparency. Each government will work to enhance its accountability to its constituents, known as

public accountability. But governments will not be accountable to one another.

The Government of Canada is committed to enhancing its accountability to Quebecers as it will to other Canadians.

The fourth part of the agreement commits governments to working in partnership while respecting their constitutional powers and jurisdictions. They will share information so as to learn better from one another. They will consult one another on their respective priorities and opportunities for co-operation. They will give one another advance notice prior to implementation of a major change and will work to avoid duplication while clarifying their roles and responsibilities. They are committed to more effective co-operation with aboriginal peoples throughout Canada.

The Government of Canada is committed to working in partnership with the Government of Quebec as it will with all other governments in Canada.

The fifth part commits governments, specifically the federal government, to using the federal spending power more co-operatively so as to improve social programs for Canadians. This means that with respect to any new Canada-wide initiatives in health care, post-secondary education, social assistance and social services that are funded through intergovernmental transfers, whether block-funded or cost-shared, first, the Government of Canada will no longer decide on its own to launch new initiatives. It will have to consult each province and territory and will consider proceeding only if it obtains the approval of at least a majority of provinces on objectives and an accountability framework.

Second, the Government of Canada will no longer impose programs, but will let each province determine its own programming for attaining the agreed objectives.

Third, the Government of Canada will no longer require that the total transfer be devoted to a given objective. A provincial government that, because of its existing programming, does not require the total transfer to fulfill the objective, may use the balance for other purposes in the same or a related priority area.

• (1510)

With respect to federal spending initiatives through direct transfers to individuals or organizations for health care, post-secondary education, social assistance and social services, the Government of Canada will no longer be able to implement new initiatives without first giving three months' notice and offering to consult the other governments. Those governments will have the opportunity to identify potential duplication and to propose alternative approaches to achieve flexible and effective implementation.

These undertakings set down significant new constraints on the federal government. They go beyond the provisions on limiting the

Routine Proceedings

federal spending power contained in the Meech and Charlottetown agreements. Independent observers in Quebec recognize the significance of these provisions.

The Government of Canada is committed to respecting these new requirements for co-operation and consultation and to ensuring that all governments benefit from this process, including the Government of Quebec.

The sixth part of the framework agreement on the social union commits governments to respecting a new dispute avoidance and resolution mechanism. This mechanism provides for joint negotiations and the participation of third parties for fact-finding or mediation. Even the Premier of Quebec has acknowledged that this new mechanism is a sign of progress. It will be available to him, as it is to all governments.

The seventh and final part provides for a full review of the framework agreement on the social union by the end of the third year of the agreement. Once the agreement has been put through its paces, it will be possible to identify its strengths and weaknesses and make improvements to it. The Government of Quebec will be invited to participate in this review. Quebeckers and all other Canadians will thus have an opportunity to express their views.

So this is what the Government of Canada intends to do to ensure that Quebeckers reap the full benefits of this agreement. To this end, it will offer its full co-operation to the Government of Quebec at every opportunity. Quebeckers want their governments to work together.

It is understandable that the Government of Quebec may feel that the progress achieved through the agreement is not enough. But it is reasonable to expect the Government of Quebec to accept the progress offered to it, even if it believes it is not enough.

Quebeckers, like other Canadians, must have full access to the immense potential of their country and to all of the opportunities for mutual assistance provided to them through the Canadian social union, one of the best in the world, which we will make even better through this agreement.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to point out to the minister, and especially to his speech writers, that it is the tradition in this House to not call members by name.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes is absolutely right. Our standing orders provide that members not refer to one another except by riding name or title.

I am sorry the Chair did not pick up on the slip the hon. member is referring to. I was involved in a discussion, therefore missing

what was said just then. Normally, the Chair would interrupt a member who makes this kind of slip to correct him or her.

• (1515)

[English]

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is no surprise to the House that I have had deep reservations on the social union agreement that was struck on February 4. I hate to rain on the minister's parade, but it is interesting that just six days after the fact, the C.D. Howe Institute has released a report by William Robson and Daniel Schwanen entitled "The Social Union Agreement: Too Flawed to Last". It states that while Canadians "might reasonably have expected to strike a deal that would have sorted out federal-provincial overlap, made federal-provincial transfers fairer and more transparent, and brought Quebec in as a more co-operative partner, the agreement reached on February 4 failed on all these counts".

The federal government can spend money in areas of provincial jurisdiction with the support of six provinces. If it is the six smallest provinces in Canada it could mean that as little as 15% of Canada's population will determine the programs. I suggest to the minister that the seven provinces representing 50% of the population would have been much more representative and much fairer to Canadians. This is the recommendation the Reform Party has made in the new Canada act.

Under this arrangement the federal government will still be able to initiate programs like the millennium scholarship fund with the exception that it now only has to give the provinces three months notice. It is not going to stop the interjurisdictional conflict that has existed in this country for the last 50 years.

While the richer provinces will be paying the lion's share for any of these new programs, it is the poorer provinces which can dictate what programs will be activated.

The C.D. Howe report also shows that residents of the three so-called have provinces, B.C., Alberta and Ontario, will lose money with the announcement of more dollars for health care because of the federal bias in the transfers to the provinces. It is not just with equalization where this happens, it is with the transfer of programs that the federal government has to the provinces.

For every additional dollar spent on health care the residents of Ontario and Alberta will have to contribute an additional \$1.30. To get that additional dollar British Columbians will have to contribute \$1.10. For the provinces of Ontario and Alberta for that extra \$100 the federal government transfers for health care they will in actuality only receive about \$60. One has to ask how this agreement managed to find signatures on it.

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As has also been reported, the proposed tax cuts in the federal budget will automatically result in less tax revenue for the provinces with the exception of Quebec. Where will there be actual dollars to put into health care?

The C.D. Howe report also mentions the concern of isolating Quebec. The minister made great efforts this afternoon to assure the people of Quebec they will be considered the same as all other Canadians. This agreement leaves two classes of Canadians, those in Quebec who will not be subject to the mobility and non-discrimination commitment, and those outside Quebec who will be.

For example, Quebec is the only province to charge higher tuition for out of province students. Quebec's failure to sign on will leave this situation as it stands. How long will the people outside Quebec tolerate Quebec students being able to pay the same tuition as their children in their provinces, while their children who want to study in Quebec will have to pay more?

As I mentioned last week, the Prime Minister missed a wonderful opportunity to sign a truly historic agreement that was all inclusive. The only reason for this missed opportunity was this government's reluctance to give up power, control and credit.

• (1520)

Members opposite want to get pictures of themselves handing out the cheques. What they fail to mention is that the money that is the basis of those cheques does not belong to the federal government. It belongs to the taxpayers of Canada.

Why do they fail to mention that? Why do they practice photo opportunity politics?

The report recommends that the provinces must seek ways of reopening the social union contract so that Quebec can sign on. Since the agreement contains provisions for re-evaluation after three years, an opportunity to establish more extensive opting out provisions balanced by more stringent obligations of transparency, portability of programs and credentials, and respect for the citizenship rights of all Canadians will arise shortly.

Preparing in advance would help to ensure that this accord's failings, Quebec's exclusion prominent among them, are not repeated. In other words, the federal government should have followed the Reform Party's new Canada act which gave good guidance in how Quebec could have signed on.

The official opposition hopes that a new spirit of federal-provincial co-operation has indeed occurred. However, rest assured we will be prominent in pointing out any and all instances where this government is letting down the Canadian people.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, February 4, 1999, nine provinces, two territories and the federal government signed an agreement on the social union, and all ten provinces and the two territories signed an agreement on health care.

At the time this announcement was made, some of the premiers apparently forgot what the Prime Minister of Canada said on referendum night, in November 1995. I would like to quote the Prime Minister, who said:

We have made to those Canadians who demonstrated their attachment to Quebec a commitment to change Canada. You called on Quebecers not to let Canada down. You have been heard. Now I call on you not to let them down.

Once again, nine premiers have entered into an agreement with the federal government without Quebec's consent. This feels strangely familiar in Quebec.

After last Thursday's announcement, Friday's press conference by three ministers of this government, and a string of public statements over the weekend, the federal government is at it again today, telling us it knows what is good for us and we should do as it says.

Despite the fact that none of the political parties on the Quebec scene—the Parti Québécois, the Quebec Liberal Party and Action démocratique—would have wanted to sign such an agreement, the federal government, in its great wisdom and superiority, tells us it understood what was best for us: a framework agreement.

This is the same government which has, in recent years, implemented a Plan B, made a reference to the Supreme Court, started such initiatives as the millennium scholarships, done a number on the provinces by cutting transfer payments for health care, and now it is touting itself as a great saviour.

What is there in this agreement? First of all, the great values and principles, with no reference whatsoever to the lead role played by the provinces in the health field. On the contrary, the door is being opened to the federal government's having a major planning role in social programs, health services and education.

Nowhere in the document, moreover, is there any firm financial commitment, even in the principles that relate to sectors so crucial to the future.

Third, this government, which had promised a commitment to a specific, unique status for Quebec, and so on and so forth, thumbed its nose at all that. Nowhere in the document, either, is there any recognition of Quebec's contribution to Canada as a society that is different, a people that is different. Now there is no longer any attempt at pretence. They do not even take the trouble to put this into the key principles behind this agreement.

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The second element is mobility within Canada, a point that surely led to passionate discussions. In this regard, the government introduces the possibility of barriers to mobility where reasonable. We know full well, and we heard it in a speech earlier, that outside Quebec there has long been criticism of the fact that there is a difference between tuition fees charged students from outside Quebec and those charged Quebec students. What they never say, however, is that these students still pay less than they would in their own province. Will that be called into question by such an agreement. That remains to be seen, it will depend on the reasonableness test.

• (1525)

It is clear, however, and the minister knows it for a fact, that at the discussion table the matter was raised by many provinces. It was even raised, on a few occasions, by another of the opposition parties here in the House. This is one of the areas some provinces want to attack in connection with Quebec. I could provide examples of other areas, but there is not enough time this afternoon to do so.

The third point is accountability. I am extremely surprised to see in this agreement that they are trying to impose accountability criteria on the provinces. As if they were not already accountable.

I would point out that the provinces, and the case in point, Quebec, are democratic. Each year, before the budget, there is a practice, known as budget votes, involving a parliamentary commission, a debate in the National Assembly and a public presentation by the media and the opposition parties. Accountability criteria already exist and they apply to provincial governments, which are accountable to their electors.

The federal government now wants to get involved in that and give itself the job of evaluating provincial accountability. The provinces will therefore get a report card from the federal government with a thinly veiled threat that funding is tied to the achievement of cross Canada objectives, something no Government of Quebec has ever supported or ever will.

Fourth, to work in partnership with Canadians. In the real world one must also walk the talk. It was just a year ago that the government introduced the millennium scholarship initiative. The same government that promised to take a co-operative approach unilaterally established this program to subsidize or grant scholarships to students on merit and performance, arguing that it was fulfilling a priority in education at the expense of the provinces' own priorities. Would Quebec's priorities in this respect not been different?

Now there will be no choice; \$80 million will be invested in this area every year and priorities will be set by the federal government, not by the Quebec government, the one responsible for managing

the whole education system. It is one thing to make grand statements of principle, it is another to put them into practice.

Fifth, and this is the crux of the problem, federal spending power, this constitutional plague. Every attempt to negotiate and come to an agreement inevitably stumbled over the issue of limiting federal spending power. The minister claims this goes much further than what was called for in the Meech Lake accord. He has a very biased view of reality and I will refresh his memory on a few points.

He uses one point in the Meech Lake accord to say that, in the future, federal spending power will be restricted even further than was provided for in Meech, but he fails to mention—and I will remind him a thing or two about Meech—that there was nothing in the Meech Lake accord about the provincial responsibilities for mobility, accountability and transparency.

Granted, in Meech the opting out provisions only applied to cost-shared programs. Everyone agrees on that. However, no provision explicitly recognized a legitimate federal role in health, education and welfare.

There was no mention of the federal government's power to spend through direct transfers to persons, which is a key feature of this agreement. This meant that Quebec could always assert that it did not recognize this federal power.

Moreover, in the Meech Lake accord there was a safeguard clause, which basically stated that this provision did not extend the legislative authority of parliament or the provincial legislatures.

I might add also that Mr. Bourassa, then Premier of Quebec and not a sovereignist, specified that the new provision had been drafted to address the right to opt out without recognizing or defining the federal spending power. To make very certain—we can see that he was wary too—we insisted that an escape clause be added to the effect that the legislative powers of the federal parliament would not be increased".

There are therefore several differences between this agreement and the Meech Lake agreement. There is also a new rule requiring the federal government to have the support of a majority of the provinces. The federal government will be able to go ahead with the support of six provinces. What does this actually mean? It means that the four maritime provinces, with two of the other smallest provinces, or 15% of the population, could impose Canada-wide standards on the social programs of Quebec, which represents 25% of the Canadian population.

There is something very wrong about this. Even advocates of the agreement admit that this is a major problem. This is a new low with respect to the criteria the federal government must meet in order to flex its spending power which, it should be said, it has extended unilaterally on more than one occasion, relying on the supreme court, the Criminal Code, national interest, and a series of

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supreme court rulings. Each time, they have encroached a little bit more.

Now, with this framework agreement, the provinces have cut them a little more slack.

• (1530)

There are two other points: a dispute settlement mechanism and a review of the agreement after three years. In light of all that, it is obvious that the Government of Quebec could not sign. I would like to read from an editorial that does not come from Quebec but rather from the *National Post*, which is hardly known for its sovereigntist slant. Journalist Andrew Coyne wrote as follows:

[English]

“Let us consider what the federal government has gained and what it has given up. It has gained first and foremost provincial acknowledgement of the legitimacy of its own involvement in the social policy”.

[Translation]

He recognizes that there has been a very clear gain for the provinces in this agreement. My time is running out, so I will cut to the conclusion. Having analysed all the federal government gains, he says this:

[English]

“You would think the premiers would never sign such a document. But with at least two and probably four facing elections this year, the allure of more money for health care proves irresistible. Money can buy happiness but it seems it can buy provinces”.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party sees the social union as a potentially positive development in the kind of co-operative federalism New Democrats have long advocated.

The NDP has long supported the principle of co-operative federalism. Most recently, an NDP panel of party members presented a report to our federal council endorsing a social union based on the co-operative development and enforcement of standards for nationwide social programs.

To the extent that the social union framework is an attempt to establish such a framework of co-decision with governments working together in building programs that meet the needs of Canadians, it is a first step in the right direction.

The NDP welcomes the fact that the development of new and better social policy appears to be front and centre on the public agenda. We hope this agreement will break the impasse that has blocked the introduction of urgently needed national programs such as the national child care program and the national home care program, not to mention a national pharmacare program, all of

which have been promised at one time or another by the party in power at the moment.

We believe therefore that the social union is a first step in the right direction toward a co-operative and less conflictual federalism where governments work together to meet the needs of Canadians in a context that affirms national standards and the continuing relevance of the federal spending power.

One of the biggest threats to Canada-wide social programs in recent years has been the federal government's unilateral withdrawal of funding. For instance, the federal share of health costs has fallen from 50% when medicare began to less than 15% now.

The social union framework comes with no specific offer of federal money nor a firm mechanism to ensure that the federal government will maintain its fair share of contributions to social programs over time.

The social union will only work if the federal government comes through with that commitment and if at the same time the agreement is amended to prevent unilateral action, particularly when it comes to unilateral reductions in federal contributions.

We believe therefore that the social union will only work if the federal government pays its fair share, is committed to do so in future years and is willing to forswear unilateral reductions in transfer payments.

New Democrats are pleased that the social union framework and the exchange of letters between the premiers and the Prime Minister have reaffirmed the principles of the Canada Health Act which protect publicly provided universal health care.

The social union framework must therefore be used to stop the trend in some provinces toward American style two tier health care.

The framework agreement contains numerous references to transparency, public accountability and the involvement of third parties. This is to be welcomed but the language is very vague.

Indeed the process of negotiating the social union was seriously lacking in transparency. We would like to register our own criticism and the criticism of many other Canadians about the way this agreement was arrived at in spite of whatever virtues it may contain. The process was seen by a great many Canadians, and rightly so, to be terribly lacking.

The federal NDP will therefore be watchful to see if governments follow through on these promises with effective measures on transparency and accountability.

On the important issue of having a watchdog to allow Canadians to assess whether both levels of government are meeting their obligations under the social union, the framework agreement is incomplete.

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The accountability framework for new social initiatives has not yet been agreed on. The agreement provides for individuals to be able to “appeal unfair administrative practices” but the mechanism is to be provided by the government providing the service itself, not an independent agency as proposed by the NDP panel report to our federal council a couple of weeks ago.

• (1535)

Canadians want to have a say about how well their social programs like health care are serving them. New Democrats will be watching carefully to make sure the social union develops in a way that allows them that kind of input.

