



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, April 14, 1999**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 14, 1999

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (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 Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore.

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

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

*[English]*

### PARKINSON'S DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH

**Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, April has been designated Parkinson's Disease Awareness Month to highlight one of the most common neurological disorders.

The disease is a chronic brain disorder resulting in tremors, slow movements and muscle stiffness. It affects over 100,000 Canadians, most over the age of 55.

The Parkinson Foundation of Canada, established in 1955, consists of more than 100 chapters and support groups nationwide. The foundation's activities are committed to funding, research, seeking treatments, and eventually finding a cure for Parkinson's disease.

The foundation provides training, counselling and workshops for patients, caregivers and health care providers, while developing educational material to heighten public awareness about Parkinson's.

I invite the House to join with me in wishing the Parkinson Foundation of Canada and its volunteers a very successful Parkinson's Disease Awareness Month.

### NIPAWIN EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE OFFICE

**Mr. Derrek Konrad (Prince Albert, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, a valued frontline federal office in my riding is to be shut down soon.

The Nipawin employment insurance office is closing and those least able to afford it will be forced to make a two hour round trip to the next office and no one can say why.

I have spoken to many upset users, received about 200 letters of support, attended a town hall meeting on the subject and had representations from both the town council and the chamber of commerce who are all opposed to the decision to close the office.

The Reform Party is in favour of prudent fiscal management and would not support the existence of an office for show, but this office is the busiest of its kind in Saskatchewan.

As the residents of Nipawin and district fill out their income tax forms this spring, they will see first hand that they are paying a lot more and getting a lot less from this Liberal government.

The message from my riding is this: Reduced services combined with high taxes are not acceptable.

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*[Translation]*

### DICTÉE DES AMÉRIQUES

**Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in this year of Canadian francophonie, I would like to report that last weekend the final of the dictée des Amériques was held in Quebec City. This international event featured 112 finalists from 12 countries in America, Europe or Africa.

It is a source of great pride that Canada has hosted such an event. The French language holds pride of place in our country. One Canadian in three speaks French and one in four has French as his or her mother tongue.

Congratulations to the prize winners. Three of them came from right here in Canada: Marc Ethier of Gatineau, Heidi Garrand of Regina, and Monique McDonald of North Vancouver.

In Canada, the French language has an intrinsic value, even if we are proud of this country's linguistic diversity.

*S. O. 31*

[English]

**WESTERN TASK FORCE**

**Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, as the Liberal's western task force prepares for its great expedition to British Columbia, here is a brief history lesson to assist them.

Prior to this government's election, B.C. used to have an army base, a fact that appears to have escaped the Secretary of State for the Status of Women.

Prior to this government's election, B.C. used to have a fishing industry, a fact that appears to have escaped the more aptly named minister of "no more" fisheries.

Prior to this government's election, B.C. used to have a softwood lumber industry, a fact that appears to have escaped the Minister of Heritage as her misguided Bill C-55 threatens to further decimate the industry.

Finally, prior to this government's election, B.C. used to have a booming economy that the federal government sucked billions of tax dollars out of. The boom is gone but the Liberals, well, they still suck.

**The Speaker:** I would appeal to hon. members to please be very judicious in your choice of words.

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[Translation]

**JEUNESSES MUSICALES DU CANADA**

**Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this year marks the fiftieth birthday of Jeunesses musicales du Canada. This event will be celebrated in a number of events throughout the year, including one last Monday evening at the Montreal Casino.

Jeunesses musicales du Canada was founded in 1949 by Gilles Lefebvre, Anaïs Allard-Rousseau and Joseph Lemieux. The objective of this member organization of Jeunesses musicales internationales is to develop a taste for music in young people.

In addition, thanks to its pivotal role in the creation of a world orchestra directed by the greatest conductors of our time, Jeunesses musicales du Canada offers our top musical talents the opportunity to hone their craft alongside musicians from many other countries.

On the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary, we owe a vote of thanks to the visionary Canadians who have thus made a contribution to the development of Canadian culture.

Many happy returns, Jeunesses musicales du Canada.

● (1405)

**KOSOVO**

**Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for a number of days now, all the refugees—men, women and children—who have fled Kosovo and the threats have been in our thoughts.

I fully support our government on this matter so vital and important to the people of Canada, which we debated when the House resumed sitting on Monday.

Canadians are aware of the suffering of the Kosovar people, and they can count on our government to speak on their behalf and especially to act, as we are doing, in a timely fashion.

We all want this war to end as soon as possible so the refugees may return home and, most importantly, recover their dignity.

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[English]

**ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE**

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, one of Canada's greatest military institutions was founded 75 years ago. The Royal Canadian Air Force is celebrating its birthday as its members perform heroically in the skies over Yugoslavia.

The Yugoslavian mission is, however, just the latest in a long, proud history of involvement for the air force. The Canadian Air Force made an important contribution to both world wars, Korea, the gulf war, not to mention the ongoing commitments to peace-keeping.

During World War I, the most highly decorated allied airman was Canadian Billy Bishop who downed 72 enemy aircraft during the war.

In 1940, during World War II, the RCAF played a key role in the Battle of Britain dashing Nazi Germany's hope of invading the United Kingdom.

The air force went on to train over 130,000 allied pilots while playing a significant role during the Battle of the Atlantic, the air war against Germany and on D-Day.

Congratulations to all members of the Canadian Air Force, both past and present. You are Canada's top guns.

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**SLEEMAN BREWERIES**

**Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to toast Sleeman Breweries.

Located in my riding of Guelph—Wellington, Sleeman has had an outstanding year and recently reported that its fourth quarter profits have increased by 44% in the past 12 months. Not only has Sleeman expanded its operations by creating a national family of

craft breweries, it has also increased the popularity of its traditional brands. This is great news for Sleeman and for my hon. colleagues from Quebec because it is in their home province that Sleeman saw the largest increase in sales.

I would like to congratulate Sleeman Breweries on yet another success. Its business excellence, combined with its commitment to promoting responsible drinking and its commitment to our community has made all of Guelph—Wellington proud.

When it comes to beer, the choice is clear and that choice is Sleeman.

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### SIKH NATION

**Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today marks the 300th birthday of the Sikh nation. It is the Sikh duty to walk in the footsteps of the Sikh gurus. Their belief was that all persons are the same though they appear different regardless of creed, colour or race.

That is why the basic lessons Sikhism teaches are: selfless service, tolerance, compassion, love, contentment, equality, humbleness and well-being for all.

I would like to thank the Hon. Prime Minister and the chairman of Canada Post, André Ouellet, both of whom next Monday will unveil a Canada Post stamp with the Sikh religious symbol, the “Kanda Sahib”.

Finally, I would urge all my colleagues in the House of Commons to join me in congratulating Sikhs in Canada and around the world on this momentous occasion.

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[Translation]

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Raymond Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Henri, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was flattered to note how many colleagues had voted in favour of Motion M-360 yesterday evening in the House.

Encouraging the use of public transit is a giant step in support of the environment. Furthermore, modern forms of transportation must make a strong contribution to the fight against pollution, since they move noiselessly, pollution free and are quick and light.

This is why I support the construction of a monorail on the Champlain Bridge estacade, as it will help fight pollution, reduce traffic on the bridge and above all significantly develop the economy of my beautiful riding of Verdun—Saint-Henri, the southwest and greater Montreal.

I note that the vast majority of my colleagues are sensitive to the environment and such positive action must be acknowledged publicly.

*S. O. 31*

• (1410)

[English]

### JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS

**Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's legal profession suffers from racism and this Liberal government has just made matters worse.

Quebec has recently chosen to address racism in the legal profession by appointing the first black judge in its history. Felicitations.

The Liberal government chose instead to push equality for black people, and indeed for all people of colour, backward.

This slap in the face of all Canadians of conscience came recently when the government failed to appoint Judge Corrine Sparks to the new Unified Family Court.

Appointed in 1987, Judge Sparks is the most senior woman and the only black judge sitting in the family court in Nova Scotia. Judge Sparks is widely respected both in the black community throughout Canada and by the legal profession in Nova Scotia.

This Liberal government must immediately review and rectify this wrong.

Dr. Esmerelda Thornhill, professor of law at Dalhousie wrote:

I further implore you to put in place mechanisms that will start guaranteeing an equitable representation for racial minorities in all federal appointments to the Judiciary.

The black community and all Canadians deserve justice on this matter.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### GYMNAST JULIE BEAULIEU

**Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I join with my constituents in Mercier in congratulating young gymnast Julie Beaulieu on the two gold and two bronze medals she won at International Gymnix in Montreal on March 13 and 14 last.

Gymnix is a competition participated in by the Ukraine, the United States, France, Argentina and Spain, countries recognized for the excellence of their gymnasts.

Ranked third in Canada, Julie carried off top honours in this competition. Thanks to her perseverance, her talent, her tremendous performances, and the support of her parents, she will be taking part in the Canadian championships next May in Vancouver. She stands a very good chance of making it to the next Olympic Games, as well as to the Pan-American Games and the world championships, her personal preference.

*Oral Questions*

Once again, congratulations, Julie. We will be with you in spirit at these important sports events.

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[English]

**SOURIS RIVER**

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak of a serious situation that is affecting southwestern Manitoba and my riding of Brandon—Souris. The residents of the area are preparing for one of the worst floods the area has seen in 20 years.

The Souris River is predicted to rise well above flood stage. Several hundred acres are under water right now in the Souris Valley with the river expected to peak around April 21st. Some businesses are already feeling the affects of the flood.

Farmers could be especially hard hit. If water stays too long in the fields, crops will not be seeded in time and what little profits there are will wash away.

Provincial flood forecaster, Alf Warkentin, said recently that the length of this year's Souris River flood would depend on the weather. If there are any more rain storms it could stay until June.

As with the Saguenay and the Red River Valley, I urge the government to apply the same consistency in the level of compensation to those affected by the Souris River flood. The livelihood of farmers and other businesses in the area are at stake. It is time for the federal government to start becoming proactive and develop a long term disaster assistance program.

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**UNITED ALTERNATIVE**

**Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Reform leader's grand dream of a united alternative continues to implode as more and more Reformers see it for what it is; an attempt to gain power without regard for principle.

As the Reform member for Yorkton—Melville said in today's paper, "the byelection results should be a serious wake-up call for us. We've got some serious problems". He was referring to Reform's last place finish in the Windsor—St. Clair byelection.

Reform has spent two years and all its resources trying to create a united alternative that will win seats in Ontario. What did it get for its efforts? It got a drop in the party's popular vote from 14% in 1997 to an embarrassing 6% this week.

There is a lesson in this for the Reform Party: you do not gain support by playing divisive regional politics; you do not gain support by undermining public institutions, and you certainly do not gain support by merely changing the name of your party.

You gain support by working hard, listening to Canadians and above all, showing respect for every citizen in this country.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**KOSOVO**

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on April 8, as part of the Salon international du livre de Québec, Ursulines de Quebec and Ursulines de Loretteville students released a collection of texts on international peace.

As the fighting rages in Yugoslavia and hundreds of thousands of men, women and children are forced to flee their homeland, I join with young Catherine Michaud, a sixth-grade student, who penned the following:

My wish would be for no more war  
For universal love to grow  
For everyone, not just for me  
A world of peace to get to know.

My wish would be for no more war  
For weapons all to disappear  
So war's young victims, not just me  
A shattered world need never fear.

May Catherine's heartfelt plea transcend international borders and add its echo to that of the shells.

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**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

• (1415)

[English]

**KOSOVO**

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, today Germany unveiled a peace plan to end the crisis in the Balkans.

This plan offers Milosevic a 24 hour suspension of NATO air strikes if he starts withdrawing his forces from Kosovo. It calls for a UN force to move in as Yugoslav forces withdraw. It entails a ceasefire and disarmament plan for ethnic Albanians and the return of refugees under a temporary UN administration.

Has Canada endorsed the German peace plan?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the proposal put forward by the Germans was a program that was worked on last weekend at a G-8 political directors meeting at which Canada was clearly represented. A series of proposals were looked at with a view to potentially having a G-8 ministers meeting.

In the meantime there has been a discussion between Foreign Minister Ivanov and Secretary of State Albright. Clearly, not only would we support it, but we certainly have to seek out the agreement of Russia to be one of the participants in it, and get the agreement of Mr. Milosevic to the conditions that were set out.

*Oral Questions*

As I said yesterday, we are hoping that these diplomatic initiatives that began last week will bear some fruit. However, at this point in time there are still those kinds of exchanges and dialogues taking place.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the German peace plan calls for a heavily armed UN ground force to move into Kosovo as Yugoslav forces withdraw.

If the Canadian government was discussing this plan with the Germans last week, why did the Prime Minister tell the House that the commitment of ground troops was not at all being considered at this time?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, clearly the Leader of the Opposition has confused two things.

We have always said, and it goes back to the February debate that was held in the House, that Canada would participate in a peace implementation force. It would monitor and make sure that any agreement that was arrived at would be properly honoured. That is exactly what is contained in the proposal that was looked at at the G-8 meetings. There is no difference.

Something that was debated and confirmed in the House last February is part of the proposals that are being looked at right now.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, regardless of the explanation now, the commitment of ground troops to action in Yugoslavia is no longer a hypothetical situation as it was described a day ago in the House by the Prime Minister.

What is Canada expected to commit to this UN ground force? Will the Prime Minister now be seeking a mandate for that commitment from this House through a votable motion?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think the Leader of the Opposition was listening very carefully to my last answer.

I said that the House has already debated and discussed what is being proposed in the G-8 meeting. That has been part of a discussion that the House of Commons has already addressed. I would also like to say with great satisfaction that all sides of the House agreed at that time that Canada would participate in a peace implementation force. That is all that is being considered as part of the proposal that was developed during the G-8 meetings this weekend.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, in this discussion there have been no details forthcoming.