Canada is a signatory to the United Nations Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights and other international covenants that set out Canadian social rights. The social union framework makes no reference to Canadian social rights, nor does it establish any mechanism to ensure that both levels of government are respecting them. In our view this is a serious shortcoming and something that perhaps could be remedied in future amendments or changes to the social union.

New Democrats want to see a social union that recognizes the social rights of Canadians and we will work toward this goal.

The framework agreement does declare with respect to aboriginal peoples that nothing in the agreement will take away from aboriginal rights and the signatory governments do commit themselves to work with aboriginal peoples “to find practical solutions to address their pressing needs”. We will insist that these consultations are meaningful and that they result in concrete action.

Finally, the Government of Quebec has not agreed to this social union framework and the social union will not be complete until all the provinces agree.

We do see in the social union a form of asymmetrical federalism by default. We do not find this to be as disturbing as others in the sense that we have always seen a form of asymmetrical federalism as that which is needed in order to address Canada’s national unity problems. We have shared the concern of others in the past about having to decentralize at the level of 10 provinces in order to meet this distinctive special needs of one province.

We see in the social union more by default than by design an aspect of asymmetrical federalism which at the same time creates a situation in which the needs of Quebecers as citizens of Canada will be met and they will not be left out of the benefits of the social union.

Perhaps federalism is working in mysterious ways. We see here the seeds of a new beginning. We hope they will come to fruition.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC): Mr. Speaker, I want to make a few comments before dealing directly with the social union framework. I listened to members from the other parties and I want to take a minute to comment on their remarks.

First, let me say that it is strange to hear Reformers say there are small and big provinces, and that the small provinces could not tell the big ones what to do. The Reformers are once again changing their mind. The provinces are all equal when Quebec or other issues are concerned, but when the issue is social union, the small provinces must not control the big ones. Such is Reform politics. It can change at any time, depending on which way the wind blows.

It is also strange to hear comments about Quebec being isolated. During the last federal election campaign, no other party isolated Quebecers more than the Reform Party did. People are becoming increasingly aware of this, on the eve of a weekend of activities that seems to be lacking on the organization side, on February 19, 20 and 21.

As for my Bloc Québécois friends, they perpetuate historical fears. They often talk about traditional demands. Our sovereignist friends have a historical fear, that of Quebec getting along with Ottawa. They talk about Quebec’s traditional demands, but this also has to do with traditional fears in Quebec because if ever Quebec gets along with Ottawa, they can kiss sovereignty goodbye. I think it is imperative that we get rid of this more extreme view as soon as possible.

Coming back to the framework agreement on social union signed last week, it was odd to have the minister talk about discussions over the past year. He knows very well that negotiations, often sectoral negotiations, on health, for instance, and even negotiations between the finance ministers, have been under way since 1995. That said, we can say that the federal government has been on board for the past year and the provincial government, Quebec in particular, for a few months.

There is one player missing in this social union deal today, but earlier on, there were actually two players missing, both Quebec and the federal government. Closer scrutiny may reveal that this deal was doomed to fail from the start, to a certain extent.

• (1540)

With respect to the agreement per se, I would have one request. This is very important to us. Shortcomings aside, no province, especially not Quebec, should have to pay a penalty. The fear in Quebec at present is that Quebecers would have to foot the bill after any confrontation between Quebec and the federal government.

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I think that the minister, the Prime Minister and the government, and hopefully the Premier of Quebec, can give us the assurance that there will be no such penalty. The people of Quebec and Canada should not be penalized because it was not their fault if a few people became stubborn at the last minute. I trust there will be far clearer commitments and that they will quit telling Quebec that it has to fall into step, and that, if it will not accept the carrot, then it will get the stick instead. That is not the right attitude.

This agreement can be readily summarized. We all know what an excellent writer the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs is, but this document could be put in just a few lines. There is an awful lot of stuff in here. There was much talk of mechanisms for settling disputes between the federal and provincial governments. It is high time we had a mechanism for settling such disputes, as they just keep on coming.

Point six refers to dispute avoidance and resolution. I am ready to bet anything, Mr. Speaker, that you cannot tell me what is going to bind the provincial and federal levels together in a solid, efficient, effective and credible process for resolving disputes.

It is said that this must be simple and timely. The government is left with maximum flexibility. The sectors must design processes appropriate to their needs, and provide for appropriate use of third parties. This could perhaps be used as a guideline. There is no dispute resolution mechanism. That is all we will have for the next three years. There will be talk, but no mechanisms.

In our 1997 electoral platform, we very humbly suggested a far firmer mechanism on which all provinces and the federal government agreed.

I suppose this was written because they had to have a document. They wanted more than just two sheets of paper. They said "Social union is something important. There must be a bit of meat to it". But when one turns the pages, it does not amount to much.

I understand the hair on the necks of our Bloc colleagues rising at the suggestion of accountability, but what does it mean? Not much. What is there in the departments' reports that cannot be found there. Perhaps they are referring to certain national standards, because there will have to be a comparison among provinces. That is not all right. When things go well in Quebec, a comparison is often made with Ontario. They say, "We are better than Ontario this month in job creation". But, when Ontario is better the following month, then it is different. It is the fault of the federal government.

Perhaps there is a fear of saying certain things, but we must keep Canadians informed and be transparent.

They mention a better partnership for Canadians. They talk about federal spending. The government will not let go its direct

spending power. It does not even want jurisdictional problems. It wants nothing to do with the matter. It wants to keep it all for itself. What we are saying is that this could increase the fear some provinces or all the provinces feel in connection with federal spending power, the direct spending power.

What is new in the agreement, is that now, for new programs, there is a new rule based on a majority of provinces. There will be jointly funded and managed programs. But who will pay what? No one is saying the federal government will pay 50% or 30%. No one is saying the provinces will pay 30% or 50% or 75%. Agreement will be reached at the request of six provinces.

I return to the remark by the party that will be doing group therapy in two weeks, to the effect that it is not true the little provinces are telling the big ones what to do. To the people of Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Manitoba, I say, the Reform Party is not for you. The same applies to Alberta. British Columbia is smaller than Ontario, and it will not tell Ontario what to do. That is a lot of hot air.

• (1545)

In conclusion, there is nothing much in that document. However, there is one element that I do want to point out, namely providing a framework for cost-shared programs. We will certainly support the federal government in that regard.

Anybody who looks at our party's 1997 platform will see that this is what we want. Providing a framework does not mean to restrict or to smother, but rather to put in place mechanisms for joint management, joint decision-making and, of course, joint financing. If a minor problem occurs, there should be a dispute settlement mechanism.

We are not afraid to do it with the United States and with the World Trade Organization, so why not do it among ourselves. We must have an efficient and credible dispute settlement mechanism that respects every government's jurisdictions. At some point, we may have one or two decision levels, which will allow the provinces and the federal government to act accordingly.

On this subject, we applaud the initiative taken by the federal government to consult with the provinces. It is a good thing. We are also pleased with the fact that the provinces will be able to discuss new cost-shared programs with the federal government so an agreement can be reached.

There is still much to be done, but it may be a baby step in the right direction. We agree on that point, but for the rest, it was worth a photo op with all the first ministers in their dark suits except one, the premier of Quebec. Again, Quebec shows its distinct character. I hope that the next photo op will be for something positive rather than negative.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-471, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (elimination of the waiting period in a natural disaster).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my colleague, the member for Drummond, for supporting this bill, which would eliminate the waiting period in a natural disaster.

What has motivated my colleague and me, as well as all the members from the Montérégie region, is last year's terrible ice storm. People who had paid EI premiums all their lives were denied benefits right when they needed them most.

With this bill, the inhabitants of Manitoba, Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean and the Montérégie region could now draw from this fund, and a rich one it is at \$20 billion, in the event of a natural disaster. That is when people need assistance.

I therefore urge the House to support this bill.

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

* * *

COMPETITION ACT

Mr. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-472, an act to amend the Competition Act (abuse of dominant position).

[English]

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this bill along with my colleague, the member for Cambridge, to amend the federal Competition Act with respect to the abuse of dominant position in the marketplace, particularly by large companies.

The report of the Liberal committee on gasoline pricing called for the Competition Act to be amended to ensure a level playing field in the retail sector of Canada's oil industry and greater protection for Canadian consumers.

The Liberal committee studying the proposed bank mergers also concluded that the Competition Act needs to be strengthened.

To many observers the current act is a toothless tiger that is unable to prevent anti-competitive acts in markets that are dominated by a few large players. In the food industry four of Canada's six major grocery retailers are currently proposing mergers. Large grocery companies charge food producers high listing fees in order

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for their products to gain access to supermarkets. As a result, Canadian consumers have less than half—

• (1550)

The Deputy Speaker: I know the hon. member will want to follow the rules and give a succinct explanation of the purpose of the bill, rather than a speech. Perhaps he could very briefly conclude his remarks.

Mr. Dan McTeague: Mr. Speaker, I just want to indicate that the tenor of the bill is certainly understood and I appreciate that. The time is right and therefore this bill seeks to do just that, protect Canadian consumers as well as competition.

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-473, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Young Offenders Act (capital punishment).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Souris—Moose Mountain for seconding the bill.

I believe that Canada should hold a binding referendum on capital punishment so that the Canadian people and not political parties decide whether it should be reinstated. A Reform government has pledged to do that. However the Liberals do not believe in allowing Canadians to exercise that much power.

Today I am introducing my bill to reinstate the death penalty for adults convicted of first degree murder. In addition, the bill also imposes a range of stiffer penalties for youth convicted of murder.

I introduced this bill three times in the 35th Parliament and am now introducing it for the second time in the 36th Parliament. On the two occasions on which I was fortunate enough to have the bill drawn, votable status was denied. If I am lucky enough to have it drawn once more I will call on the government to allow a free vote so that all MPs can vote the will of their constituents on this important issue.

Not all murderers—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member is going a little beyond a succinct explanation of the bill. While what he is saying, I am sure, is of great interest to all hon. members, perhaps he could quickly conclude his remarks because he is going far beyond what is normally permitted in a succinct explanation.

Mr. Jay Hill: Mr. Speaker, this is very succinct. Not all murderers deserve the death penalty, but in the most heinous cases the punishment must match the crime.

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

*Routine Proceedings***PETITIONS**

MARRIAGE

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present a petition from my constituents, largely from the city of Weyburn. The petitioners are very concerned about judicial rulings which could change the meaning of the word marriage which they hold very sacred.

MMT IN GASOLINE

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am honoured to present two petitions signed by residents of Grand Bend, Dashwood and Hensall who urge parliament to ban the gas additive MMT, noting that it is not used in Europe and most American states as it clogs emission control devices in vehicles.

MULTILATERAL AGREEMENT ON INVESTMENT

Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am honoured to present on behalf of my constituents two petitions.

The first petition is signed by 51 residents of Vancouver Island who are still very concerned about the introduction of a multilateral agreement on investment. They feel that all Canadians should have the opportunity to have full discussion on such an agreement before it is implemented.

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by 287 constituents, mostly from the town of Ladysmith. The petitioners are very concerned about recent cutbacks by Human Resources Development Canada. The petitioners ask for a full restoration of employment assistance services for the town of Ladysmith.

[*Translation*]

FIREARMS ACT

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the pleasure of submitting a petition signed by 25 residents of the Outaouais region.

• (1555)

The petitioners are asking Parliament to repeal the Firearms Act and to redirect the money spent on gun registration to more effective ways to reduce violent crime.

[*English*]

CANADIAN MERCHANT NAVY VETERANS

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present a petition

on behalf of Marianne and George Frederick and 30 others who want to draw attention to the House that since the end of World War II Canadian Merchant Navy veterans have sought to be accorded the same recognition and benefits as have been accorded to other Canadian war veterans and Canadian prisoners of war, and that to date no government has accorded to Canadian Merchant Navy veterans the recognition and benefits sought.

These veterans would like to be recognized as war veterans, to receive prisoner of war benefits, to receive compensation for years of denial of equality and to receive recognition on ceremonial days.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present a petition signed by a number of Canadians, including from my riding of Mississauga South, on the matter of human rights.

The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that violations of universal human rights continue to occur around the world, particularly in countries such as Indonesia.

The petitioners also acknowledge that Canada is recognized internationally as a champion of universal human rights.

The petitioners therefore pray and call on parliament to continue to condemn violations of human rights and to seek to bring to justice those responsible for such abuses.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition containing over 20 pages of signatures from people who are essentially calling for international sanity.

They cite the stockpiling of over 30,000 nuclear weapons internationally. They cite the threat they pose to humanity and the environment. They point out that the only route to safety is the elimination of these nuclear weapons. They also point out Canadian obligations through the UN and International Court of Justice.

They therefore pray that parliament support the immediate initiation and conclusion by the year 2000 of an international convention which will set out a binding timetable for the abolition of all nuclear weapons.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*English*]

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that, because of the ministerial statement, Government Orders will be extended by 42 minutes.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN PUBLISHERS ADVERTISING SERVICES ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-55, an act respecting advertising services supplied by foreign periodical publishers, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: There are 22 amendment motions on the order paper at report stage of Bill C-55, an act respecting advertising services supplied by foreign periodical publishers.

Motions Nos. 1 to 21 will be grouped for debate, but they will be voted on as follows:

The vote on Motion No. 1 will apply to Motions Nos. 2 to 21.

[*English*]

Motion No. 22 will be debated and voted on separately.

I shall now propose Motions Nos. 1 to 21 to the House.

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, Ref.) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 1.

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 2.

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 3.

Motion No. 4

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That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 4.

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 5.

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 6.

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 7.

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 8.

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 9.

Motion No. 10

That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 10.

Motion No. 11

That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 11.

Motion No. 12

That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 12.

Motion No. 13

That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 13.

Motion No. 14

That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 14.

Motion No. 15

That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 15.

Motion No. 16

That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 16.

Motion No. 17

That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 17.

Motion No. 18

That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 18.

Motion No. 19

That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 19.

Motion No. 20

That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 20.

Motion No. 21

That Bill C-55 be amended by deleting Clause 21.

● (1600)

He said: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca for seconding the motions. I am pleased to debate at report stage the amendments to Bill C-55, the magazine bill as everyone knows it. The bill is really not about culture; it is about trade.

Bill C-55 has created a life of its own and is about to put Canadian jobs at risk. In some ways the bill has got out of hand over the past several months because of numerous statements made by many parties which have not helped matters. It has the potential to threaten many Canadian jobs.

Today the heritage minister indicated that she will amend the bill, but she could do a lot better. She could withdraw the bill at this time. The heritage minister's amendment is redundant. It does

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nothing. Bill C-55 is still government legislation. It is still on-stream.

This is the reality of the amendment: Once Bill C-55 passes through both houses of parliament it will qualify as an action under article 2005 of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. Under subarticle 2005(2) the United States "may take measures of equivalent commercial effect in response to actions".

My main message is that the minister's amendment is legally meaningless. With or without it—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member knows that we are debating Motions Nos. 1 to 21 which he has moved and not Motion No. 22 which is in Group No. 2 and which will be debated later this day or whenever we complete the debate on the first group of amendments. I suggest that he confine his remarks to the group we are discussing at the moment.

Mr. Inky Mark: Mr. Speaker, I will certainly do that. Regardless her amendment is still redundant.

Trade is really the issue in Bill C-55. Our countries share a common boundary, the longest unguarded boundary in the world. We share a common continent. We move freely about across borders. Our friendship is a model for others in the world to follow. Yet at times we tend to forget all of this.

I will try to make my remarks brief. I will do a quick recap on why I believe this ill founded magazine bill needs to be deleted in its entirety. The bill needs to be taken back to the drawing board. It was ill-conceived and very one sided.

The bill represents the views of publishers. When the bill was drawn up the advertisers were not even consulted. One-half of the equation was not even consulted. That omission is enough to withdraw the bill. It is so unfortunate that an industry is divided by the bill. The magazine industry is divided into two camps: advertisers versus publishers. Everyone knows that.

Who did the government consult? It was people like François de Beaubien and Ted Rogers. Do these people need help to defend Canadian culture? I do not think so. What we have today is that publishers support Bill C-55 and advertisers oppose it vehemently.

• (1605)

The bill is a thinly veiled attempt to circumvent two unfavourable rulings Canada received at the World Trade Organization tribunal. How can a government bring on good legislation without consulting all the stakeholders in the industry? I believe this magazine bill is a good example of bad legislation. It was poorly researched and poorly put together.

We have always been told that Canadians tend not to read Canadian magazines. The fact is that Canadians do buy Canadian. Canadians buy magazines that are published in Canada. Statistics

have proven that 75% of all magazines read are received by control circulation and 94% of these are Canadian owned. In other words they are owned and published in Canada. This proves one thing, that Canadian readers prefer and buy Canadian magazines.

Let us put this debate in perspective. Let us take a closer look at our trade with our closest ally and trading partner. Over \$1 billion of trade takes place daily across our borders. Canada is the western world's most trade dependent nation. Some 40% of Canada's gross domestic product is derived from trade and 83.5% of all our goods and services are exported to the United States. Our economic health is directly related to our U.S. partner. Can we imagine the value of our loonie without our trade with the United States? Our United States exports rose 10% in 1997. Meanwhile our Asian market shrank by one-third.

According to Nesbitt Burns the reality is that we are more reliant than ever on the United States. We really have only one trading partner, the United States of America. Our Japanese market is number two but it is currently on its knees. The reality check is that Canada's total trade with the United States is 83.5%.

Do we need a trade war? Do we want a trade war with our best trading partner? No. Do the steelworkers of Hamilton want a trade war? Do the textile workers of Montreal want a trade war? I am sure the millworkers of B.C. and the maritimes do not want a trade war. Do farmers of Canada want a trade war? Who wants a trade war? Perhaps the heritage minister does, especially when she puts her culture protection bill ahead of the steelworkers in her home town.

Perhaps we need to look at how much money we are talking about in the bill in terms of advertising dollars. I am told a measly \$250 million of advertising is at stake.

Let us look at what is really at stake for the country. As I said earlier, \$1 billion is exchanged daily between our two countries. This tells me that on an annual basis the total is about \$350 billion. Can we put our country at risk for \$250 million? As François de Beaubien said, that is several hours out of a day's worth of trade. There are \$350 billion at stake. Only a fool would gamble on these types of numbers. We would think that the international trade minister would do a risk assessment before echoing his full support for Bill C-55.

According to law professor Jamie Cameron of Osgoode Hall Law School, irrespective of any trade issue Bill C-55 should be opposed because it is an unreasonable limit on free speech and press freedom. Furthermore it impinges on property rights and freedom of contract as guaranteed by the Canadian bill of rights.

• (1610)

How real is this threat of retaliation? Let us listen to the people of Hamilton. They know what it will be like if the steel industry is

hit. One industry towns like Hamilton take this threat seriously. Dofasco steel is telling the Hamilton MP to drop Bill C-55. Stelco has made the same plea. Steelworkers of Hamilton are sending the heritage minister the same message, to drop Bill C-55.

Why is the heritage minister willing to sacrifice the steelworkers of her home town? It is to protect the big magazine publishers like Télémédia and Rogers Communications. How many steel jobs would be put at risk in Hamilton?

There are many other ways to promote Canadian culture. The heritage minister needs to take a lesson from the defence minister who said:

Perhaps in the new digital world policies of cultural promotion make more sense than traditional policies of protection.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, given the number of amendments to Bill C-55 tabled by the Reform Party I thought it would be useful to highlight their substantive character.

The member who just spoke made an interesting commentary, but I think the most interesting part of his intervention was that in his view and the view of his party more consultation should take place between, as he put it, all the stakeholders.

That statement says to me that there is a number of issues which have to be worked out in the bill and there are some issues to which they take exception. As a result of this need for Canadians to continue to consult with the stakeholders on all sides, obviously there are some issues that are of importance.

What are those issues? The issues of importance which reflect the need for additional consultation are highlighted and exposed for all Canadians to see in the 21 amendments proposed by the Reform Party.

Motion No. 1 would eliminate clause 1. It is a very well crafted, effective motion to delete the first clause of the bill without explanation and without being addressed by the member in his comments, which is the purpose of the debate that is going on right now.

We understand that it is okay for members to sometimes demonstrate a point. I was hopeful and listened to the Speaker read the motions. We came across the Reform Party's important, constructive and insightful Motion No. 2 which would delete clause 2.

It has a lot of parallel to the first important motion that the Reform Party tabled on Bill C-55. It provides important insight into why it wanted additional consultations with all stakeholders, as the the hon. member so eloquently put it, advertisers, publishers, Canadians and so on.

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If we go forward with the bill, according to the Reform Party there will be a trade war and we will lose \$1 billion a day in trade. Suddenly all ties with the United States will be totally severed and Canada will risk losing \$350 billion of estimated trade in a year when the impact of the bill on Canada is about \$250 million. With that I think I could understand the concern and the justification for Motion No. 2 in Group No. 1 of this report stage.

• (1615)

I was hopeful we would get a bit more insight as to the specific concerns and why we would have these consultations when we got to Motion No. 3, tabled by the Reform Party for Bill C-55.

Motion No. 3 was somewhat different in that it referred to clause 3 of the bill rather than the previous two clauses and the amendment tabled by the Reform Party to improve this bill was to delete clause 3. A pattern was developing. I had heard the member clearly state on behalf of the Reform Party that more consultations were needed on this bill.

Bill C-55 obtained first reading in the House on October 8 and second reading on November 3, 1998. The committee report was presented to the House on December 2, 1998. There has been quite substantial dialogue and opportunity to deal with Bill C-55 by all hon. members, whether it be at the different stages of this bill or indeed at committee which dealt with it. As a result of all those consultations, as a result of all the discussions with all these so-called stakeholders from all parties, we came up with Motion No. 4, which was delightfully refreshing. It was to delete clause 4.

I was really hoping that as a result of the member's serious concern the trade position with the United States would evaporate in a moment should Bill C-55 proceed because it only involved \$250 million and that this was outrageous and a serious risk. It was so important to the member that we not take this terrible risk of moving forward with Bill C-55 that we came up with Motion No. 5, which is the parallel and by now I have caught on totally.

Motion No. 5 said that clause 5 of the bill should be deleted. Even the Speaker at the time was becoming a little concerned that this pattern would extend to a point in which the House's time might be possibly frustrated, perhaps even wasted with frivolous discussions of which amendment was deleting which clause. I suppose we should be thankful that there are at least rules in the House that allow us to deem things to have been done.

If we had proceeded the way the Reform Party wanted on this extremely important bill which was to evaporate all trade, over \$350 billion of annual trade with the United States, we would have had to stand in our places and listen to 21 motions, each saying delete a different clause of the bill.

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This is the substantive contribution of the Reform Party to a bill it suggests will somehow eliminate all trade with the United States.

I do not want to abuse the opportunity or the privilege to bring these items up but I want as a backbench member of parliament simply to express my disappointment that the time of the House would somehow be taken up by such a frivolous approach to an important bill.

• (1620)

We have important amendments that are going to be considered by this place. They are not going to be considered until we deal with 21 amendments on behalf of the Reform Party which simply say delete a clause without explanation, without members prepared to speak on those motions.

This is contemptuous of the House. It is an insult to members of parliament who are here to deal with the important legislation of the day. This is an important bill. This bill has to do with the cultural sovereignty of Canada. It has to do with important issues within the magazine industry. It affects some groups differently from others and we must understand that. We have to make decisions.

The Reform Party is having a conference very soon. Something it will have to deal with is a report done by one of its own members from Edmonton who basically said the problem with the Reform Party is that this philosophy of populism does not work in Canada. Populism says let the people tell you where you want to go and the Reform Party will lead you there.

I have risen to speak in favour of Bill C-55 at report stage of the first grouping because I support the bill. I am insulted and disappointed that the Reform Party would not give respect to the House by introducing 21 frivolous motions.

* * *

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS ACT

BILL C-65—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the second reading of Bill C-65, an act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act. This is the act to provide funding to provinces.

[*Translation*]

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I therefore give notice that a minister of the crown will propose, at the next sitting of the House, a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours

for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stages.

This applies to Bill C-65.

Some hon. members: Shame.

* * *

FOREIGN PUBLISHERS ADVERTISING SERVICES ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-55, an act respecting advertising services supplied by foreign periodical publishers, as reported (with amendments) from a committee, and Motions Nos. 1 to 21.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester, Transport.

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to participate in this debate today on Bill C-55, an act respecting advertising services supplied by foreign periodical publishers.

The Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage having reviewed this bill clause by clause, we are now proceeding to consideration of the bill at report stage. My hon. colleague from Dauphin—Swan River has introduced 21 motions in amendment designed to delete clauses 1 through 21 of Bill C-55.

To ensure greater efficiency in the House, the Chair has grouped these 21 motions together. I will therefore use the time allotted to me to discuss the Bloc Quebecois' position on this bill.

First of all, the Bloc Quebecois is against the 21 Reform motions as they boil down to withdrawing the bill.

The Bloc Quebecois has supported this bill from the outset because it acknowledges as legal and legitimate the right of any people to protect its culture against an overly aggressive invader. It is therefore no wonder that the Bloc Quebecois is working toward Quebec's sovereignty, since the Canadian government will not recognize the people of Quebec.

The battle waged at this time in Canada goes far beyond the periodical publishing industry. Two major principles are at stake.

First, we must assert the rights provided for in the trade agreements we have signed. Otherwise, it would be like saying that all these rights, including the cultural exemption in NAFTA, have no true value without the United States' approval.

• (1625)

Second, if Canada does not defend its rights, it would be tantamount to letting Washington dictate our country's economic and cultural policies.

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This is nothing new. In all the trade negotiations in which Canada took part, successive Canadian governments stated clearly, without beating around the bush, that Canadian culture was not negotiable. Yesterday, in a statement to the media, François de Gaspé Beaubien said, and I quote:

We have obtained a cultural exemption under the free trade agreement and under NAFTA, and we have not assumed any obligation under the WTO agreements that would restrict Canada's right and ability to implement these policies. In the magazine industry, the United States have not obtained the right to have access to our advertising services market, and we are under no obligation to grant them that access.

What is the purpose of this bill? Essentially, this bill is to prevent American advertising from being replaced with Canadian advertising in split run editions of American magazines sold on the Canadian market. This policy has been in place for more than 30 years, and split run editions of American magazines such as *Time* and *Reader's Digest* are protected under the bill's grandfather clause.

This is not about prohibiting imports of foreign magazines into Canada. After this bill is passed, nothing will be changed. Foreign periodicals will still be imported and will still take up 80% of shelf space in English Canada, and account for 50% of magazine sales in English Canada. This bill is aimed at preventing unfair competition by dumping advertising charges.

The Bloc Québécois understands the concerns expressed by many Quebec and Canadian businessmen, who do not want to get caught in the crossfire when they are not directly involved in the periodicals industry.

The Bloc Québécois believes that the United States is using these businesses to encroach upon states' rights to pass measures favourable to their economy.

These industries deserve to be given information by the federal government on the mechanisms governing international trade so that their fear of reprisal will be replaced by informed knowledge of the mechanisms for handling international trade disputes.

The Bloc Québécois also believes that the rules of international trade apply to the US as much as they do to any other country on this planet. The Bloc Québécois therefore calls upon the federal government to continue its negotiations with the US representatives, in order to reach a negotiated agreement to protect the magazine industry.

[*English*]

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to assure all members of the House that the NDP's lukewarm support of Bill C-55 still holds. It is possibly now stronger due to the bullying noises coming from Washington.

We still believe the bill is too weak because it does not contain provisions to improve the situation for Canadian magazines. We still believe the main premise of the bill is false, that the cultural protections offered under NAFTA or by the WTO are inadequate.

The WTO does not protect culture and the FTA and NAFTA continue to remain untested with fatally flawed exemptions for culture. We know that half a loaf is better at this time than no loaf and therefore we support the bill.

A lot seems to have happened on the volume front concerning Bill C-55 since the heritage committee heard witnesses on the bill. The Reform Party has decried this bill, saying we have no need to protect culture, that we should simply promote it.

We are debating today the 21 amendments proposed by the Reform Party, amendments that tersely delete ever section of the bill until nothing is left. The amendments to methodically delete every trace of the bill seems to reflect its approach to Canadian culture, methodically and clinically delete, delete, delete.

The irony of this position is that Reform then puts forward budget plans which would inevitably decimate the Department of Canadian Heritage, the only mechanism in place to promote our culture. The Reform Party position smacks of hypocrisy and of an opportunism that I believe comes painfully close to being anti-Canadian.

• (1630)

The Americans have turned up the volume by threatening, albeit verbally, to countervail steel, plastics, lumber, textiles and God knows whatever else if we pass this law. This kind of bullying is not unique. The committee heard similar threats coming from the New York based president of *Time* magazine at the hearings. He suggested that we were preparing to confiscate his property without compensation and compared the Canadian government to some old-style communist regime. I must admit that this is the first time I have ever heard this particular criticism levelled at this government.

What the Reform Party and the Americans believe is that this is not about culture but that it is about money. They think that magazines, and music, and books, and videos, and films, and paintings, and fragile artifacts are not to be valued as culture, they are goods to be priced for sale. They do not believe that writers are creators, but are potential profit centres only if marketed properly.

I can categorically say that Canadian culture is not a commodity. Margaret Atwood is not a soap pad. The Group of Seven is not an international trading cartel. The Canadian book publishing industry, a group of visionary business people who have made our great writers a possibility, should not be allowed to be shipped south as if it were a roll of newsprint.

The fact that only 2% of Canadian film screens show Canadian films is not a reflection of the quality of our films, because they are

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excellent. Instead it is the reflection of the fact that Hollywood spends more money promoting a single film than most Canadian filmmakers will ever have to produce their films in their lifetimes.

Sadly, this government and the official opposition continue to bow at the altar of Jack Valenti and his Hollywood version of reality.

Our culture is constantly under attack from south of the border. We as parliamentarians have a duty to stand in our places and say that we are different.

We need a government which will stand up for our creators, not reluctantly pick and choose cultural winners and losers.

I can see the talk around the current cabinet table: "This time we will hold the line on magazines but we will let books go. This time we will have the CRTC promote Canadian content through the CBC but we will kill the mother corp with underfunding. We will promote access to Canadian national museums, but we will abandon the regional and local museums. We will talk tough on trade but do nothing to fix the problems which exist in our current trade agreements. In other words, we will play both sides of every cultural issue".

This may be the Liberal way of politics, but our cultural legacy deserves the full support of the Canadian government, not half a loaf.

Culture is something which Canadians have a right of access to, not simply because some American conglomerate has decided that it may be marketable, but because it has intrinsic value.

We should promote, but we also have a responsibility to protect.

I call upon this government not only to draw the line at magazines, but also to get active protecting our culture across the board. Do not continue to stand idly by while our book publishers are sent offshore with the obligatory nod from the Minister of Industry. Do not further gut the CBC and the NFB to shuffle funds to Canadian film producers. Take action on allowing Canadians to see their own product by bringing Canadian content to our screens. Do not listen to voices who believe there is a price for culture but ignore the value of culture.

Do not believe that the Minister of Canadian Heritage is the great protector of culture until the title is earned. I would say that the jury is still out on this minister's legacy.

Again, Bill C-55 is something that we will support in the House, but we continue to hold our praise for the minister and her efforts on Canadian culture.

Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise before the House to once again speak in favour of Bill C-55, the foreign publishers advertising services act.

Bill C-55 is a very important piece of legislation. Besides providing much needed support to our Canadian magazine publishers, it also sends a clear message to all Canadians that we are intent on protecting and maintaining our cultural sovereignty in the midst of ever increasing pressure from foreign influences.

• (1635)

[*Translation*]

A desire to protect our cultural integrity has always been a major Canadian priority in all business discussions.

[*English*]

The former Progressive Conservative government was always very concerned with the protection of our Canadian cultural industries which is why during the free trade negotiations we ensured that all cultural industries were exempt from the final free trade agreement. This exemption was also included in the North American free trade agreement.

[*Translation*]

Over the past three decades, successive Canadian governments have brought in legislation aimed at ensuring that Canadian publishers have sufficient advertising to maintain their competitive edge in the Canadian market.

[*English*]

The Canadian publishing industry has prospered during this period specifically because of these initiatives. According to Statistics Canada, in 1996-97 there were 1,166 publishers producing some 1,552 periodicals with a total circulation of 539 million copies. The result is that we have revenues reaching the billion dollar mark plus 7,000 full time and part time employees.

Canadian publishers rely on advertising revenue for anywhere from 65% to 100% of their income. Therefore, it is easy to see why it is imperative that we intervene to protect them against the potential of any unfair competition by our U.S. competitors.

The government introduced Bill C-55 to help protect our Canadian magazine industry following last October's World Trade Organization ruling against Canadian imposed excise tax and customs tariffs on split-run magazines entering from the U.S. It is very important to note that in its decision, the WTO was not questioning Canada's right to protect its cultural industries; it objected to a policy that directly targeted U.S. magazines. Rather than target U.S. magazines directly, Bill C-55 will focus its attention on advertising services.

Essentially, Bill C-55 will restrict the sale of advertising directed at the Canadian market to Canadian publications. It should be noted that U.S. magazines can still sell Canadian advertising in their magazines so long as these advertisements appear throughout their

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North American publications. They cannot be solely targeted toward the Canadian market.

Some people might be wondering why we should impose measures to protect our Canadian magazine industry. There are a number of very important reasons, notwithstanding the fact that each year the Canadian magazine industry pumps millions of dollars into our economy creating employment opportunities for thousands of Canadians.

For one thing, many of Canada's most distinguished writers have graced our magazines with thoughtful and entertaining stories about people, places and things that have helped make our Canadian culture unique. More specifically however, Canada's magazine industry plays an important cultural role in helping us to define who we are as a people and what we stand for as a nation.