There has not been an actual votable motion on the floor of this parliament. Despite support from all parties in the House, the government's attitude on our involvement in this thing borders on contempt of parliament. The government refuses to commit to a vote on the conditions that would be involved with the Canadian

ground troops. It refused that vote. It would be so easy for the government to come forward with it.

I would like to ask the minister again, because he would go forward so much stronger, does the minister believe that this parliament has a role to play in this huge military engagement Canadians are involved in?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this parliament has been playing a role. There have been important, in depth, take note debates on three different occasions. Opposition critics have been briefed. There have been regular statements by ministers.

This parliament has been greatly and deeply involved. I am sure it will continue to be deeply involved.

• (1420)

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is one thing to take note. How about we take a vote? That is what Canadians are looking forward to right now. All of us need to band together to make sure that we are not just taking note of something. We are at war. We need a vote in this parliament and the minister needs it so strongly for that confidence to move forward.

We also just heard this morning that a spokesman at NATO in Brussels has announced that he wants more planes to come from Canada. Why is it that Canadians will find out from a NATO spokesman in Brussels about increasing escalation of military equipment and forces from Canada? Why would that be?

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is full consultation on a daily basis with all the partners in NATO. All 19 of us are constantly being consulted.

Additional aircraft are needed because we want to intensify this campaign to stop the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Additional aircraft are being provided by many countries and Canada is also considering it.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on Monday we had a debate on the situation in Kosovo.

During that debate, the government told us that stopping the bombing to bring President Milosevic back at the negotiation table was absolutely out of the question. Yet, this is precisely what the German peace plan proposes. Today, the Minister of Foreign Affairs told us that he was aware of that plan and that he had discussed it during the weekend.

Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs tell us whether Canada changed its position, or whether the minister and cabinet did not inform us, did not tell this House about Canada's participation in these talks on diplomatic options, during the meeting of foreign affairs ministers the minister attended?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure where the hon. member gets his information.

The proposal is not talking about a pause and then something happening. We are saying if there is an agreement, which is what we have been saying all along from the very first, if there is an agreement, then the bombing would stop while Milosevic withdrew his troops. You cannot have troops withdrawing if you are bombing, but there would be no pause until there was that agreement.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I understand, but we were told just 48 hours ago that it was pointless to raise such possibilities. Today, we are being told the opposite.

We were also told that it was pointless to raise the issue at the security council, since Russia and China are opposed to any diplomatic settlement that would include the withdrawal of Milosevic's troops from Kosovo.

It just so happens that the Chinese premier is here for a week. Could the minister tell us if the government intends to discuss the German proposal with the Chinese Prime Minister, to convince him of the need to have the UN security council examine this peace plan?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes.

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, despite our repeated questions to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Canada has, in our opinion, done nothing to assume leadership and find a political solution to the conflict raging in Kosovo.

Not only is Germany proposing a peace plan, its chancellor is proposing a stability pact for the Balkans.

Could the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs finally show some leadership by unreservedly supporting the German peace plan and by working as hard as possible to convince the NATO allies and the UN security council of the value of this plan?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I told the Leader of the Opposition, the German proposal was on the agenda for all G-8 members last weekend, Canada included.

We are, in particular, greatly interested in ensuring that the United Nations play an active role in any agreement on Kosovo. As the hon. member is aware, last week I went to the United Nations to discuss with the secretary general the role the UN could play.

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, if this peace plan is so important, why was it not mentioned in the debate in the House?

Two things are obvious: Canada's lack of leadership and the obstinate refusal of the Prime Minister to hold a vote on the nature of our commitment.

• (1425)

Since the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs are in agreement on a continuation of Monday's debate on the situation in Kosovo, would they now be prepared to focus this debate on the German peace plan and to have this House vote on the plan—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have made an offer to the opposition parties to continue the debate begun on Monday, and some of them turned it down. If they still want to have that opportunity, we will give it very careful consideration.

*[English]*

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Canadians are desperate for us to continue pursuing diplomatic solutions to the Kosovo crisis through the United Nations. In my letter sent to the Prime Minister earlier today, I outlined how Canada has a means through its position on the security council to overcome the veto barrier. It has been done before. Think of Lester Pearson in the Suez crisis.

Will Canada use its position on the security council to put forward a resolution to get the Kosovo crisis before the UN General Assembly?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with the sentiment expressed by the leader of the New Democratic Party that Canadians, in fact people around the world, want to see a diplomatic solution. It is certainly something we have been actively pursuing.

I would point out that at the discussions held last weekend and at the NATO council, the nature of those diplomatic solutions were carefully examined. It would include going back to the United Nations Security Council to provide a mandate for an agreement to be followed through in Kosovo.

I would say at this point in time there is in active play the opportunity to use the security council. There are active discussions with the Russians about how that can be achieved.

We will take note of the idea of the hon. member.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we have a chance for peace here. We have a chance to stop the killing. I hope the Minister of Foreign Affairs will pursue this proposal with a vengeance. It has worked before. For his role in that process Lester Pearson got a Nobel peace prize. It has worked before and it can work again.



*Oral Questions*

Will the Minister of Foreign Affairs assure Canadians today that we will use our seat on the security council to sponsor a resolution to get the Kosovo crisis before the UN General Assembly?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week when I was at the United Nations I met with the secretary general as well as representatives from a number of delegations. We talked about a united for peace resolution. The assessment at the time was that there was no consensus for that, that there would not be an agreed upon vote at the assembly itself.

What I am saying to the hon. member is that there is now in play a proposal that would be designed to bring to the security council an agreement of all the parties that would lead to a settlement in Kosovo. Right now that is the opportunity we are working on very actively in co-operation with other G-8 members and other members of the NATO council.

As I said, we will continue to pursue that. If it does not work, we will look at other options.

**Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Prime Minister for his rare but clear and concise answer yesterday.

I would also like to remind the government of the Somalia commission of inquiry and its call for a vigilant parliament. The Somalia report cautioned about sending troops abroad that were not properly trained for their designate mission.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister assure the House that before Canadian ground forces are deployed to the Balkans that they are properly trained and equipped for their designate mission?

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC):** Mr. Speaker, this is a whole new thing.

I am informed that the 3rd Battalion of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, our ACE and UN standby units, have been training for months for action in the Balkans, including at least one trip to the United States for training. The training in the United States was not oriented to peacekeeping and they are now, in turn, training Lord Strathcona's Horse. With support, that would be about 2,000 soldiers. Can the minister confirm that this group is being considered for the Kosovo mission and in what capacity?

• (1430)

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, all of our troops are trained to be combat capable. There are various conditions that come up in peacekeeping missions. We have seen that in Bosnia and in other theatres. They

are not always peaceful. They have to be prepared for different eventualities.

Yesterday the hon. member brought up this figure of 2,000. He brought it up because he said that something was being discussed at Kingston. I looked into that and I found out that a month ago there was a classroom discussion at the peacekeeping training centre there. Somebody asked a question about different theoretical possibilities and there was a general discussion.

Policy for the Canadian forces is not made in a classroom in Kingston, it is made at defence headquarters. He is being mischievous and irresponsible.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, on the very day of the Kosovo debate in this House, in response to a direct question, the Prime Minister categorically stated that the use of ground troops was not being considered, period. So the possibility was not debated. It was not on the table.

Suddenly we find out that this was actively being considered by the government at the time, in fact the week before. Why would the government withhold this information from the House if its desire is to get the support of the House for what it is doing in Kosovo?

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have been abundantly clear about this. The only ground forces we have been talking about are those in relation to a peace implementation plan. There will be peacekeepers when a peaceful condition exists in Kosovo. That is the only thing this government has put forward. It was discussed in the House on February 17 and that is what we are preparing 600 troops to do.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, we will give the defence minister a chance to be even more abundantly clear. If this has been discussed and considered, will he tell the House precisely what commitment of ground forces Canada is going to make to this international peace force under the German plan? And will the government bring forward a motion in this House asking for a votable commitment to that commitment?

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, talk about votable situations. The official opposition had an opposition day and its members chose not to talk about this subject at all. If they want a vote, they could vote no confidence in this government.

This government is taking its responsibility and doing the proper thing because we care about the people in Kosovo who are being persecuted by the Yugoslav government.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of National Defence again raised the possibility of

*Oral Questions*

Canada's sending between 600 and 800 ground troops to Kosovo. They would probably be posted in Macedonia.

No mention was ever made in the House of soldiers being posted anywhere but in Kosovo and doing anything but playing a humanitarian and peacekeeping role.

Would the Minister of National Defence confirm that 800 soldiers could be sent to Macedonia, and, if so, what role they will play?

[English]

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is no change from what has been said. We had said 600 to 800 troops, but we now have it pinned down to 600 troops. Yes, they would go to Macedonia because they would be part of a co-operative effort with the British who are located in Macedonia. We have not determined when they are going to be deployed, but their only deployment will be as peacekeepers.

[Translation]

**Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the debate in February concerned the deployment of a peacekeeping force in Kosovo.

The minister is now talking about sending these soldiers on a different mission in a different location. The House was therefore never consulted on the government's new plans.

Will the Prime Minister promise, from his seat, to not send any ground troops to Kosovo or elsewhere without consulting the House and obtaining its approval as expressed in a vote?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is discussing a situation that for the moment is hypothetical only.

\* \* \*

• (1435)

[English]

**YEAR 2000**

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, Health Canada is not monitoring our hospitals and health care facilities for the Y2K bug. Through a survey I conducted, I found that we can expect that 35% of health care facilities will not be ready in time and will need millions of dollars to fix the problem.

Why did the Minister of Health let the Liberal policy of pay more, get less health care bring us to the point where 35% of our health care facilities will not be Y2K ready on time?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the first thing we have to do is explain to the hon. member the

constitutional responsibilities here. The provinces are responsible for the hospitals. If the provinces are not doing the job with the money that we just gave them to make sure that their own facilities are Y2K compliant, then the member ought to take it up with the provinces.

As far as Health Canada is concerned, the second thing the member has to understand is that his so-called survey is unscientific and unreliable. I can tell the member what the facts are. Health Canada is 93% compliant with its Y2K responsibilities.

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, last week the Treasury Board said that Health Canada was dead last as far as government preparedness for Y2K is concerned. A passing the buck and head in the sand approach will not fix anything. When will the government accept its responsibility for health care in this country and ensure that the money is available so that health care will be available on January 1, 2000?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Health Canada has consistently and continuously respected its responsibility in relation to the approval of medical devices and equipment and making sure its own systems are Y2K compliant. We are 93% of the way there.

With respect to hospitals throughout the country, we have encouraged the provinces to look after their responsibilities. I hope they do. I remind the member that in the recent budget we provided \$11.5 billion to help the provinces do just that.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**KOSOVO**

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I personally informed the government House leader of the pressing need to extend the debate on the situation in Kosovo this evening, until midnight.

I checked with the other opposition parties and they are all interested in continuing the debate, which should end with a vote on the important issue of the peace plan and the sending of troops to that region.

Is the government prepared to extend the debate and to conclude it with a clear vote of the House? This would be a very important measure under the circumstances.

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am quite prepared to continue the debate started the other evening, under the same government order No. 23, and under the same rules and conditions as on Monday evening. I am prepared to add several hours, so as to give to as many as possible members who wish to participate in such an important debate an opportunity to do so.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member opposite is very aware of the importance of a vote in the House of Commons on this issue.

Does he agree that a vote in the House on the peace plan proposed by Germany and on the possible deployment of troops in the Kosovo region would strengthen the government's position and would allow Canada to show some leadership in this issue, something that it has not done since the beginning of these events?

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member just asked a very interesting question, except that it has nothing to do with the previous suggestion to extend Monday's debate.

With regard to the first question, I already said that this side of the House would be prepared to extend the debate, so as to allow all those interested in making a speech and in providing some input regarding such an important issue to do so.

\* \* \*

[English]

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, thanks to the government's policies Canadians are working harder and harder and falling further behind. Today Statistics Canada revealed that Canadians have seen their pre-tax incomes fall by \$2,700 since 1989 and they have not gone up a single cent since this finance minister came to power five years ago.

When is the finance minister going to quit playing his little games, hinting and musing about tax relief, and actually deliver tax relief?

• (1440)

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's numbers are wrong. Family incomes had been declining, but since this government has taken office they have stabilized. Where they have declined is in the United States.

In addition to that, we should point out, and I am delighted to say, that the number of children living in poor or low income families has declined by 100,000.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, rival, rival, pants on fire.

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I would hope that we would not make any of the words rhyme. I would ask hon. members to be very careful in their choice of words.

**Mr. Monte Solberg:** Mr. Speaker, the fact is that pre-tax incomes are down, but taxes in Canada are up. Even taking into

account what the minister has said, Canadians are far worse off today than they were when this minister came to power five years ago.

We know that the finance minister feels the pain of Canadians. Instead of just feeling their pain, when is he going to do something about his terrible record and start to cut taxes in Canada?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member spent a little less time memorizing nursery rhymes and a little more time doing his basic research what he would see, as an example, is that the average income for single income families headed by women is up by \$1,000. What he would see, as a result of the child tax benefit brought in by this government, is that the situation facing low income families and single families headed by mothers has improved substantially, and his party voted against it.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**KOSOVO**

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the peace plan proposed by Germany allows the UN and its secretary general to play a key role in the Kosovo peace process.

However, Germany is not a member of the UN security council at this time and is therefore unable to put forward its plan itself.

My question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Will Canada use its seat on the security council to sponsor a resolution to have the German peace plan for Kosovo adopted by that UN body?

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have already explained to the House, what we are dealing with right now is a proposition. There is no agreed plan. We hope that there will be an agreed plan, but there is no plan.

A series of propositions were discussed last weekend at the G-8 meetings, but in order to go to the security council we need the agreement of the Russians. We do not have that agreement yet. We are working on getting it. As soon as we have that agreement we will be very happy to support that resolution at the security council.