A culture defines one's beliefs and values. We are not automatically born with a culture. We might be born in a culture but culture is something we learn. We need Canada's magazine industry to prosper so that future generations of young Canadians have the opportunity to learn and appreciate the value of our own distinct culture, one that is envied throughout the world.

From the very beginning, the Reform Party has opposed any kind of legislation that would call for the protection of Canada's unique culture. Obviously it does not believe we have a culture worth protecting. Well I believe and the Progressive Conservative Party believes that Canadian culture is worth protecting.

When Canada was rallying together to show the people of Quebec that we very much wanted them to remain part of this great country, where was the Reform Party? Its leader was busy in private discussions with the former American ambassador.

[Translation]

More recently, the Reform Party went to the U.S. to hire a kind of guru to help cultivate MPs' minds.

• (1640)

[English]

The Reform Party's heritage critic has introduced 21 motions on Bill C-55, none of which contains any constructive improvements. All the Reform Party wants is the total cancellation of the bill. Is the Reform Party blindly following our American friends while overlooking our own cultural needs?

For months Canadians have been hearing stories about possible U.S. retaliation directed toward such Canadian industries as lumber and steel if Bill C-55 is allowed to become law. Naturally we take these threats very seriously. Canadians are naturally concerned, as I am, of any possible sanctions that might be imposed against any Canadian company.

That is why as the Progressive Conservative heritage critic I made a point of asking on a number of occasions questions in committee, precisely to get assurances from the representatives of the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Department of Justice that Canada's industries would be protected if indeed the U.S. brought challenges before the WTO or NAFTA. I received these assurances from departmental staff, as well as from the minister herself during yesterday's question period. As the minister stated, Bill C-55 respects every one of our national and international obligations.

Canada has one of the most open markets in the world for imported magazines. Imports account for 50% of magazine sales in Canada and over 80% of newsstand space according to the Magazine Publishers Association.

This bill is not going to close the door on imported magazines. It is going to allow our Canadian publications an opportunity to continue to compete with other foreign magazines in a very competitive industry.

In April 1993 the first Canadian edition of *Sports Illustrated* successfully circumvented import prohibitions by electronically transmitting its magazine to a printer in Canada. Essentially this opened the door for unfair competition from U.S. publishers who began producing split-run advertising editions of their magazines, thus reaping the benefits of repackaging the editorial content of their U.S. editions with Canadian advertising which they could sell for considerably less than their Canadian competitors. This essentially is dumping of U.S. magazines in the Canadian market.

Advertising has changed more in the last 10 years than it had in the previous 60. This is mostly because of new technology and changing markets. That is why any threat derived through unfair predatory practices must be challenged. Canadian publishers need our support to maintain their competitive edge in this new global economy.

[Translation]

Bill C-55 may not be perfect, but it is my belief that we must be strong as a nation and protect our Canadian culture. That is why I will be supporting this bill.

[English]

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to these amendments today.

It is always a pleasure to remind the ruling party that the government's primary duty to the citizens of Canada is to defend their fundamental and natural rights and not to strip them of these rights by misguided legislation such as Bill C-55.

I have a little aside before I go any further. The same government that pretends to protect Canadian culture would not allow Canadians to indicate on their census forms that they were Canadian. Figure that one out.

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Bill C-55 violates fundamental and natural rights including freedom of expression, freedom of contract and property rights. Bill C-55 also violates the charter of rights and freedoms and the Canadian bill of rights. Additionally, Bill C-55 has violated at least two international treaties including the 50-year old Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the North American free trade agreement.

Why were amendments not introduced to deal with these colossal oversights? It is because of politics.

• (1645)

When the government can run roughshod over individual rights and freedoms on the false premise of protecting our culture there is something sick with our system of government. I have said more than a dozen times in this House that if we do not change the system we will not change much else.

Bill C-55 should be scrapped, which is what the amendments of my colleague intend to do. It should not be just amended, it should be completely done away with. Bill C-55 makes it unlawful for Canadians and Canadian businesses, small and large, to advertise in foreign magazines sold in Canada, especially those magazines published in the United States.

How is this legislative sledgehammer supposed to protect Canadian culture? By prohibiting Canadians from advertising in American magazines. The bill actually guarantees that Canadians will only see American ads in American magazines, not Canadian ads.

Even a foreign magazine that has published only articles about Canada could not sell ads to Canadians. That is a long leap of Liberal logic that is bound to make everyone shake their heads in amazement.

Farmers cannot sell the grain they have grown with their own hands on their own land because of a government enforced monopoly. Now the government is taking away the freedom of Canadians to advertise where they think it will do the most good for them, for their companies, their employees and their shareholders.

Section 2 of the charter of rights and freedoms states:

Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:

(b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;

Professor Jamie Cameron of Osgoode Hall Law School says that this fundamental freedom includes advertising. The charter states that everyone has these fundamental freedoms; everyone it seems but Canadians who want to advertise in the magazines of their choice.

Through Bill C-55 the government takes away these fundamental freedoms for Canadian citizens. This will undoubtedly be the subject of a charter challenge. Has the government factored this

into its cost of implementation for this bill? Has it considered what will happen when this unconstitutional law is struck down? How much will it cost us?

Violation of the freedom of expression is the first reason this bill should be scrapped rather than amended.

Last December 10 was the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations, which included ratification by the Government of Canada. Article 19 of the universal declaration states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression. This right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers".

Bill C-55 prohibits the imparting of information and ideas through any media. There it is for the world to see. Canada chastises other countries for violating fundamental human rights but it is prepared to violate article 19 of this international treaty which it signed 50 years ago. Violating such a fundamental freedom guaranteed in an international agreement will diminish respect for Canada and Canadians, and this is the second reason that Bill C-55 should be withdrawn rather than amended.

Bill C-55 violates another international agreement, namely the NAFTA. I would think that the minister of heritage and her cabinet colleagues would have learned their lesson when they lost the fight and millions of dollars when they arbitrarily tried to ban MMT in 1997.

Members of the House will recall that the Ethyl Corporation of the United States took the government to court because Canada had breached its obligations under the NAFTA. The NAFTA established a compensation process for investors harmed by a government failure to meet its NAFTA obligations.

Just like Ethyl Corporation, American magazine publishers will claim compensation for the advertising dollars they will lose as a direct result of the Canadian government's arbitrary prohibition of advertising from their Canadian customers. It is estimated that the loss to American magazine publishers will be in the neighbourhood of \$250 million. This is money that the Canadian taxpayer cannot afford and that the government should not put at risk. That is the third reason Bill C-55 should be abolished and not amended.

Property rights protect the freedom of individuals because they allow people to make their own decisions about how to make the best use of their existing possessions, including their labour and the fruits of their labour. In the long run the right to make one's own decisions about one's life, one's work and one's business is the foundation of dignity and freedom.

• (1650)

In order to have property rights individuals must have freedom of contract, or economic liberty as it is called. Bill C-55 takes

away Canadians' freedom to enter into contracts with whomever they choose. Bill C-55 takes away everyone's fundamental freedom of contract and, as a consequence, violates the property rights guaranteed in the Canadian bill of rights. That is the fourth reason Bill C-55 should be killed rather than amended.

None of these four reasons have been addressed by the government or any of the other parties that are criticizing us for our stand on this. I wish they would address these four concerns.

Let me summarize why Bill C-55 should be killed, scrapped and abolished. First, it violates the charter of rights and freedoms. Second, it violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Third, it violates the North American Free Trade Agreement. Fourth, it violates the Canadian bill of rights.

Throughout Canadian history it has been taken for granted that we have freedom of speech and property rights, including freedom of contract. In fact people have come to this country because Canada is known for protecting these fundamental freedoms.

These freedoms have provided a foundation for the culture that has developed on this continent, especially in Canada. Canadians value their property rights and their freedom of speech. They see them as being part of their heritage. For the government to use protection of culture as an excuse for this bill is ridiculous. Any thinking person would realize that this bill does the very opposite. This bill flies in the face of what Canadians value most. It does not protect their culture, it undermines it. The speech I have just given makes that absolutely clear.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am speaking in support of the amendments put forward by our heritage critic today for a number of reasons. Before taking a look at the issue on a clause by clause basis, I will give a broad overview, probably best contained most recently in an article by Peter Cook in the Wednesday, February 3, 1999 edition of the *Globe and Mail*.

In part he writes:

Just as the Canadian government thinks its needs a new weapon, Bill C-55, to safeguard a threatened cultural sector, the magazine industry, so Europeans are taking an increasingly nationalistic line with U.S. cultural "imperialism" as it applies to them.

In this article he is speaking about something the French were doing.

The article continues:

The current big transatlantic trade fight is not over culture, but bananas. Still, it is worth noting that the tactics pursued by the United States against Canada on magazines

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and Europe on bananas are the same—threatening massive retaliation against many unrelated products. And the Europeans have had culture clashes with the Americans before and expect them in future. At one stage, the French held up the Uruguay Round of trade talks in an attempt to limit the activities of U.S. entertainment companies. So there is keen interest in what Canada is proposing to do on magazines and whether, by restricting advertising, it can succeed in making Bill C-55 compatible with world trade rules. Where Ottawa leads on cultural sovereignty, Europe may follow.

The larger question, however, is whether erecting cultural barriers works.

Of course that is the question the Reform Party poses. In answering the question, our answer is no.

Mr. Cook continues:

While it may satisfy those who worry about the powerlessness of the nation state, Europe's experience, and Canada's too, is that publication bans, audio-visual quotas and content rules raise costs and deter quality. Subsidies to European films cost \$600 million a year; increasingly, they help film makers make films that win awards at festivals before going on to bomb at the box office. Meanwhile, far from encouraging local talent, television quotas have led to a profusion of European soap operas and game shows that are instantly recognizable as cheap U.S. look-alikes.

The issue for Canadian magazines or French films or Irish music is whether competition, and the public interest, is best served by this. And that, to judge by the European record, is doubtful.

• (1655)

This bill congers up a number of spectres. I take a look at clause 4. Subclause 4(1) states that the minister may cause any investigation that the minister considers necessary to be made into an alleged supply of advertising services in contravention of section 3.

Now we are going to have magazine cops going around making sure that those ads are just exactly what the minister wants.

Subclause 4(2) states that the minister may designate any person to carry out an investigation under this section and shall furnish them with a certificate of that designation in the form that the minister may specify, and that the investigator shall, upon request, produce this certificate to any person in charge of a place under investigation.

Subclause 5(1) states that an investigator may, under a warrant issued under section 487 of the Criminal Code, with any modifications that the circumstances require, enter any place and make any investigation that the investigator considers necessary.

Not being a lawyer, I went to a lawyer and I said "What is section 487 of the Criminal Code? What does it cover?" Section 487 of the Criminal Code covers things like going in and looking for people who may be in the possession of child pornography. Of course this is available anywhere except in British Columbia, thanks to our justice minister. They can go in and do investigations on murder. They can go in and search for illegal weapons.

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While they are there, under this clause, it was pointed out to me that they can also go into computers and take apart any data contained in the computer.

It is a very broad ranging section of the Criminal Code that the heritage minister may choose to enforce this bill.

We then go on to take a look at the whole issue of who the minister may choose to go after. Subclause 7(1), which again we have asked be deleted, states that the minister may send a demand to a foreign publisher if the minister believes that a foreign publisher (a) has supplied advertising services in contravention of clause 3 or (b) has entered into a transaction or an arrangement that if carried into effect would likely lead to a contravention of this act. Subclause 7(2) states that the minister may in the demand require the foreign publisher, without delay or within a period specified in the demand, to stop supplying the services, and so on.

What this is basically saying is that the heritage minister may choose to jump all over a foreign publisher. But by definition a foreign publisher would be exactly that, a foreign publisher; somebody outside of the immediate jurisdictional constraint of this House or of the laws of Canada.

While the minister may jump on a foreign publisher, the reality is that under this bill the government is going to go after Canadians who have the temerity to advertise, to use their freedom of speech, association and expression in a particular publication. This bill will allow the minister to go after those awful Canadians who may choose to advertise in an unsubscribed publication.

The reality is that this bill, although it is under serious constraint and is of concern to our trading friends across the border, is a far larger threat to the freedom of expression that Canadians assume they have under the charter.

I agree with the Reform member who spoke before me. There can be absolutely no question that this bill, if it were to be passed, would definitely lead to charter challenges.

• (1700)

There can be absolutely no other way. The Liberals are famous for setting things up for the charter industry, for all the high priced lawyers to go after them. It is just a wonderful way for any of the people in the charter industry to make money.

Reading through this bill is a very scary proposition when one realizes that there is little or no problem. If we take a look at *Maclean's* this week, I dare say that better than 50% of the advertising revenue in *Maclean's* will have come to *Maclean's* from American advertisers. My friend, our international trade critic, will be able to provide us with precise numbers on that. The

reality is this is simply a constraint in the ordinary process of doing business in Canada.

Furthermore, although the Canadian Magazine Publishers Association loves to drag out that 80% of the magazines on the stand are foreign magazines, the reality is that there are many Canadian magazines that are very successful.

For example, the *Alberta Report* and *B.C. Report* are two examples where the majority of their revenue is derived from subscription. There are many ways for magazine companies to compete on an level playing field.

If this government would just get out of its smother love we might be able to get on with doing business in Canada and disregard the bleatings of the heritage minister.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the debate today at report stage of Bill C-55, although I admit I am a little dismayed that we should be debating such a bill to begin with.

In my capacity as the critic for international trade for our party, I understand all too well the importance of trade to Canada. Forty per cent of our GDP is derived from exports.

Canada recognized a long time ago, and I suggest that even the Liberal government of the past recognized a long time ago, as early as 1947, the need for some rules to surround the trade issue. Canada has a relatively small population base and we need trade to survive. It is as simple as that.

A third of all the jobs provided in this country are related to exports. That is a simple fact of life. There is not anybody here who is not affected by that fact of life. Of that, 83% of those exports go to United States. We have this great big trade relationship, \$1.4 billion a day crossing the Canada-U.S. border in a healthy, goodwill relationship. I submit we need to make sure that stays.

In that trade relationship, yes, we have some problems with the Americans in terms of agriculture from time to time. Problems with softwood lumber and other issues present themselves. This is a pretty small problem overall in terms of our total trade relationship but to those industries the problem is big.

Add to that the steel industry. It is subject to a lot of anti-dumping charges by the U.S. and I do not think they are really substantiated. They have to go through quite a process to comply. The compliance factor is very expensive. They are always on notice that there will be problems with the U.S. on the steel industry.

We have come a long way with trade liberalization. It has been recognized worldwide for the last 50 years, largely as a result of the second world war. A number of institutions were built to make sure we did not get back into those situations again, the World Bank, the

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International Monetary Fund and of course the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the United Nations.

One of the reasons the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade was put in was so that we would not have Balkanization where there was no access to markets from other countries.

I have already made the case why we need that access. In addition, under the free trade agreement with United States and the subsequent NAFTA, trade between our two countries has grown by over 50% in 10 years.

• (1705)

That speaks volumes about the need for and the benefit of trade liberalization and yet we have a government that as far back as 1988 fought the free trade agreement. The minister responsible for Canadian heritage was one of the leading proponents of fighting the free trade agreement with the United States. She even fought it right up until NAFTA was signed.

Although the Liberal government all of a sudden was elected in 1993 it said at the time it would not sign NAFTA unless a number of important problems were addressed. It did not do that. It did sign NAFTA.

I wonder if some of the Liberals who fought this so hard are really committed to trade and trade liberalization. It seems to me we are seeing today that some of them are not.

Do we need protectionism in our cultural industries? A number of our speakers have already suggested we do not. I would subscribe to that theory. Our cultural industries need promotion just like any other industry. It needs to be promoted at our embassies overseas and through trade missions. I have no problem with that aspect at all.

We have a number of areas in culture that stand up very well but what we do not want is to have other countries take this same type of venue, protectionism, especially the United States. What would happen if the United States told Canada our artists no longer had access to Hollywood or Nashville?

Look at the number of Canadian artists who have developed their abilities by having access to that huge American market. We absolutely have to make sure that stays. This kind of legislation is the type we have come to expect from the minister, stick your finger in the eye of the United States and give it a good gouge.

What do we have from this minister so far? We have the MMT legislation, Ethyl Corporation. We were to ban the sale of MMT. It came from the minister. Of course we had to back down. The American Ethyl Corporation was paid \$16 million as a result of the heritage minister's misguided policies.

We had the split run legislation on taxation, on duties, that went to the World Trade Organization that we lost. We had the endan-

gered species legislation that had to be pulled as an embarrassing piece of legislation because the minister was not going to take into account the very users in the areas involved, forest companies, farmers and ranchers. We have of course the toxic waste situation where S.D. Myers in the United States is probably going to sue Canada under the investment chapter of NAFTA because the minister decided that toxic waste should not be exported to the United States, it should go to northern Alberta so we could burn it up there.