\* \* \*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mrs. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's Cyprus group met today with the new High Commissioner for Cyprus to Canada.

As a result of that discussion I ask the Minister of Foreign Affairs if Canada will continue to support international efforts to maintain peace in Cyprus.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are very supportive of the initiative of the secretary general in Cyprus, particularly in sending a special envoy to negotiate with the two parties.

We are also pleased to note that the secretary general has now taken up the Canadian proposal, which is to initiate a de-mining program along the boundary lines as one way of building confidence between the two sides in Cyprus. We are prepared to offer concrete support for that de-mining project in Cyprus.

\* \* \*

**JUSTICE**

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the mother of Alison Parrot quietly and with dignity expressed her thoughts on our justice system. She said: "Sadly, the justice system failed to protect Alison in the first place. There were convictions that were reduced, there was parole that was reduced and not well supervised".

Why is it the policy of this government to release repeat, convicted, violent rapists to our streets?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first I would like to express my sympathy to the family in this tragic situation.

• (1445)

I can tell my hon. colleague that over the last number of years we have made a number of improvements to the parole system, including risk assessment and the selection of board members.

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the government has been in power now for over six years. In that period of time the problem has not been corrected. Clearly the problem has not been corrected. If anything, it is getting worse.

The words of the minister are very hollow to the victims. I ask again why the government is continuing to allow the release of convicted repeat violent rapists on to our streets.

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one death is one death too many. As I indicated to my hon. colleague, we have made a number of changes over the last number of years.

If my hon. colleague has suggestions that will improve it, he is aware that the Corrections and Conditional Release Act is before the justice committee and I would encourage him to bring his thoughts to that committee.

**KOSOVO**

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, because of the deepening crisis in Kosovo, Canada has an opportunity to use its position on the security council to show leadership and bring about a diplomatic solution of this crisis.

Will the minister representing Canada take before the security council a resolution under the uniting for peace precedent, a resolution which does not require a consensus of the security council but a simple majority?

Will Canada take that resolution before the security council and urge an emergency special session of the general assembly to try to arrive at a peaceful diplomatic solution to the problem?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said to the leader of the New Democratic Party, certainly we have been examining a variety of propositions including the uniting for peace resolution. I discussed that at the United Nations last week.

At the present time there is in active discussion the proposal that was developed last weekend during a meeting of G-8 officials. It was communicated among G-8 ministers and would have agreement. It would go to security council and would establish the conditions for peace in Kosovo, including the establishment of an international force to monitor the peacekeeping and to verify the peacekeeping.

In this case the proposal by the hon. member would cross currents with that particular proposal, and I think we should let this particular diplomatic initiative play out first.

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, all of us fervently and deeply hope that particular proposal will bear fruit. There is no question about that.

How long is the minister prepared to wait? How many more people must die? How many more villages must be burned and refugees driven out of their homes before Canada finally takes urgent action, brings this matter before the security council and ultimately uses our leadership in the way that Lester Pearson did in 1956 to take it before the general assembly?

How much longer is he prepared to wait before he shows that leadership and brings it before the security council?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is a very curious undertone to the member's question that somehow Canada was responsible for the violence, the persecution and the repression. It is Mr. Milosevic who is doing that. It is not Canada that is doing that. We are using all our resources not only to try to stop that repression from continuing but also to try to find a diplomatic solution.

We will continue to do them at the same time in a parallel fashion. What I am saying right now is that the most likely prospect

we have at the moment is the one we have been discussing over the last three or four days. We hope it can bear fruition.

In the world of diplomacy we are never sure but we will continue to activate that. If it does not work we will look at other options at the United Nations, including the uniting for peace resolution.

\* \* \*

## FISHERIES

**Mr. Charlie Power (St. John's West, PC):** Mr. Speaker, we are now in the seventh year of the cod moratorium in Atlantic Canada. However all scientific data show that cod stocks are at a lower level now than they were in 1992. A particular cause for alarm is that there are very few juvenile fish to be found.

Could the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans provide us with an explanation as to why, in the absence of a commercial cod fishery for seven years, cod fish numbers are so low? Is it possible that seven million harp seals might be a factor?

• (1450)

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there are a number of reasons for the decline in cod stocks and for the failure of the cod stocks to recover since the moratorium in 1992. The fundamental reason for the difficulty we face with cod was the extreme overharvesting in the period prior to 1992 when the hon. member's party was in power making decisions as to the total allowable catch.

We have been attempting, through a number of measures which are extremely difficult for the fishermen in Newfoundland, Labrador and the rest of Atlantic Canada, to try to improve cod stocks. There are a variety of reasons, including changes in water temperature particularly in the gulf, possible predation and difficulties—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for St. John's West.

**Mr. Charlie Power (St. John's West, PC):** Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons for the demise of the cod stocks is the absence of a seal management plan. There is adequate scientific evidence which proves that harp seal populations have doubled, if not tripled, over the past seven years.

The minister acknowledged on Monday to all provincial fisheries ministers that for reasons of international trade there would be no increase in seal quotas. In particular, he mentioned sanctions against canned salmon from his home province of British Columbia.

Will the minister accept his responsibility and implement, based on scientific data and not politics, a seal management plan for Atlantic Canada?

## Oral Questions

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again the hon. member's knowledge of history and his own party's history is defective. It was a Tory minister of fisheries who happened to come from Newfoundland that responded to the threats of overseas boycotts by cutting out the sealing in Atlantic Canada.

That started the increase in the population to which the hon. member has referred. If he is concerned about people being worried about overseas boycotts, he should speak to Atlantic Canadians, 80% of whose product is exported, who know that \$2.2 billion would not be coming into their region were there such a boycott.

\* \* \*

## LABOUR

**Mr. Larry McCormick (Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a recent article in the *Globe and Mail* stated that Canada holds the record for the most strike activity in the G-7 industrial countries.

Will the Minister of Labour acknowledge if this information is true or not?

**Hon. Claudette Bradshaw (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. We are now at our lowest point in strike activities in the past 20 years.

Ten per cent of the federal labour market is under the Canada Labour Code. Last year 95% of the disputes were settled without a strike or a lockout. Every Canadian should congratulate employees, employers and unions.

\* \* \*

## AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister of agriculture has repeatedly stated that his farm aid program was bankable and would be available for farmers in the spring. Spring has arrived and farmers are beginning to put in this year's crop.

Could the minister tell the House how many applications have been approved and how much money has been paid out?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the amounts of money being paid out are changing every day, but I can give the member an example.

In the province of Saskatchewan over 11,000 applications have been mailed to producers. As soon as they get them filled out and send them back we can deal with them. We cannot do it until they fill them out and send them back.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**KOSOVO**

**Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, increasingly we are hearing troubling accounts of the Serbian forces ill-treating civilians, and even systematically raping and murdering innocent Kosovar women fleeing their region.

Will the Prime Minister share any information he has about this with the House and will he undertake, on behalf of Canada, to ensure that those responsible for these atrocities are brought before the international criminal tribunal?

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, indeed there has been a number of reports of very serious crimes against humanity and violations against women by the Serb forces.

What is happening is that the investigators of the international tribunal headed by Justice Arbour are now investigating them. At the NATO meetings on Monday we agreed that we would give all possible information.

• (1455)

In fact there are Canadians, specifically from the RCMP, involved right now in taking evidence as part of that transfer of information so that the prosecution of any war criminals can take place.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH CARE**

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it has now been over 100 hours since the chiefs of two first nations in northern Ontario have been fasting at the Sioux Lookout Zone Hospital in a desperate attempt to get the federal government and the minister to address a very critical health care situation. About 16,000 residents of northern Ontario depend on this hospital that now has no emergency or obstetrics services.

Will the Minister of Health now accept responsibility for this crisis? Will he begin immediately to restore physician and nursing services that operate out of the Sioux Lookout Zone Hospital? Will he at least agree to meet today with those who are fasting in a desperate move to get attention and resolution to this critical health care problem?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the problems of physician and nurse supply in northwestern Ontario have had my full attention for the last 18 months. In the course of that period we have negotiated a new contract with McMaster

University medical school for the supply of physicians. Recruitment activities are well under way.

As I said in a letter I sent yesterday to those who are fasting in Sioux Lookout, I want them to join the task force that I have already put together to work toward solutions to these problems on the ground.

I have been working with the hon. member who represents the riding, the hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River. He has made a very constructive contribution to these issues. I am going there next week to visit for myself the areas most affected—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for St. John's East.

\* \* \*

**FISHERIES**

**Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is no doubt aware that seals are showing up in community harbours where their presence was rare before. They have been found 11 miles up the Eagle River in Labrador feeding on Atlantic salmon. The seals are literally eating themselves out of house and home because they are starving.

The seal population is now over seven million. Would the minister not agree that a larger seal quota is needed, not only to save cod but to save the seal herds themselves?

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I announced the seal quota for this year in January. At the time it received general acceptance. The head of the Canadian Sealers Association, Tina Fagan, said:

The discussions the sealers association has had so far this year with processors indicate they are satisfied with this year's TAC.

They said they could handle 275,000 harp seals—

The minister of fisheries of the province of Newfoundland said that he was delighted with the decision of the federal minister. He said that he was excited about it.

The St. John's newspaper supported the decision that was put forward. That was the reaction in Newfoundland of support for the TAC, the total allowable catch of 275,000—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Winnipeg North—St. Paul.

\* \* \*

**SOCIAL POLICY**

**Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North—St. Paul, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development who met two days ago with the federal-provincial-territorial council on social policy renewal.

Could the minister update the House on what the government is doing to ensure that Canada's children indeed have the opportunities needed for a better start in life?

**Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

As we know, children are our future. They represent our future as a society and as a country. On Monday the Minister of Health and I did meet with the federal-provincial-territorial council on social policy renewal and at that time our discussions focused on the national children's agenda.

We are looking at how we can best work together to have a co-ordinated approach on programs for children to make sure that they succeed in the future. We want to ensure that the money we invest in children helps them—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford.

\* \* \*

#### CORRECTIONS CANADA

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the solicitor general. Retaliation after labour strife in the country is really unacceptable.

I would like to tell the solicitor general that Corrections Canada this day has fired Miss Caralynn Morris who has had excellent performance evaluations after four and a half years of work. Her husband is out of work and now she has been fired after working 16 hours in one shift. I would like to ask the solicitor general, because there are more people involved in this, why is it that Corrections Canada is retaliating and making a purge of its employees after this labour strike?

• (1500)

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish my hon. colleague had given me notice of the question. I would have had an appropriate answer for him this afternoon. I will get the information for my hon. colleague and I will give it to him.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### KOSOVO

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, under Germany's proposed peace plan, international aid organizations will begin their work in Kosovo as soon as the first soldiers of the international peacekeeping force arrive.

#### Points of Order

My question is for the Prime Minister. Will the government undertake, here and now, to develop a plan with Quebec and Canadian NGOs working on the ground, so that Canada's assistance is effective and meets the most pressing needs?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for Francophonie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. We are already working with Canadian NGOs from Quebec, Ontario and the west.

We have signed agreements with CARE Canada, the CECI and World Vision. We are continuing to await requests. We will continue to work with all Canadian NGOs, who are doing an absolutely wonderful job in the country.

[English]

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The other day the minister said that Canada would not be against the meeting of the G-8, but he did not say whether we would actually support a meeting of the G-8. Now that Germany is pressing for a meeting of the G-8, could the minister tell us whether he would support that call for an immediate meeting of the G-8 and what Canada would be doing to bring about that meeting as soon as possible?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada did participate in the meeting of G-8 senior officials on the weekend. The proposal put forward by Germany was discussed. It was looked at, elaborated on and examined very carefully. We were certainly part of that process.

If there is to be a meeting of G-8 leaders then of course we would be there. We would be there in a very supportive fashion because we think this particular proposal which we have all worked on does have some chance of success if we can get Russia's agreement on it.

**The Speaker:** My colleagues, that would bring to a close our question period for today.

There are three points of order. I will listen to them in the order in which they were given to me. The hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough on a point of order.

\* \* \*

#### POINTS OF ORDER

KOSOVO

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Prior to the government House leader calling the orders of the day, will he request the Minister of Foreign Affairs who has just returned from a meeting with the UN ministers in Brussels to brief

*Points of Order*

the House as to the outcome of that meeting? That is what Canadians deserve.

**The Speaker:** I would think that is a form of question which would better be handled in question period. I am sure that you can get some comment if you have private discussions. That is not a point of order, by the way.

The second point of order is from the House leader for the opposition.

## KOSOVO

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, during question period the Minister of National Defence said it is basically the official opposition's responsibility to declare a debate and vote on the Kosovo situation.

• (1505 )

I therefore seek the unanimous consent of the House to debate and vote on the Kosovo situation this night after regular hours.

**The Speaker:** My colleague's seeking unanimous consent from this House is in order. Does the hon. member have permission to put his motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** No.

[*Translation*]

## KOSOVO

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I too ask for the unanimous consent of the House to move the following motion.

I move:

That notwithstanding the usual rules and practices of the House, the House proceeds immediately to an emergency debate on the following motion:

"That the House approve the peace plan proposed by the German foreign affairs minister to put an end to the hostilities in Yugoslavia and to proceed without delay to rebuild Kosovo and return refugees to their homes in peace and safety; that no member speak for more than 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of questions and comments, and that, at the end of the debate, the motion be put to a vote".

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move this motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I was about to say, a number of points of order, genuine or otherwise, have been raised on this issue. The government is prepared to let the debate continue

tonight, if the House so wishes. I am willing to meet with the other parliamentary leaders to continue the debate we had earlier in the week. In fact, the Minister of Foreign Affairs is ready to make a speech if that were the case.