This is what we have come to expect but it is not what we should expect from a minister of the crown who should be introducing responsible legislation. This issue will come back to haunt us. I know the minister has introduced an amendment today, essentially backing down, saying this will not be put into effect for some time.

I noticed the tone of her remarks in question period during the last while has really come down a lot. She is trying to put this issue at a lower level, and rightly so. It should be scrapped altogether. The legislation should be scrapped because it is not in Canada's best interest.

I happened to catch a CBC program the other night where a number of the minister's own constituents in Hamilton were interviewed. The big issue for them is jobs and not whether split runs continue to enjoy Canadian advertisers. It is the fact that their jobs may be threatened. The Hamilton steel industry has enough problems with the Americans. We do not have to invent phoney ego trip problems by the minister.

What about the chemical industry, the plastics industry out of Toronto and other parts of the country which has had tremendous growth into United States, taking advantage of niche opportunities in that big American market? Are we going to kill those opportunities now because we risk retaliation from the United States?

It is clear that if there are any jobs to be lost on this issue it should only be one, that of the Minister of Canadian Heritage for irresponsible legislation.

Does Canada have the right to introduce the legislation? Of course we do. But is it the responsible thing to do? That is the question. Is it responsible to risk our big trade relationship with the United States? NAFTA, brought in 1993 and endorsed by the Liberals, says Canadians have the right to protect our culture. It also says as part of that agreement that if the Americans are not happy with that they have the right to retaliate to an equivalent effect.

• (1710)

Some people have estimated that equivalent effect to be \$350 million of Canadian businesses that may be subject to tariffs and duties. Can our steel industry support having duties applied to it? We know what has happened to our softwood lumber industries in

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the past when that happened. It has had a very dampening effect on jobs.

It seems this is sending entirely the wrong message to Canadians, that one minister on an ego trip is willing to sacrifice the jobs of Canadian farmers, the jobs of Canadian steelworkers, Peerless Suits in Montreal which has actually had a tremendous niche opportunity and developed a business in the United States. It has developed this because the United States took a misguided view of things and put a tariff on wool coming into the United States.

We do not have the same tariff. We have seen the light. It has given Canadian companies in Montreal a tremendous opportunity in manufacture in wool suits. They captured a tremendous amount of the American market. We were not there 10 or 20 years ago but we have several billion dollars worth of sales of wool suits in the United States. That shows what can happen when we have a view in terms of liberalization, in terms of duties and tariffs. This bill should be sunk. It should have the deep six. It should go to the bottom of Lake Ontario, the same place the minister referred to with some of the ships from the war of 1812. She put it in the same category as the American-Canadian battle of 1812 when American ships were sunk. That is where this should go, to the bottom of Lake Ontario.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Madam Speaker, as I sat listening to the speeches it really struck me what a menace this minister is. She truly is a menace.

When we think about the history of the bills and acts she has introduced and the actions she has taken in parliament she truly is a menace. Just a short time ago I remember seeing a news item on television where she was taking a swim in a polluted part of Lake Ontario. It had been approved safe to swim there. Obviously it was not cleaned up enough and corrupted her thinking in terms of sensible legislation. I do not know why her cabinet colleagues continue to humour her this much, to allow her to introduce this type of legislation, especially when we consider her history.

This is the minister who introduced a ban on the transportation of MMT. When she could not get the health department to prove to her that MMT was harmful she introduced a ban on transportation. What could be more ridiculous than that? No wonder we ended up in a fight with the United States over that. It cost us close to \$100 million by the time the dust settled.

Then we had the flag fiasco. Remember that nonsense the minister ran for about a year and a half where she gave away flags, putting Canadian businesses out of work. I had people in my riding who make their living selling Canadiana who were begging with me to stop this minister from being in competition with them, giving away Canadian flags. How much did that cost us in the end? It cost \$14 million for a complete fiasco which actually put people out of business. There was loss taxation and lost jobs on top of the actual cost to the treasury.

The heritage department was reported by the auditor general a month ago to be in complete disarray. It has no idea what it is spending the money on or why. The auditor general gave examples of programs that should be in completely different departments. For example, the minister's department produced a brochure on alternatives to physically disciplining children published in 16 languages, including French and English. It is unimaginable the waste that goes on.

We heard recently the minister's department gave \$80,000 to a Montreal publisher to produce a book on blonde jokes. Another example is a conference to discuss promoting science and technology programs in schools for a specific racial group. A further program she funded was a conference for aboriginals on adolescent issues.

● (1715)

We have to ask ourselves, with this sort of history, the actions of her department and the bills that are coming in, how we can tolerate anything at all that the minister brings before us.

We have the example of the previous magazine bill that she brought before the last parliament. What a fiasco that was. Although we did not end up with the compensations we had to pay for the MMT fiasco, I will bet there were tens of millions of dollars in legal fees, human capital, resources, use of copiers and travel, all the things that went into that appeal and the challenge that took place under NAFTA.

It appears that everything the minister touches turns to poop. I hope you do not mind me saying that, Madam Speaker, but that is to put it mildly.

It makes me think of the complaints I receive in my riding about the CRTC which tries to impose through the minister culture upon the people of Canada. When a new Canadian station starts up, whether or not it is even commercially viable, whether it is mediocre or excellent, cable users are forced to pay for it and it is forced into an unimpaired part of the channel spectrum on cable. Some other channel people were getting before goes into the nether regions of space where they have to pay for an additional package to get it.

I know these sorts of complaints come to every member of the House. This is a misguided attempt to force upon people something on which they should be able to have free choice. All the things the minister is doing should be based on choice. The people producing them should have to produce excellence instead of mediocrity if they want to be accepted.

My original home country, New Zealand, went through quite an upheaval in the early nineties. It cut the size of government from something like 80,000 federal employees down to about 45,000 people today. That does not sound like much by Canadian standards but it is for New Zealand, a small country. Almost 10 years later it is running with half the people it had in 1993.

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Part of the program system it had involved cultural controls, subsidies to protect New Zealand culture. It was exactly the same nonsense we have here. TV and radio stations had to have a certain amount of New Zealand content. With the upheaval in the New Zealand economy and the restructuring there was the abandonment of that approach.

After an initial faltering the culture industry in New Zealand took off because it offered opportunities for entrepreneurs and private people to put money into the system. It started to become excellent instead of mediocre. It managed to produce films like *The Piano* which was sold worldwide and appeared on screens all over the world, something that had never happened from New Zealand before. *Mutiny on the Bounty* was made there as a result of encouragement of culture. People were encouraged to come from the outside and use New Zealand talent.

The point that I am illustrating is that every attempt the minister makes to compel Canadians to go along with her plans to absorb more Canadian content is a disaster. They are a complete and utter failure. They cost us hundreds of millions of dollars and achieve absolutely nothing except to make Canadians irritated and angry about what the minister is trying to do.

The minister should be telling the people making their livings off the grants and subsidies she hands out that they are on their own. They should prove to Canadians that they can produce excellent quality material and the viewers and readers will come and they will be successful. She is not doing these cultural groups any favours at all by giving them constant subsidies.

Some of my colleagues have mentioned that we are threatening the billion dollars a day in the trade we do with our biggest trading partner all over a few arguments about advertising in magazines. It is quite clear, from the way the bill is constructed, that we would not just have the Americans challenging us. We will have Canadians taking us to court if the bill is enacted. People will ask what right the Minister of Canadian Heritage has to stop them from advertising where they want to advertise. There will be challenges.

• (1720)

Mr. Speaker, you always enjoy it when I make speech when you are on duty. I am pleased you have taken the chair. It is a shame you were not here before because you missed the best part about the minister being a menace and how everything she introduces turns to poop.

The national publicity the bill has received over the last week has finally brought some sense to the minister. She realizes, with the uprising in her own riding, that this attempt to protect Canadian culture at the expense of everything else is a silly fiasco. If the

magazines are worth reading they will be purchased by Canadians and there will be advertisers in them. Let us get that out of the way.

We have to remember as well that only about 5% of all magazines sold in Canada are sold off magazine racks. Yet we hear all this weeping and wailing about how 80% of the magazines on the racks are from foreigners. Most of the magazines in Canada are delivered through subscriptions or through delivery along with the local newspapers or by free drop off at the door.

There is plenty of opportunity in magazines for advertisers and Canadian content. In committee representatives of the Canadian industry admitted that their biggest competition was from Canadian industry, not from across the border.

What have we done here? We have used a great big sledgehammer in an attempt to take care of a tiny, little problem that should be resolved by people in the industry sitting down with their counterparts across the border and seeing if they can work out natural trade relationships where they share advertising and editorial space. Let us use creative thinking at the commercial level instead of the nonsense that the minister keeps introducing. I urge all members to vote against the bill.

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I will use my time to explain to the government that the bill is a time bomb. The bill is ticking. Even though we have temporarily put it on the shelf by order in council the bill will explode.

When the bill explodes every Canadian will be affected by it, not just the people in Hamilton or the people in my constituency. The bill will hurt Canadians everywhere, from ocean to ocean. We are bound to suffer severely from the bill even though it has been put on hold.

One might ask if it is a heritage bill. No. What is the bill? Is it a finance bill? No. Is it an industry bill? The minister is seeking to control an industry. Is it a justice bill since it is applying the Criminal Code to those people who wish to exercise their right of free speech? Or, is it a foreign affairs and international trade bill? As this time bomb sits there and as the bill sits on the shelf there will be severe repercussions for Canadians.

Two words cannot be found in the bill. They are the words culture and heritage. These words do not even occur in the bill.

• (1725)

Mr. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Will the member opposite be kind enough to indicate to which of the motions in Group No. 1 he is referring?

Mr. Roy Bailey: Mr. Speaker, I am referring to Motions Nos. 1 to 22.

We will have trade retaliation. The government knows it. The Minister of Canadian Heritage knows it. Backbenchers know it.

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This why the bill will come into force to be fixed by order in council. That is how much they trust their own minister's bill.

There are nine ports of entry into the United States in my constituency. They are all legal. If an American magazine published in Minard was dedicated solely to Canadian geography and sold advertising to Canadian advertisers, it would face criminal charges. Can we believe this? It is true. The magazine would face criminal charges, and I have that happening in my own area.

I do not know whether the government has clearly thought the bill through. On the other hand, if a magazine owned by a Canadian in Estevan writes about vacation spots in the United States, it can get advertising from whomever it wishes. This is bound to have severe effects on international trade.

Let us take the western perspective. A group of people just south of the 49th parallel are waiting for some little excuse to retaliate. The first truckload or caravan of cattle turned back because of retaliations for this bill will fall right smack in the government's lap, particularly in the lap of the Minister of Canadian Heritage. They do not seem to care. That will happen. The time bomb is ticking away on the bill.

Let me put it in a different perspective. The bill is more restrictive than the Canadian Wheat Board bill. It is a fact. Why is it more restrictive? The Canadian Wheat Board bill only affects the property rights in the west of those who grow wheat, but this bill will affect all Canadians everywhere.

Does the government opposite think for one moment that it should restrict American advertising on Canadian TV? Does it think for one moment that a little FM station in Scobey, Montana, should not be able to take Canadian advertising or, better still, that we should not be able to take from Estevan and advertise in the States?

This is sheer nonsense. If we want to see culture grow and prosper we should let it compete. Canadians can compete in any area they wish. They can compete in manufacturing. They can compete in agriculture. We do not need this international squabble looking us in the face.

Weyburn and Estevan in my constituency have some very unique projects which are running short of funds. They look after people who cannot look after themselves. They are both short of about \$20,000. We could not get it from here. Yet, as the hon. member mentioned, we find a Montreal publishing firm was given \$98,000 to publish a bunch of dumb blonde jokes.

What do members think the people out there think? They ask if that is the government's priority? The answer is yes, that is the government's priority. And, it is all in the name of what? Oh, culture.

• (1730)

If you advertise in the wrong magazine you are subject to criminal prosecution. Think of that. Somebody in my constituency who chooses to advertise in a magazine that is published in Bismarck will be subject to prosecution. It is unbelievable but it is true.

This bill will not be passed for some time. There will be terrible ramifications. It will cost us hundreds of millions of dollars to get ourselves out of the legal suits. I would ask the government members opposite and the ministers to take this back to caucus and do the sensible thing and pull this rotten bill right off the list. Pull it right away. Get it out of here. It has failed in the past several times. It will fail again but they are quite willing to blow a hundred million dollars to try to defend it in international courts and they will say that they were standing up for Canadian culture. Nobody believes that.

Let us honour the Canadian's right to compete. Let us not try to protect something that can compete. The minister in charge of the wheat board would tell us right away that Canadian wheat can compete anywhere in the world but this bill says that Canadians cannot compete. I believe they can and I think this government is terribly wrong in trying to say they cannot.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I re-emphasize that Motions Nos. 1 to 21 in Group No. 1 point out that the bill is poorly crafted. It is a thinly veiled attempt to circumvent two unfavourable rulings that Canada received at the World Trade Organization tribunals. It is provoking very real trade retaliation from U.S. trade representatives and it is offensive to fundamental freedoms.

There are some very practical reasons why I oppose Bill C-55 on behalf of the constituents of Selkirk—Interlake. This foreign publishers advertising services act will have a large negative impact on my riding and on all Canadians. The minister has said words to the effect that this bill is about promoting Canadian culture. I think the minister referred to ensuring that her daughter has magazines to read that have Canadian content.

I say this bill is really about promoting the heritage minister. It is not about Canadian culture at all. Let us look at this promotion. The protection of what appears to be two major publishers in this country is what this whole bill seems to be about. The two that have come to the attention of this House are Maclean Hunter and Télémédia Incorporated, two very large companies that really have no problem standing on their own or competing with others. I think they would agree this has nothing to do with their not being able to compete.

• (1735)

As soon as any country starts to go into protectionism and reduce trade the population of that country soon becomes much poorer.

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Throughout history look at the greatest nations in the world like Rome. We find that the rich nations were those that had open and free trade. They became wealthy. Their citizenry became wealthy. That is what is under attack in Bill C-55. We want to close in among ourselves. Deal inside Canada. Keep the evil foreigners away, in this case the Americans. Tomorrow it will be the Europeans. The day after that it will be the Japanese. That is what this bill is about. It is about dollars and cents as to its repercussions.

Mr. Gary Leech, one of the chief executive officers of Manitoba Rolling Mills, a steel rolling plant in Selkirk and a subsidiary of Gerdau, was so concerned with the possibility of trade problems in steel exports from Canada to the United States that he sent me a letter outlining the problems he sees will come up. Bill C-55 and protectionism is exactly what he does not want. He wants to see the exports that earn large amounts of money for Canada continue to flow to the states. It is a good customer. It wants to make these purchases. There is an example of a direct impact on my riding. It is one of the industry items that we are exporting that we do not want to see shut down.

The reality check is the harm in trade between Canada and the U.S.. It is our biggest customer and we are its biggest customer. It would enter into the hundreds of millions. When we get into a tit for tat trade dispute, which is what the heritage minister seems to be trying to get us into, it soon turns into billions.

At best, the intent of trying to protect a couple of our publishers to the tune of a few million dollars is not worth the trade costs and problems we will have if this bill gets passed.

I am the chief agriculture critic. Agriculture is another gigantic industry in western Canada, in my riding in particular. At present Canadian agriculture and agri-food trade is over \$28 billion a year. We are not talking a few million for the publishing trade.

I pointed out that Motions Nos. 1 through 21 have very much to do with the World Trade Organization talks. We are coming up to those talks. What we are going to find out is that the trade representatives from other countries are going to look at Canada and say "Are you putting out bills like Bill C-55 and going into a protectionism type mentality? Our economies are about 10 or 15 times bigger than yours. You are going to be the loser". We will not see that in published print but I guarantee that is exactly what we are talking about in the debate today.

The cost to agriculture could be gigantic. We are talking about an industry of \$28 billion in exports a year. In agriculture we depend on trade for our survival. Right now we see the problems of agriculture with reduced exports to other countries and low commodity prices. They are low because the dollars we are able to earn from trade and the lower exports are hitting families on Canadian farms in the pocket book.

We are not talking about some hypothetical bill, that is really does not matter or that it matters to only a few Canadians. This matters to everyone.

• (1740)

At present commodity prices have collapsed and in Saskatchewan the estimates earlier on this fall were that the drop in income could be as high as 70%, Manitoba as high as 45%, Prince Edward Island as low as 41% off from past years.

Instead of introducing legislation that would ensure a viable agricultural sector, this government seems to spend its time on Bill C-55. Bill C-55 will erode our farm markets and will deepen the income crisis we are in already.

I point out that our exports to the United States have been hurt by South Dakota and North Dakota which feel that we are subsidized, that we are exporting products which are not in keeping with their pesticide regulations or other chemical regulations.

I believe Bill C-55 will just add to the frustration of American trade negotiators. They will not necessarily say they are restricting the movement of grain, cattle or hogs into the states because of Bill C-55 but in the back of their minds they will see Canadians as unfair traders, people trying to restrict trade and put up barriers to the United States and other countries.