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** I do not know that these negotiations necessarily take place on the floor of the House. May I suggest that if the House leaders are inclined to have prolongation of hours, perhaps they can meet with one another. May I suggest that to the House leaders. This can always come back as a unanimous consideration for the House.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I respect your kind words and your decision. However, I point out that it was the hon. government House leader who made that offer. I would suggest that this party would be in favour of that but with a minor amendment, that we have a vote at the end of the evening. I think our colleagues would agree to that right here without waiting for you to make a further decision.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that we need to separate two things here: the ongoing debate which would not be a point of order, about whether or not there should be a vote in the event of the commitment of ground troops or whatever, and the question of whether or not the debate of the other night should be extended.

I personally see no point in having a vote on the motion we debated the other night because it was a meaningless motion in the first place. The question is whether or not we should continue the debate so more members can have a chance to express themselves. In that sense, I would urge the government House leader and other House leaders to agree. But having a vote on what we had before us the other night would hardly be worth doing.

**The Speaker:** I see we are having negotiations whether we want to have them or not. If you want to take five minutes I do not mind sitting in the chair. Let us hear what the government House leader has to say.

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, let me try this to see if the House is agreeable. I would like to offer the following:

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice, at 6.30 p.m. this day, the House shall not consider proceedings pursuant to Standing Order 38, but it shall resume consideration of Government Orders, Government Business No. 23, provided that during consideration of the said Government Order, the Chair shall not receive any quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent to propose any motion; and, provided that when no member rises to speak or at 12 a.m., whichever is earlier, the House shall adjourn to the next sitting day.

If this motion is adopted, the Minister of Foreign Affairs is prepared to speak tonight.



*Routine Proceedings*

\* \* \*

• (1510)

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. government House leader have permission to put the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** No.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

**TEAM CANADA INC.**

**Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(1) it is my honour to table before the House, in both official languages, the 1998-99 Team Canada Inc. Achievement Report. As members will know Team Canada Inc. involves over 20 departments and agencies of the Government of Canada, each touching in some way the aspect of international trade.

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**COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY PERMANENT ENGINEERING BOARD**

**Mr. Gerry Byrne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I am pleased to table in both official languages the annual report of the Columbia River Treaty Permanent Engineering Board to the Government of Canada and to the Government of the United States for the year ending September 30, 1996.

\* \* \*

[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 14 petitions.

[English]

I wonder if there would be unanimous consent to return to presenting reports from committees.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there consent to revert to presenting reports from committees?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 66th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs in relation to its orders of reference from the House dated Wednesday, February 17, 1999 and Thursday, February 18, 1999 in relation to the matter of the molestation of the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt and in relation to picket lines established to impede access to the precincts of parliament.

After hearing the testimony of several witnesses and considering all the evidence, the committee has concluded that there was no deliberate intention to contravene parliamentary privilege in this case. Any contempt of parliament was technical and unintended.

The committee has also included observations and recommendations to avoid similar situations occurring in the future.

I also have the honour to present the 67th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

• (1515)

If the House gives its consent, I move that the 67th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**PETITIONS**

## HOUSING IN NUNAVIK

**Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to table a petition from the Inuit community of Puvirnituk, in Nunavik.

The petitioners state that there have been no housing starts by either federal or provincial governments in Nunavik in the past three years. At the present time, there are 16 to 20 people in three bedroom dwellings.

The Inuit find the housing conditions at Nunavik extremely distressing. They consider the situation totally intolerable. It contributes to the high incidence of tuberculosis, infectious diseases and social problems.

The federal government must assume its obligations under the James Bay and Northern Quebec agreement as far as housing is

*Routine Proceedings*

concerned. At the end of October 1998, there was a shortage of 425 houses in Nunavik.

[*English*]

## NATIONAL UNITY

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to present a petition from the constituents of Kelowna who ask that the Prime Minister and the Parliament of Canada declare and confirm immediately: first, that Canada is indivisible; and second, that the boundaries of Canada, its provinces, territories and territorial waters, may be modified only by a free vote of all Canadian citizens as guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms or through the amending formula as stipulated in the Canadian Constitution.

## BIOARTIFICIAL KIDNEY RESEARCH

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present another petition from citizens of Peterborough and other parts of Ontario who believe that the Government of Canada can deal more effectively with the more than 18,000 Canadian citizens who suffer from end stage kidney disease.

They point out that facilities for kidney dialysis, which is very important, and programs for organ transplantation are in place but are ineffective.

Therefore, they call upon parliament to support research for the bioartificial kidney, which will eventually eliminate the need for both dialysis and transplantation for those suffering from kidney disease.

The petitioners and others were pleased to hear that donations to the University of Michigan, which is one of the few sites where bioartificial kidney research is going on, made by Canadians are tax deductible.

## KOSOVO

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition from the constituents of Kings—Hants, a group of whom are opposed to the NATO bombing in Serbia and who are seeking the cessation of Canada's participation in the NATO exercise.

## MMT

**Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am honoured to present a petition signed by residents of the Grand Bend, London and Dashwood areas who urge parliament to ban the gas additive MMT. They note that studies under way at the University of Quebec are showing adverse health effects, especially on children and seniors, and that car manufacturers oppose the use of MMT.

## PAY EQUITY

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of the citizens of my

riding of Selkirk—Interlake who note that the Government of Canada has yet to comply with article 11 of the Canadian Human Rights Act which pertains to the rights of workers to equal pay for work of equal value.

The petitioners say that to this date the government has not complied with the tribunal order and they therefore petition parliament to instruct the government to immediately comply with the orders of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal in the matter of pay equity.

## ANIMAL ABUSE

**Ms. Eleni Bakopanos (Ahuntsic, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be presenting three petitions on behalf of the Minister of Justice.

The first petition calls upon parliament to enact legislation to amend the Criminal Code to provide increased penalties for serious cases of animal abuse and to make illegal the practice of inhumane euthanasia for companion animals.

## PAY EQUITY

**Ms. Eleni Bakopanos (Ahuntsic, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition deals with pay equity.

## PORNOGRAPHY

**Ms. Eleni Bakopanos (Ahuntsic, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the third petition concerns pornography.

• (1520)

## COPYRIGHT BOARD

**Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of over 100 Canadians. The recent commercial television and radio decision of the copyright board retroactively reduced the royalties of Canadian music creators and adopted the American practice of forcing individual music composers to negotiate directly with large broadcasting corporations. By adopting the American scheme the copyright board has failed to respect parliament's longstanding commitment to the collective administration of the copyright of Canadian creators.

The petitioners request that parliament strongly reaffirm this commitment and that the Minister of Industry immediately appoint a judge to chair the copyright board and respect parliament's intent that the board be a competent and objective quasi-judicial tribunal.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions, both of which are signed by a number of Canadians, including those in my own riding of Mississauga South.

The first petition is on the subject of human rights. The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that human rights abuses continue to be rampant around the world in countries such as Indonesia and Kosovo. The petitioners also point

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out that Canada continues to be internationally recognized as a champion of human rights.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon Canada to continue to speak out strongly against human rights abuses and also to seek to bring to justice those responsible for such abuses.

THE FAMILY

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to present for the 158th time in my career as a parliamentarian a petition dealing with the family, which is my favourite petition.