In the fall the agriculture minister was real big on this. He said don't worry about trade, it is just to do with the elections in the United States. When that is over we won't have any more problems. The elections in the United States were over in the fall and the trade disputes and the trade irritants got worse. It was false that the elections were the cause of the trade disputes.

On top of all that now we see Bill C-55 which could be looked on as the straw that broke the camel's back if passed. I urge all members to vote against this bill.

Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today, not necessarily to have to speak to a bill like this, but still to exercise my democratic right as an elected representative of the people of Nanaimo—Cowichan to continue the debate on Bill C-55 and the amendments proposed by my hon. colleague.

I want to share why I believe those amendments should be passed and through the passage of those amendments the bill should be entirely wiped out.

This bill has drawn a great deal of controversy and political rhetoric over the past several months. As we all know, what we read and hear from the spin doctors and the political posturing from the government does not tell the whole story.

Part of the government's and magazine industry's story has been that without this bill Canadian culture will be hurt. I have eight children and I do not for a minute think that the passage of this bill

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will protect the kind of culture with which they grow up. I have a little daughter who is going to be eight tomorrow. I wish her a happy birthday. As a member of parliament I may not be there for her birthday. But I do not expect that she is going to ever have her cultural sensitivities hurt because this bill passes into law.

The government said that not to endorse this bill is somehow unpatriotic and anti-Canadian. This is absolute nonsense.

I believe, moreover, that this bill has the potential to do far more harm than good for Canada. If this bill is approved and given royal assent the heritage minister is willing to put vast portions of the Canadian economy at risk.

• (1745)

The minister may be willing to risk it all but I wonder, are the people who she is affecting willing to risk it all? I dare say that if we asked the logger, the sawyer, the pulp and paper worker in the British Columbia forest industry, we would find that they are not willing to take this risk. They have already paid dearly in the downtrodden economy of British Columbia. They have already paid with layoffs and downturns.

My riding of Nanaimo—Cowichan has traditionally been a large producer of forest products with many people employed in that industry. I can guarantee that they are not willing to put any more of those people at risk through a bill like this.

I wonder if the minister of heritage is willing to ask the farmers across the prairies who have already seen a price drop in grain whether they are willing to risk their livelihood further. Farmers are already facing many natural calamities from drought, frost and hail without built-in disasters that are imposed by their own federal government. Many farmers are already facing a disaster from this federal government by hearing that the cheque is in the mail when in fact it is not.

Perhaps the minister would be willing to listen to the response of the many people who depend upon work in the steel, textiles or plastics industries which stretch across southern Ontario and Quebec.

Many of these businesses have carved their place in the market in spite of major international competition. Are they willing to risk it all based upon the false premises of this bill? I suggest that they are not.

When the heritage minister asks the House to pass this legislation, there are major risks and very real consequences.

The United States has clearly stated its own position on this matter. I do not want to be misunderstood here; I believe in Canadian sovereignty and I strongly believe in national unity. But there are many issues and times that I feel this government has

acquiesced to the sabre rattling and scare tactics of our neighbours south of the border.

Overall our U.S. neighbours are good neighbours and I agree they cannot dictate Canadian policy. However, our ambassador to the United States met with me and a group of parliamentarians which incidentally included members of the government in Washington last week. The government members should listen to this. Among other things, we discussed this bill and its consequences to Canadian-U.S. relationships. The ambassador warned us not to get into a situation where a trade war would erupt because when all is said and done, we know who the losers would be. Here is a man who has his ear to the ground in Washington. I really wonder whether our government has been listening to him. I do not think so.

There are other instances. I believe that the minister of fisheries has a lot to account for in the handling of our west coast fish stocks. Where was the nationalism of this government when our west coast fishermen were being stopped from reaping their livelihood and were forced to watch from the sidelines as Alaskan fishermen ran their nets and lines down to pull up our Canadian salmon? It was not found anywhere on the west coast.

Where was the strength of the government when the British Columbia forest industry was facing sanctions and tariffs by the lumber industry of the United States? It was nothing but weak-kneed action that I would see.

This government has a lot of very mixed up priorities. On the issues when the government could have made a difference and truly stood up for national sovereignty, the Liberals were nowhere to be found. On the issues that involve the jobs and livelihoods of thousands of individuals and businesses alike, they are prepared to take enormous risks. This seems to be out of step with what Canadians really desire.

I believe that Canadians want to have opportunities to work, opportunities to move ahead in their lives and to not be faced with regressive and hidden taxes every time they try to make a step forward. This bill does not meet those kinds of objectives.

In doing some rough calculations, the total trade that Canada currently does with the United States is approximately \$365 billion, a billion dollars a day. That is a huge number. The annual advertising market that Bill C-55 is designed to address totals about \$400 million. This is just over one-tenth of one per cent. In comparison, the value of the goods for wheat, metals, alloys, chemicals, plastics, fertilizers and forest products that Canada exports to the United States totals \$76.98 billion.

The heritage minister is willing to risk 21% of our trade with the United States for the sake of this bill. This is a far greater risk than I believe the stakeholders in these industries are willing to take. This bill is fraught with misconceptions and bureaucratic doublespeak.

Government Orders

• (1750)

On Tuesday, February 9 the heritage minister was asked if Bill C-55 was an ironclad piece of legislation that could survive any possible U.S. challenge to the WTO or the NAFTA and to confirm that it conforms with Canada's charter of rights. The minister's reply was that it is the position of the government that this bill respects every one of our national and international obligations.

In fact, the WTO handed down two rulings last year which found the provisions under previous magazine advertising legislation to offend the GATT. We were not receiving a straight bill of goods on these most important questions.

This bill also has possible ramifications for our charter of rights and freedoms. Through the enactment of this bill, Canadian advertisers will be banned from selling their goods and services in foreign magazines. Is the minister telling Canadian advertisers that when it comes to freedom of speech, something we all hold in high favour, that these people are second class citizens? I certainly hope this is not what it will come to be.

We have been told this bill is to protect our Canadian culture. My read of this bill does not show the word culture anywhere in its writings. What this bill has is the workings and markings of protectionism and will likely fail when challenged at the World Trade Organization through the GATT.

We have been told that this bill is intended to protect Canadian advertisers from cheap American advertising dollars creeping into split-run magazines. In fact, Mr. John Tory of Rogers Communications, which owns Maclean Hunter and publishes *Maclean's* magazine, recently appeared before the heritage committee. At the heritage committee he admitted that magazine publishers' biggest competition for advertising dollars is from Canadians. It does not make sense.

Perhaps the item that causes me the most concern in this bill is the addition of the magazine police. Are we going to have them all over the place? I suspect so if this bill goes through. I believe this legislation is wrong. I do not believe that the Canadian public is supportive of this legislation and I certainly am not.

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I know that unlike my colleagues across the way, you have been waiting for some time for my intervention and I hope I do not disappoint.

The first thing I have to say and which is patently obvious to most of us in the House and most Canadians at this point in time is that the heritage minister's ego and arrogance know no bounds. It is becoming clearer to Canadians all the time. She has demonstrated this over and over again. Let me give this House some examples.

Alongside this bill, what has the minister got for a track record? She has the GST promise. She has the—

Mr. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is my understanding that members on either side of the House have to address the motions that are on the floor. Would you please invite the member to do so.

The Deputy Speaker: I am sure that the hon. member for Skeena is going to address the 21 amendments that are before the House at this time. I am sure he was just warming to a theme.

Mr. Mike Scott: Mr. Speaker, that is indeed the case. I am amazed. My friend across the way must be blessed with ESP to know what I was going to say as I just rose.

I have to relate this bill to other things the minister has done to show the arrogance and the egotistical approach she has to her job. I can talk about the MMT, the GST, the flag giveaway, and as my colleague mentioned the \$98,000 for a book on dumb blond jokes, which incidentally was just before she had her hair dyed. She demonstrates little concern for the economic wreckage she leaves behind her with all of these initiatives. This bill is a case in point.

• (1755)

The minister professes to care about national unity. She professes to care about keeping Canada together. Then she introduces a piece of legislation such as Bill C-48 which I suggest is going to do more to divide and anger Canadians than anything the minister has done before. We will see the fruits of her labour not too far down the road.

What is amazing is that the Prime Minister continues to let the heritage minister prance around without a leash leaving unpleasant little surprises for us all over the place.

Mr. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege. This is probably the toughest afternoon I have ever had in my life listening to the nonsense from across the way, but when it degenerates to personal insults directed at members of the House I am amazed that the Chair tolerates that.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair is mindful that members do sometimes make personal comments. While some may regard them as in poor taste, I do not think that intervention by the Chair is required unless the comments are unparliamentary. I have not heard comments that under the rules appear to be unparliamentary. A matter of taste is a matter of taste and I leave members to exercise their own restraint.

Mr. Jim Gouk: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Reform members seem to be the main ones who are trying to shed some light on the problems of the bill. We are continually being interrupted. Could I suggest that perhaps it might be in order if the hon. member across the way has so much to say that he take a place on the speaking rotation instead of interrupting.

Government Orders

The Deputy Speaker: I think the comments on both sides are indicative of the fact that perhaps there is not complete agreement on all the terms of the bill. The Chair is not in a position to adjudicate on what I regard as perhaps not well taken points of order or questions of privilege.

Mr. Mike Scott: Mr. Speaker, it would be easier for us on this side and certainly easier for me to proceed with my intervention and to keep the personal comments to a minimum if my colleagues on the other side were not engaging in this kind of heckling in debate.

The case before us is really important. Canada's trade with the United States is huge. Eighty per cent of our trade is with the United States. We need them and they need us. It is a very important trade relationship. We need them very badly.

The magazine issue as an economic matter does not even register on the scales in terms of economic importance. It is not important in terms of our economy. Issues like steel, softwood lumber and other trade relationships that we have are vital to the future of the country and vital for the province I come from and vital for the constituents I represent. We have a huge trade in softwood lumber with the United States.

By introducing this bill, the minister is indicating that she is willing to put at risk those jobs and those industries and that trade relationship for the sake of her ego. It is irresponsible in the extreme. She is willing to put our entire trade relationship with the United States at risk over an issue that does not even register on the scales economically. Someone should run out and buy the minister a calculator. She should become acquainted with the numbers and maybe then she would pause and change her mind.

The minister and the government show so much concern for magazines. If the Liberals are that concerned about the trade relationship with the United States and protecting Canadian businesses, why do they not do something about fish?

The people in my riding particularly from the Prince Rupert and the Queen Charlotte Island areas are in deep trouble because of our trade relationship and because of the fact that the government has been totally ineffective at negotiating any kind of an agreement with the Americans on the Pacific salmon dispute. It was totally ineffective in even bringing up the issue, and totally ineffective in even trying to make this a priority because the Liberals do not consider it to be a priority.

When it comes to magazines, oh yes it is a national issue but when it is Pacific salmon, that is a regional issue, a B.C. issue. It does not matter. It does not register on their scales, or the minister's scales.

• (1800)

Where is the concern for the sports fisherman, the aboriginal fisherman and the commercial fishermen who have lost their livelihoods? That is a heritage issue. These people, particularly in the commercial industry, have lost and are in the process of losing a way of life because of government inaction and inability or unwillingness to deal with that very crucial issue.

The province I come from does a tremendous amount of trade with the Americans on softwood lumber. I cannot begin to say how many communities in my riding, never mind businesses, depend on trade in softwood lumber for their sustenance, for their livelihoods. Families depend on a paycheque so they can make their mortgage payments, buy groceries, put their kids through school and have some kind of future.

The minister is willing to put that at risk over an issue that does not even register on the economic scale. The minister is willing to put at risk thousands of jobs in the steel industry in Ontario over an issue that does not even register on the economic scale. The minister is willing to put her ego and agenda ahead of the best interest of Canadians. I am frankly appalled.

I look at my colleagues across the way. They just do not understand that real lives and futures are on the line. If they would choose to venture out of Ontario and come to my riding in northern British Columbia they would see for themselves the economic devastation that northern communities in British Columbia have faced over the last couple of years. Then maybe they would not be so quick to criticize.

We see window dressing action on the part of the minister that is designed to try to persuade Canadians she is concerned about our country and out there doing something. She is really out there attempting to exacerbate the problems my constituents already have in the industries in which they are employed.

I understand the heritage minister being this way because she has demonstrated a track record in this regard for a long time. What I cannot understand is how her caucus, her fellow cabinet and the Prime Minister will let her continue with putting at risk hundreds of millions of dollars of trade with the United States every year over an issue which basically does not even register on the economic scale and is not important to most Canadians. I frankly do not think most Canadians are concerned about the issue the minister is trying to address. I am appalled that the minister is willing to put everything else on the line over this issue.

If the heritage minister and the government were really serious about standing up for Canada's interest, they would get off this issue which for most Canadians does not even register and address some other issues like softwood lumber and Pacific salmon which they have done absolutely nothing meaningful about for five years now, ever since I have been in this place.

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Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I note once again that Liberal members across the way have the opportunity to officially join in this debate at any time but would rather snipe from the sidelines. Of course, that is understandable. They have nothing concrete to add. They have nothing substantive to say so all they can do is hurl little insults or stand there and nod like drinking birds. It is kind of interesting. If they had something to say I am sure the Canadian public would listen, but as it is they have already declared the merit of the bill by their silence.

Let us look at what is really happening with the bill. I have just completed a round of town hall meetings in my riding. I have talked about how legislation works in the House. I have explained that only the government writes legislation and that sometimes it writes good legislation which we support. In fact we work with them to get it through the House as quickly as possible because it might be long overdue.

• (1805)

Sometimes the government comes out with legislation that has some merit, but we think it could be a little better so we propose amendments. Sometimes the legislation is bad, really bad, and we say we will fight it unless the government agrees to fix it up. Every now and again it comes out with some legislation that is so bad it is absolutely unfixable. We are close to that with this one.

There is actually one more category. Every now and again it comes out with legislation that just does not make sense. We fight it if it is bad. We may not agree with it but at least we understand where the government is coming from. However, every now and again it comes out with something that just makes no sense at all.

Should we try to come up with some Machiavellian reason as to why it might come out with such legislation? Let us look at the legislation before us. We are only talking about two big corporations that stand to have any possible benefit. The rest of the publishers in the country are asking what it is doing.

Why would the government do that? It was not overly rich back in pre-1993 but it got all kinds of contributions from big corporations. I wonder if there will be a marker out there after its slides this piece of garbage through the House.

An hon. member: Do you think so?

Mr. Jim Gouk: It is entirely possible that is what this is about. I certainly cannot think of any other reason for it.

The sole speaker, I think it was, on this debate from the Conservative Party raised the issue of dumping. It was an interesting point. That is what the government is claiming. In essence that

is what it is claiming the American companies are doing, that they are dumping product.

We do not need legislation for that. We already have it. If that is what it thinks is occurring it should follow the rules that are already in place. If it is not really dumping then it cannot very well follow those rules. There goes another excuse for the Liberal Party.

The Liberals talk in terms of what the Americans are doing in Canada, that they are running Canadian ads in their magazines. Did it ever occur to them that Canadians want to be able to run those ads? That is how they sell to their market. Have they ever thought of the impact on Canadian producers? God forbid, they have enough trouble nowadays with Liberal taxation policies. Now they cannot even advertise their overpriced products, overpriced because they have had to pay so much in taxes and wages trying to keep their employees above the starvation level as the Minister of Finance takes their paycheque away from them. Now they want to take away their ability to advertise in the magazines and publications of their choice. It is absolutely crazy.

Let us look at some of the other potential impacts of the bill. If one walks up to somebody and punches him in the nose he tends to try to defend himself. If the little giant walks up and tries to do something to the United States, guess what it will do? It will defend itself. It will say that we are being unfair to its companies. There are rules in place. If the government thinks they are dumping it should follow them. If it does not have the temerity to follow that route then it is wrong and retaliations start.

What kinds of things will the Americans retaliate on? We have talked about how it might be dumping. The government thinks this is dumping and it needs this action.

In the western part of my riding in the Okanagan Valley lot of orchardists, particularly those growing apples, are going bankrupt. One of the problems they have is real dumping by the American market into the Canadian market. American orchard farmers, apple farmers, have a completely different set of policies to follow and different levels of subsidization so they dump into Canada.

Is the government concerned about that? No. They are little apple orchardists who do not contribute enough to the Liberal Party to merit concern about that kind of dumping. However, a couple of big publications might affect the Liberal coffers so it had better do something. It creates a bogeyman and goes out to save them even though nobody else thinks they are in danger in the first place. It is interesting.

• (1810)

In the softwood lumber industry it has been suggested the Americans may look for some form of retaliation. I come from a forest reliant riding. That is our major employer. We had agreements with the United States and it tried doing the very thing the Canadian government is now talking of doing in the case of this magazine situation. What did we do? We just acquiesced. Maybe

Private Members' Business

that is why they thought the Americans would do that in this case, but they did not acquiesce. They came out with an insane softwood lumber quota system and the government said "Hot damn, where do we sign?"

All kinds of people in my riding have had problems. I have talked to people in the softwood lumber industry about how this started and how they tracked it. When this started they admitted they had no idea of how it was going to work but they just had to do it.

My riding has been hurt by the softwood lumber quota. As if it were not bad enough the way it started, they said here is the quota and here is how it will work. A lot of people were really opposed to it. Some said the government is too weak-kneed to support them in any other way. At least if they got a little stability, even though they would be cut way back, they would know what they could count on.

Every year for the last three years a lot of the big lumber producers in my riding have been cut back further on the softwood lumber quota. They are hanging by their fingernails right now on the verge of shutting down. They are very close to it. We are waiting to see what happens with the quotas coming out in the spring. If there is another cut, it will wreak havoc on the west.

Of course the Liberal Party does not care. That is Reform country so why should it do anything for western companies. Then it has a western tour to try to determine why it does not get any support in the west. We do not have to look very far for the reasons for that.

If there is any threat of retaliation against western lumber producers, it might be the straw that breaks the camel's back and puts them under—

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but the time for the consideration of Government Orders has expired.

Mr. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would ask for unanimous consent to dispose of all questions at report stage.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to dispose of the report stage of the bill?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6.12 p.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

HOLIDAYS ACT

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.) moved that Bill C-401, an act to amend the Holidays Act (Flag Day) and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to discuss Bill C-401. This is not the first time I have introduced this legislation. It is not even the first time that similar legislation has been presented before the Chamber. I had an identical bill in the previous parliament that was votable but unfortunately it died on the order paper when the election was called.

For members here and for those watching us tonight, some may immediately jump to the obvious conclusion that there is such a thing as a flag day. Flag day is the third Monday of February or February 15. My legislation talks about making it the third Monday. Flag day is recognized on the February 15, which is the very day the flag rose over our nation in 1965 for the first time. Indeed the current Prime Minister proclaimed a day called flag day. The difference between that and my bill is that my bill seeks to make flag day a national holiday. That is to say that people would have the day off work to celebrate this event.

• (1815)

The background of this has a lot of history in this Chamber. It goes back as far as 1980 when my colleague in a previous session, Warren Allmand, presented a bill much the same as this. Back in those days they called this heritage day and indeed we have a heritage day as well which falls on the third Monday of February. This of course causes some confusion among people. I look at flag day as being a culmination of heritage day to recognize the heritage of all cultural groups in Canada under one flag.

Then there is a string of similar suggestions by the New Democratic Party. Stanley Knowles presented this legislation at one time, as did Ian Deans. A special consideration for my former professor. I have a bachelor of commerce degree but I always took political science just down the road here at Carleton University and in those days my political science professor for about three of those years was Dr. Pauline Jewett, which I know rings a happy note with some of my colleagues across the way. I can say that Dr. Jewett was somewhat responsible for leading me into the area of politics. It took a long time for me to remember some of her words and come back to this place, but it is in somewhat of her honour that I am able to stand in my place and present her very bill, although I now call it flag day as opposed to heritage day.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Speaker, sitting on either side of you is the Canadian flag. I have been very happy, every day I have been in the House, to wear this lapel pin, the Canadian flag. I have been very proud of my country and its symbols.

The flag is more than a simple piece of coloured cloth. It is the epitome of who we are as a country. It is a symbol. Canada is very much a young country. For some of us 1867 may seem like a long time ago but in reality, when we compare it to countries like Greece or European countries, our history is quite young. It is very important that a country, as it is evolving, evolves symbols of its unity as symbols of its people. I do not think there is any stronger symbol in Canada than our flag.

I know all of us have travelled to foreign countries and there is no question of the identity, when one is wearing that flag, of who one is, where one is from. Most important, it is not about geography, it is about what kind of people that represents, caring people who created this incredible country on the north half of the North American continent, the second largest geographical country in the world with tremendous democratic traditions over a short period of time. It has become the envy of the world. The Prime Minister often refers to the United Nations accreditation that Canada is deemed the best country in the world for its social services and so forth. This is really about agreements that we make with one another.

I was talking to some Cape Bretoners last night. Taxation came up. I said people like to talk about Ottawa, about money coming from Ottawa and going to Ottawa, but in reality what is really happening is that these are all agreements we make among ourselves. We agree in this place to share money with other citizens of this country for a variety of reasons.

• (1820)

I think these are the great things that Canada is about and why this symbol is so important to me and the Canadian people.

The flag debate has had a great tradition. I was a little younger but I can remember the flag debate in the House. I can remember the very day the flag went up the flagpole on this Chamber. Governor General Georges Vanier, Lester Pearson and hundreds of thousands of Canadians watched that momentous event. I also remember at that time the leader of the official opposition, Mr. Diefenbaker, with a tear in his eye watching the red ensign come down. It was a traumatic event in our history. It was a recognition of how we had changed. It was not about throwing out our old traditions.

A lot of people get involved in the monarchy thing. They always think we are tearing something apart. We are throwing something in the garbage. Our history cannot be stolen. Nobody can steal our

traditions. What we can do is build on the strength of those traditions and move forward. I believe that is what the flag does.

I have not argued why I feel this should be a national holiday which is significantly different from what the Prime Minister did only a short few years ago. It should be a national holiday because it is a time that Canadians can reflect on their heritage, their culture and the things that make this a great country.

I know some people will suggest what is Canada Day if not that. I agree. Canada Day is another similar day on which we recognize our country. But flag day is unique in that it marks the evolution of our country in 1965. An argument a lot of people will bring is that we cannot afford flag day. That is another day off. People will not be working. Employers will have to pay for it. That is a lot of the argument brought up.

To give a comparison, Australia has 11 statutory holidays; Austria, 12; Finland, 12; France 11; our chief trading partner the United States, 11; Canada, only 10. In the scheme of things we can see there is room for another national holiday.

I will touch very briefly on the cost of that. It is a fair question and people are going to raise that issue. I have made a basic estimate of the labour costs for that national holiday of \$1.5 billion. People will say that is a lot of money in lost productivity. It represents .16% of our economic activity. More important, it does not attempt to analyse what economic benefits would be gained by a national holiday.

Members may ask what benefits could there possibly be. Everybody will be sitting at home or hopefully going to flag day celebrations. How is that going to have an economic impact? I do not have to tell the House that we have Winterlude going on right now in Ottawa. People would use this to promote tourism and events and celebrate the flag. When people do that they have a tendency to go out and spend some money and so forth. So there is a direct economic benefit to Canadians to have this national holiday.

It is very timely that we are having this debate because Monday, February 15 is flag day. The time between New Year's Day and the next holiday, Good Friday, is about 91 days. In other words, it is over three months without a holiday. Many of my constituents and other people have said we need a break in the middle of winter. Winters are long and the days are short. It would be nice to celebrate our country and make something very important about that.

• (1825)

I have mentioned Canada Day. One problem I have with Canada Day is that it is in the middle of the summer. Invariably the very people we want to interest in this cultural evolution are our youth.

Private Members' Business

Unfortunately they are out of school at the cottage or wherever and Canada Day kind of works but it does not work as well as I think it could.

That is why in my own riding I have been promoting flag day. It started off with one school the first year that the Prime Minister proclaimed that day. We went to the school and had a ceremony. We raised the flag and we talked about the great and wonderful things in this country. It was a wonderful thing to watch all these students with their Canadian flags singing O Canada. They were very proud of their nation and about who they are.

There was a teacher retiring. He was 55. He said "That is the culmination of my career. I have never been so proud to be a teacher at this school as this day". That tells something about the emotion people feel about this event.

I have attempted with the help of the people on the school board to promote this because it is such a wonderful thing. Now it is at the point where I cannot go to all the flag day ceremonies in my riding. My whip is annoyed with me and other members as well because I will be away on Monday. I have three ceremonies that I am going to. Our biggest problem is supplies. We have to find hundreds and hundreds of paper Canadian flags.

It is a great event because we talk to those young people about the importance of Canada because it is their country. Clearly they are going to be the inheritors of this great nation.

We are all getting a little older and one of these days we are not going to be here. It is these young people who will step forward in our place and advance the cause of Canada. It is to these people that we are trying to promote the importance of this great nation.

We just had a debate on Bill C-55. I do not really want to get involved in that, but that is the whole issue that we are talking about, Canadian culture and our identity.

I think I have touched on most of the points that I wanted to raise. I wish this were a votable motion. I think it is a very important issue for all Canadians to identify the symbols which unite them as a nation and to honour them and make them even more important in their lives. If all of us did that on a day to day basis this would be a greater country.

I see some of my colleagues from the Bloc looking at me very auspiciously. It is a great experiment that we are all involved in here. We cannot unite under monarchical flags. It is time to realize we have a central purpose in this country and that is our flag. Our flag identifies that purpose.

I will close on that and I hope we have a very nourished debate about what I consider a very important issue.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to stand in the House today to speak about what it means to be a Canadian and to speak about the Canadian flag.

I have no small touch of history in this place with respect to the flag. I suppose therefore it was rather natural when this bill came forward that I was the one selected from our party to respond to it in this debate.

I am really curious about this bill because of the fact that I am probably known both among my friends and among my colleagues here in this place as being a very proud and a very grateful Canadian. It never leaves my mind.

● (1830)

Often I think how grateful I am that way back in the early 1920s both my grandfathers, although they did not know each other at the time, and my parents, who also did not know each other at the time, made the decision to flee Russia and make Canada their home. We sometimes complain about the rate of taxation here, but over in Russia they paid 100%. They left everything they had and fled to preserve their lives. They chose to make Canada their home.

My grandparents have been gone for some 30 years, but I remember going to my grandparents' place. My grandmother, in particular, many times, both in speech and in her prayers, expressed gratitude for the wonderful country in which we lived. She, my grandfather, my uncles and aunts shared many of their experiences in the old country.

This is quite remarkable because growing up on a farm in Saskatchewan in the 1940s and 1950s we were actually quite poor. We had very little of what we would call worldly goods. Yet here we were in this wonderful country. I suppose the feature they liked the most was the freedom which we enjoy here, the opportunity to work and provide not only for ourselves as a family but also to share with others.

That is a value that has been deeply ingrained into my thinking over all of these years and one which hopefully I have transmitted to my children. Hopefully they will transmit it to their children, since I now have three grandchildren. I shall take the opportunity, when they are old enough to understand, to explain some of our family history and to bring them to the place where they are not only proud Canadians but also, as I am, a deeply grateful Canadian.

We are discussing the issue of having a flag day, a special day to honour our flag. I too am old enough to remember quite clearly the time when the Canadian flag was brought in. As a matter of fact, on Monday, February 15, 1965 I happened to have been a grade 11 student in a small town in Saskatchewan.

I also remember the great degree of opposition there was to the flag, especially in that part of the country in which I live. The opposition was primarily from people who had fought under the old Union Jack, people who were involved in our great wars, as they are called, in which Canadians participated, many giving their lives.

I remember one of our neighbours, a person by the name of Mr. Payne. He had a permanent limp as a result of an injury he suffered in the war. I do not remember him specifically, but it was that kind of person who had some considerable objection to the changing of Canada's symbol because of what the old symbol meant to them.

Our Canadian flag is not without its history. The flag that we have now, the Maple Leaf, is a flag of which I believe we are all proud. We have made that transition. I am grateful to say that my family is now totally accepting of the Canadian flag. We are very happy that we have a symbol such as this to unite us as a people.

Not long ago I thought about the Canadian flag as being one of the very few things that universally ties us together. There are some who say it is our health care system. Yet the trouble with which our people are viewing the health care system now is such that it is hardly a great unifying force in our country. The health care system is in deep trouble, primarily because of the fact that the commitments made by the federal government at the time when it was brought in have greatly eroded. Consequently, while the Liberals particularly love bragging about the health care system, and we all wish we had a good one, due to their change in fiscal priorities over the years it is in great trouble. Therefore, I do not think our health care system can be said to tie us together.

• (1835)

We have other symbols. For example, the governing party of Canada. Does it unify us? As I recall, it got about 39% of the popular vote in the last election. That means that approximately 60% of Canadians probably would not view the present Liberal government as being a unifying force.

We have other symbols, such as our governor general. Yet when we realize that the governor general is but a token appointment, a patronage appointment of a current prime minister, then that as a unifying force is substantially diminished. I do not want to in any way denigrate the position or the person. However, it is not a huge unifying force.

Then I think of Her Majesty the Queen. I have spoken to a number of people in the last couple of years and, very frankly, a lot of people have shown genuine regret over some of the problems that have beset the royal family in England. There is a genuine concern and a compassion for some of the things they have gone through. Yet if we ask whether we are unified around our allegiance to the Queen, that too falls short.

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I suppose we could come to the conclusion that the Canadian flag is probably the strongest unifying symbol in the country today. There may be some others that I have not thought of. However, I went through a small list of different unifying symbols or forces and probably the Canadian flag is the strongest one.

The question at hand is: Should we have a day once a year proclaimed as flag day? Should we have a statutory holiday in which everybody would make a special effort to celebrate Canada and that national symbol, the Canadian flag?

I have great problems with a motion of this nature for one very simple reason. To explain it I want to give a little analogy. There was a young fellow who was asked in church to sit down by his father, but he kept standing. His father put his hand on his shoulder and said "Sit down" and the boy stood again. Finally the father, very firmly, said "Sit down". At that point the young lad turned to his dad and said "I may be sitting on the outside, but I am standing on the inside".

I think that is a rather good illustration of what it means to fly the Canadian flag. If we bring in legislation that says "On this day you will fly the flag and you will do this", it almost smacks of political or government manipulation of a desired behaviour. I think it is meaningless unless it comes from deep within.

Again I think of the stories my grandfather told. They were legislated into allegiance to their country. At the first opportunity they left because it just went on and on until they lost all their personal freedoms.

I in no way suggest that this bill takes away any freedom. I am saying that the idea of legislating a day to promote the flag leaves a hollow ring, at least with me. I think the much better way is to have people fly the flag with pride and with honour because of the fact that deep within, hopefully like me, they are proud and grateful to be Canadian.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I also have the opportunity to rise in the House to speak to the bill before us, which aims at adding a holiday to celebrate the flag. We already have a flag day.

• (1840)

It is in fact a sad day in Canada's history, because the first day we celebrated this flag day, we recalled that the Prime Minister had shaken up a demonstrator by grabbing him by the throat. And the Minister of Canadian Heritage, without knowing who the person was, called him a sovereignist.

So flag day has a bit of a blot on it in our history. Memory being what it is, I hope one day that we will have happier memories in this regard about Canada.

I have heard some rather unconvincing arguments on the subject of making this day a holiday, first, because the third Monday in

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February would make a fine holiday. If people are tired, collective agreements provide for sick days so they can take a day off if they need to.

Reading week happens about the same time, a week later. So there are holidays the following week.

Some have said that other countries mentioned have 10, 11 or 12 holidays. They probably have much more important events to celebrate than flag day. I for my part know of no country that gives everyone a day off just to celebrate the flag. When the argument is made that this might cost \$1.5 billion in work time, we say that it is meaningless, that the amount involved is negligible in relation to the revenue generated by all these workdays. I think these kinds of arguments are not very serious.

I heard another argument, saying "There is Canada Day, but it is in the middle of the summer. It is hard to celebrate in the middle of the summer. If kids were in school, we could have a flag celebration for them, which would be more like an indoctrination or propaganda day than a day of celebration. We would like kids to be back in school, so that the celebration could take place at school".

However, it seems to me that the argument put forward by the hon. member from the Reform Party could have some merit. That is always the problem with days like women's day, child day, mother's day, a day for this and another for that. I think that the flag should be honoured 365 days a year in all circumstances.

Personally, I am old enough to remember how the Canadian flag came to be. As hon. members will remember, under the leadership of Réal Caouette and his Social Credit Party, the French-speaking members of this Parliament argued vigorously in favour of Canada adopting its own flag, as we Quebecers had a hard time relating to the Queen's flag, a flag that looked like the British flag and did not mean much to us.

Quebec has its flag, and I think Quebecers venerate the flag of Quebec first and foremost, the flag that belongs to us, and tells who we are, because Canada was such a long time adopting its own. Personally, I have a great deal of difficulty believing that those two bands on either side of the maple leaf represent the Atlantic on the one side and the Pacific on the other. Oceans sure ain't what they used to be.

I can perhaps understand Canada's wanting to have a flag day, but I cannot see why it should be a statutory holiday. We in Quebec have a journée du drapeau, I know, but I would also be opposed to its becoming a statutory holiday in Quebec.

I believe that a flag day needs to be celebrated at work, for it is important in my mind to associate it with work and with the pride of living and working under the flag. We Quebecers have our journée du drapeau and it is a day when we celebrate. But I do not see why it should be made a statutory holiday.

• (1845)

Canada has given itself many opportunities to promote its flag. The Canadian flag became very popular following the campaigns led by the Minister of Canadian Heritage. The minister distributed flags all over the country. Since one had to phone to order them, Quebec only accounted for 10% of total demand. I believe that, for Canada Day, spending was increased by 400% in recent years, with the result that Quebec finally got more than its fair share, since 63% of the budget for last year's Canada Day was spent in our province.

The flag is, of course, a symbol for a country. It is very difficult for me to tell Canada what it should do with its flag, but I do not think it should be used as a tool for propaganda or indoctrination. It must be something that people are proud of.

When I was very young, we used to sing the national anthem every Friday afternoon in school. We would salute the flag, but it was the Quebec flag. We sang *O Canada*, which was sung in Quebec long before it became Canada's national anthem.

This is how I was raised. I have always respected the flag. I will respect the Canadian flag as long as Quebec will be part of Canada. However, my allegiance is first and foremost to the Quebec flag, which I learned to love. I hope Canadians will learn to love their flag the way we learned to love ours, but without having to designate a legal holiday when no one goes to work.

[English]

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak today to Bill C-401 which would establish a flag day on the third Monday of February as a national holiday to be observed throughout Canada.

I appreciate the genesis of the hon. member's bill and his studies with Pauline Jewett. I also appreciate his faithfulness to the idea of heritage and I share that with him.

I was interested in the fact that the original concept was to have a heritage day and then it moved to a flag day. I must say that I have some concerns with the name.

I am not going to dwell on anybody's devotion to the flag as a national symbol, but I recall an uproar which occupied the attention of some in this place some time ago and it was all for the sake of a flag. That rancorous debate did not feed one child, improve our health care system, create a job, cut a tax or in any way benefit a Canadian. Therefore, I am reluctant to dwell too much on the flag, given the fact that it causes a great deal of problems for some people.

This debate allows for the dream of a well earned holiday for hardworking Canadian workers in the dead of winter, and I appreciate that. However, do we need a day to commemorate the flag? I think not. I appreciate the sense of inspiration which my

hon. colleague gets from the flag and I respect that, but I do not think a day should be named after it.

I agree that Canadians should recognize their roots and their symbolic heritage. It is very important for us to draw strength from our roots. We need to find inspiration and guidance from the people who came before us. But I think that each of us looks to different people for inspiration.

I have found inspiration in an early suffragette named Francis Beynon. She was a journalist in Winnipeg in the 1910s. She worked for a newspaper called *Women Grain Growers*. For many years she spread information and communicated with isolated women on the prairies who lived on mile-wide farms and had no contact with anyone.

Francis Beynon taught women a lot about their rights. She was very involved in the struggle to get the first vote for women. When the first war came along she fought very hard to get the vote for immigrant women. That was not an easy battle because unfortunately there were a lot of women, even in this country, who were unwilling to allow foreign women to vote during the war.

• (1850)

Francis Beynon showed her patriotism not in her flag, but in her actions. She took this very important democratic stand. I respect her for that. It was not a popular stand. She also fought against conscription. I believe that she passed out of history because she did not take a popular stand.

I respect and find inspiration in people like Francis Beynon. I wonder whether I should suggest a Francis Beynon day. Instead, I think I would look at the concept of an ancestor day.

Other people might look to someone like Agnes MacPhail for inspiration. As we walk in the door every day we see the statue of Agnes MacPhail. She was the first woman member of parliament. She served in the House from 1921 until 1940. In 1943 she was one of two women to be elected to the Ontario legislature. She was also the first woman appointed to the Canadian delegation of the League of Nations, where she insisted on serving on the disarmament committee.

She is another important ancestor for many of us in terms of our political beliefs. She was a very important woman in Canadian history. She was a peacemaker and an inspiration to many women. Maybe we should have an Agnes MacPhail day.

Recently I had the privilege of being part of the unveiling of a plaque for Portia White in Preston, Nova Scotia. She was a very famous and inspirational black Canadian woman from my community.

Portia White was the first African Canadian woman to win international acclaim as an opera singer. She was a famous musician in our country. She was born into a musical family and taught choir in her church. She was a teacher and a community

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person who is remembered by thousands of people scattered all over the country. She has become well known as an inspiration for thousands of young black Nova Scotians.

I believe we should all celebrate our roots and our ancestors. They are the root to our patriotism. We should be helping young Canadians to find inspiration wherever they can. Instead of having a day that represents one inspiration, a piece of fabric with some red and white on it, it may be more appropriate to have an ancestor day. We accept the fact that we all have ancestors who we gain strength from. We should try to recognize them in a public way. That would go a long way in encouraging us to gain strength from our roots and in helping us to understand our roots better, and perhaps one another.

I do not agree at this time that we need a flag day. I do not think that is a wise option. Instead, I suggest that we have an ancestor day.

Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise before the House to debate Bill C-401, an act to amend the Holidays Act to have a flag day and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

First I would like to commend the sponsor of this private member's bill, the hon. member for Durham, for his obvious sense of pride and patriotism in both our country and our Canadian flag. Most Canadians would agree with these sentiments.

[*Translation*]

When I look up and see the Canadian flag flying high, I proudly recall all those who, throughout our history, fought to make Canada the best country in the world.

I think of the Fathers of Confederation, with their vision of a great country, I think of our war heroes who fought courageously to defend our freedom, and I think of the millions of Canadians who struggle daily to improve not just their own lives but the lives of their fellow citizens. They are what Canada is all about and they are what make this the world's most respected and wonderful country in which to live.

[*English*]

The Canadian flag represents the tremendous efforts of all Canadians who have worked so tirelessly to make this such a great country. It is the embodiment of what we have achieved together as a nation. I love our Canadian flag and I am tremendously proud of our country and our achievements, but I do not believe the flag should somehow overshadow the celebration and recognition we already offer to our great country. Obviously I am referring to July 1, Canada Day.

• (1855)

Every July 1, millions of Canadians participate in Canada Day celebrations across the country. Whether they are joined together

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across the country by means of satellite or whether they proudly fly the Canadian flag at home, whatever the case the results are the same. Canadians want to show their pride in their country. It is not solely pride in the Canadian flag but what it represents.

[Translation]

The Canadian flag was first unveiled on February 15, 1965, at an official ceremony in Ottawa. Many of our fellow citizens will remember that the decision to adopt our flag was not reached without heated debate on both sides of the House, and without input from many Canadians. The intensity of the debate is a testimony to the significance of the flag as a symbol representing us as individuals.

[English]

I believe the government too often forgets just how important a symbol the Canadian flag is to our identity. The Canadian heritage minister believes that handing out hundreds of thousands of free Canadian flags at a cost of millions of dollars is enough to qualify anyone as a proud Canadian. Although most of those who receives these free flags were likely proud Canadians, I am certain that they would have been even prouder had the minister and her government invested the money into much needed programs such as education and health care.

[Translation]

Like many of our fellow citizens, I have had the opportunity to travel abroad. I met people who talked to me just because I was wearing a Canadian pin. I must say I find it heart-warming to hear people say nice things about our great country. Canada is highly regarded abroad.

A Canadian pin is a symbol of what Canada and Canadians are in people's mind. When they see the Canadian flag, they see a caring and generous country, where free citizens live in a democratic society. It bears repeating, the flag represents Canadians, and it is to them we must continue to pay tribute.

[English]

There is a number of questions we should be asking ourselves regarding Bill C-401. Should Canada create a specific holiday with the sole purpose of recognizing an important symbol of who we are as a people and what we stand for as a nation? Or, should we not focus greater attention on promoting ourselves through an existing holiday, Canada Day, in such a manner whereby we could focus greater attention on educating Canadians about our history and the importance our flag has played in it?

On November 11 we celebrate Remembrance Day. For days leading up to it and including Remembrance Day we hear countless

stories of the exploits of brave Canadians during both World War I and World War II, along with those who fought in the Korean War and our various peacekeeping missions.

These individuals fought and in many instances died so that we could enjoy the freedom we have today. It is because of them that we can fly our Canadian flag. Although in most instances their exploits were done prior to the adoption of our official Canadian flag, it does not diminish the significance of the Canadian flag being flown during these ceremonies. The Canadian flag is the embodiment of their struggle and sacrifice for the country.

Do Canadians across the country want another national holiday? Have the proponents of the bill actually held comprehensive discussions with representatives of Canadian industry or boards of trade to see just how another national holiday would affect the Canadian economy? Can the Canadian economy support another holiday? Canadian taxpayers may already believe there are too many holidays. I am certain when approached they would likely say that politicians already have too many days off.

Our fragile economy continues to struggle from the effects of high taxes and high unemployment. The Liberal government continues to refuse to reduce taxes which would help stimulate growth in the economy. It is intent on continuing to gouge Canadian workers for refusing to significantly reduce EI premiums even though reports show that a greater reduction is possible and necessary.

These are serious problems that Canadian taxpayers are facing on a daily basis. Can they legitimately afford to sponsor another holiday no matter how good or how just it might be?

• (1900)

I think more consultation would be required from across the country before we systematically created a new holiday.

I appreciate the most sincere attempt by my hon. colleague to draw attention to the importance of our great flag. I commend him for that. However, at the present time we can work within the framework of already existing holidays to accomplish the same goal.

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I commend the hon. member for Durham for bringing this issue to the floor of the House of Commons for debate.

As he may be aware, in the past I presented a private member's bill proposing the adoption of an oath of allegiance to the flag. I share his passion and his love for our country and its symbols which is why I felt it is important for me to speak on Bill C-401.

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I support the spirit of Bill C-401, an act to amend the Holidays Act and make flag day a statutory holiday. I agree that flag day is an important day and that it should be recognized.

The flag is what symbolizes our nation. It is bold and represents our strength as a country. The maple leaf demonstrates unity with the stem, the federal government, binding the tips of the leaf, the provinces and territories, together. It is an internationally respected symbol and an ambassador of tolerance, peace and understanding. It is Canada.

Compared to those of other countries, our flag is quite young. It was only 34 years ago that parliament debated the adoption of a new flag. Imagine how exciting it would have been to see the maple leaf flying over the Peace Tower for the very first time. It is that excitement that I hope Canadians everywhere still feel whenever they see our flag.

A teacher in my riding of Guelph—Wellington is working very hard to make sure that our younger generations share that enthusiasm for our national symbols. Joe Tersigni has put a motion to the local Catholic separate school board that would require every Catholic school in the district to raise and lower the flag every single day. While this may seem like a normal process or way of doing business, as far as Mr. Tersigni is aware, no other school board in Canada has done this yet. This simple action would go a long way in teaching respect for our flag and our country. It would teach students that our flag is a treasured emblem of our nation, one that must never be forgotten or abused.

Mr. Tersigni's school, Our Lady of Lourdes, is hosting a special ceremony on Monday to commemorate the adoption of this important motion. On February 15, flag day, every Catholic school in Guelph will raise a new Canadian flag and the students and teachers of those schools will be reminded of all that it stands for.

Canada is a young country with an even younger flag, but that does not mean the maple leaf is not steeped in history and significance. Just think of what we have accomplished in the 34 years since it was adopted.

We have developed the Canadarm, a tool that has been critical to the success of many space missions. We have watched inspiring individuals like Terry Fox and Rick Hansen venture across Canada to raise awareness on very important causes. And we have twice hosted the Olympics and won numerous medals. We have worked to make and to keep peace in every corner of the globe. We have repatriated our Constitution. We have officially adopted O Canada as our national anthem. We have come into our own as a nation. All under our own flag.

These are just a few of the reasons why I feel it is so very important to recognize and celebrate flag day. I do feel that flag day deserves more recognition and promotion than is currently the case. If Canadians were to be polled, how many could say why February 15 is a very important day?

Wendy Willis, a teacher at Crestwicke Christian Academy in Guelph, recently brought her grade 4 class to citizenship court. Each new Canadian was presented with a handmade valentine. One of her students, Brad Lord, recited a poem welcoming the new citizens and outlining all that Canada has to offer. The closing line of his poem was "From coast to coast, it's all within reach". The new Canadians no doubt believe this statement or they would not have chosen to make Canada their new home. The students believe it too, because now they have seen firsthand how special it is to be Canadian.

• (1905)

I believe it is through initiatives such as those undertaken by Mr. Tersigni and Ms. Willis that we can best educate Canadians to appreciate all that we have and to the importance of our flag day.

I would be remiss in not mentioning Joyce Hammond who two years ago suggested to my office and myself that we should think of doing an oath of allegiance to the Canadian flag. I put it forward in this very House as a private member's bill. When I did, over 500 municipal councils wrote to me, including a number of them in Quebec, and said that they agreed with this premise, that this should happen. Mr. Speaker, I put you on notice that I will be reintroducing the bill at some point in time.

As I mentioned earlier, I sincerely thank my colleague, the hon. member for Durham for proposing Bill C-401 because it gives us all an excellent opportunity to promote flag day and to encourage Canadians everywhere to take part in the celebrations. My hon. colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage says it has been wonderful to promote Canada Day and flag day and therefore I make special mention of him.

Whether it is by wearing a Canada flag pin on your lapel or dressing in red and white, or attending a flag raising ceremony, there are ways for everyone to show a little patriot love.

Canada truly is the greatest country in the world. Let us celebrate it.

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Durham. I advise the House that when the hon. member speaks, he will close the debate.

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we have had a very useful debate today.

The members of the Bloc will not necessarily be supportive of the legislation. It was interesting to listen to the member as she talked about times when singing O Canada in that great province and because of the flag's association with the monarchy Quebecers felt that it was just too late to make that change, so they opted for another flag, the flag of the province of Quebec. I do not want to get into an argument about flags but the flag of Quebec of course is

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a monarchical symbol, the monarchy of France, so it seems unusual to me.

Similarly the New Democratic Party has its own wish list. It wants to recognize the women's movement. As I listened to the debate by the opposition I reflected and wondered what it must have been like back in 1964 when everybody had some reason not to proceed with the flag debate. They wanted to keep it the way it was, and we should be honouring some other group within our society. I am not saying that the member of the New Democratic Party did not have a good argument, but the reality is our flag unites all of us, women, men, everyone under one flag.

The member from the Reform Party thought that it was inappropriate to have just one day for celebration, that we should be celebrating this within our bodies every day. I suppose we could say the same thing about Christmas which of course is a national holiday. If one is a Christian why should there be a Christian holiday called Christmas? It should be something that is inside a person every day and there should not be a specific statutory holiday for that reason. The reality is that is what people have holidays for, to celebrate the things they think are unique in life.

• (1910)

The debate in the House is amazing. Other countries celebrate flag days because they are proud of their countries: Argentina, Finland, Haiti, Liberia, Panama, Paraguay, and the list goes on. Yet here we have this intellectual debate about why we cannot have a statutory holiday. I think that is unfortunate.

My concern was that it was not a votable motion. It would be great to carry on this debate for another two hours. I wonder if I could seek unanimous consent to continue the debate by making it a votable motion.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent that the motion be made votable, as suggested by the hon. member?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: The time for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped from the order paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

TRANSPORT

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask a question of the parliamentary secretary following a question I posed back in November with respect to a shortage of aviation inspectors.

My question was generated by a report put out by Price Waterhouse, a very well respected consultant in Canada. In the study it prepared it found that as the government moves from being a hands-on regulator to more or less a monitor and as we go through the deregulation process in the aviation industry there is a significant and concerning shortage of aviation inspectors to inspect aircraft and aviation facilities.

The study says that the growing wage gap between the private sector and the department means that the department must either choose between a shortage of inspectors or lower the qualifications. This is no time to lower qualifications for inspectors. It cites certain provinces in Canada that have inspector shortages in their areas of up to 20%. It puts a number on it and says there are 80 vacancies for inspector jobs in Canada.

My question is in the interest of ensuring that aviation safety is addressed on an ongoing basis. I feel it is, but I want to make sure in this circumstance and for this case that the minister is taking steps to ensure there is an adequate number of aviation inspectors and that they have adequate training to do the job.

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I reiterate that Transport Canada recognized the recruitment and retention problem with the technical inspector community. In October 1997 it commissioned the Price Waterhouse review to help in resolving it.

Similar independent reviews are now under way of both the civil aviation pilot inspector and the aircraft certification engineering communities. It is also important to note that Transport Canada has never downsized its number of aviation inspectors. The number of positions has continually been growing. The department has added 179 safety inspector positions in the last five years.

Transport Canada has initiated a comprehensive program to deal with identified problems through training, new recruitment methods and reclassification. Approximately 66% of civil aviation technical inspectors were reclassified after retraining.

Canada was one of the first developed countries to be assessed under the International Civil Aviation Organization safety oversight program in mid-October. We were in receipt of an interim report and the results were very positive.

The interim report concludes that the civil aviation organization of Transport Canada has established a very sound structure for safety oversight. The staff has the proper qualifications, is provided

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with appropriate training and has at its disposal the proper tools to discharge its duties.

The interim report also notes that Transport Canada has launched a number of initiatives to address recruitment and retention issues including commissioning the Price Waterhouse review.

I look forward to making the final report public in the near future—

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary but his time has expired.

[*Translation*]

The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.15 p.m.)

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