The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that managing the family home and caring for preschool children is an honourable profession which has not been recognized for its contribution to our society and that the Income Tax Act discriminates against families who choose to provide direct parental care to preschool children.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon parliament and all parliamentarians to support initiatives to ensure fairness and equity for all families who choose to provide care in the home for preschool children.

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

**Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of the residents of Kamloops, Chase, Clearwater, Barriere and Savona, who point out a number of concerns they have regarding a recent United States customs announcement which will put in place additional barriers to the export of Canadian softwood lumber to the United States.

The petitioners ask the federal government to take whatever action is necessary to bring to an end this continuing harassment of Canadian producers.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 128 and 205.

[Text]

Question No. 128—**Mr. Lee Morrison:**

For Canada Ports Corporation, would the government provide the following for each fiscal year from 1993-94 to 1996-97: (a) the number of people on the board of directors; (b) how each director was remunerated; (c) the total remuneration for each director; (d) the total number of employees; and (e) the average and median salary for all employees?

**Mr. Stan Dromisky (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.):** (a) Board membership in 1993: 15-17 members;

1994: 13-16 members; 1995: 14 members; 1996: 10-11 members; and 1997: 10-11 members

Section 12(1) of the Canada Ports Corporation Act stipulates that the board of directors consists of a chairman, vice-chairman and not less than 8 or more than 14 other directors. Variances in board membership are a result of vacancies not immediately filled by the minister with the approval of the governor in council.

(b) Pursuant to subsection 3.14(8) of the Canada Ports Corporation Act, directors, including the chairman and vice-chairman, are remunerated as follows: \$150-300 per diem for attendance at meetings of the board or committees of the board; \$150-300 per diem for loss of income when travelling for the corporation's business; \$150-300 per diem when with the authorization or approval of the board a director engages in work for the corporation; reasonable expenses incurred in the course of duties in the city in which they are based; reasonable travel and living expenses incurred while absent from ordinary place of residence in the course of duties; and a salary in the range of \$119,900 to \$141,100 is paid to the president.

People on the Board of Directors are remunerated as follows: the chairman-annual retainer, \$30,000-\$35,000; the vice-chairman-annual retainer, \$17,000-\$20,000; and an annual retainer of \$2,600-\$3,500 paid to all directors.

(c) In accordance with the Privacy Act, only general statistical information on the total remuneration for all directors can be provided, instead of for individual directors:

Year	Honoraria	Per Diem	Total
1993	\$91,000	\$188,000	\$279,000
1994	\$89,800	\$167,000	\$256,800
1995	\$68,700	\$128,300	\$197,000
1996	\$42,800	\$81,800	\$124,600
1997	\$51,000	\$58,100	\$109,100

Note: The Canada Ports Corporation directly administered national office and seven divisional ports during the period 1993 to 1997.

(d) total number of exempt, union, and non-exempt, non-union, employees at National office and seven divisional ports:

1993:	183 employees
1994:	185 employees
1995:	154 employees
1996:	109 employees
1997:	102 employees

(e) Average and median salary for all exempt and non-exempt employees at national office and seven divisional ports:

	Average	Median
1993:	\$53,503	\$75,986
1994:	\$51,717	\$75,986
1995:	\$54,804	\$73,648
1996:	\$55,777	\$74,842
1997:	\$49,517	\$77,007

*Government Orders***Question No. 205—Mr. Jason Kenney:**

For the years 1994-97 inclusive how many residents of Manitoba had confidential taxpayer information disclosed by the Department of National Revenue to the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation or any other Manitoba agencies and departments without their written consent through release form T1013?

**Hon. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** T1013 is the form which authorizes accountants and tax preparers, acting on behalf of clients, to provide consent for the release of relevant taxpayer information. Therefore, it would not be applicable in the release of taxpayer information to the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, MPIC. Such information can only be released to MPIC when the taxpayer has signed and approved consent form which provides a clear statement that the Department of National Revenue may release information to MPIC.

Following a complaint received from a taxpayer in November 1997 regarding the release of information to MPIC, the Department of National Revenue reviewed the consent form being used by MPIC to obtain authorization to request taxpayer information relevant to the processing of claims. As a result of the department's review, the form was modified to meet current standards to ensure that there is no ambiguity about the release of information the client is authorizing.

A complaint was also filed with the Winnipeg city police and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police that investigated this matter. Both law enforcement agencies found that there was no criminal intent and that charges were not warranted.

[Translation]

**Mr. Peter Adams:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that 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, Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers No. 55, in the name of the hon. member for Cariboo—Chilcotin, and No. 56, in the name of the hon. member for Charlesbourg, are acceptable to the government, except for those documents which cannot be released pursuant to the Access to Information Act. These papers will be tabled immediately.

Motion No. P-55

That a Humble Address be presented to His Excellency praying that he will cause to be laid before this House a copy of all correspondence between the Government of Canada and the United States Environmental Protection Agency and United States Customs relating to intelligence and surveillance capacity concerning ozone-depleting substances.

Motion No. P-56

That an Order of the House do issue for copies of all documents, reports, notes, memorandums, letters, correspondence and minutes of meetings regarding the use of inmates of federal institutions as guinea pigs in experiments on the effects of LSD and, in particular, the report commissioned by the Solicitor General of Canada from the McGill Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Subject to the reservations expressed by the parliamentary secretary, is it the pleasure of the House that Motions Nos. P-55 and P-56 be deemed to have been adopted?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Peter Adams:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all other Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed that the remaining Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers shall stand?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

• (1525)

[English]

**BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 1999**

The House resumed from April 12 consideration of the motion that Bill C-71, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in parliament on February 16, 1999, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Ms. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise today to speak to Bill C-71, the budget implementation act of 1999. The premise today is that it is a great budget that will be easy to implement because it was a great process.

It is on the ground that problems are felt, it is on the ground that real solutions are formulated and it is on the ground that budgets are implemented. I hope we will never return to the day when ministers of finance and a few close advisors cloister themselves and then come out of their perceived telephone booths to announce to Canadians what they think is good for Canadians. We know that does not work. People do not want to be told what is good for them when they have not been included in the process.

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I have been pretty fortunate to have come from an institution like Women's College Hospital. Women's College Hospital had the motto "Non quo sed quo modo", meaning that it is not only what we do but how we do it. It is very interesting that when we have a motto such as that we actually look at the way we do things.

In the federal budget there are two hows: how we decide what we want and how we do what we want. It was indeed the process in terms of how we decide what we want, the thorough consultation and rigorous analysis of this budget, that has ensured its relevance to Canadians and thereby its success in implementation.

It is a feminist theory, if we are allowed to use that term, which I am proud to use, that is actually part of inclusive decision making. One of my great heroes, Ursula Franklin, once told a story of being invited to a PD day at a school. She insisted that all of the staff be included. The teachers thought that maybe just the faculty should be included. However, because the topic of the day was identifying children at risk, Ursula felt that she would like to have all of the staff there.

It was quite interesting that as they began the day, within the first half hour the janitor put up his hand and said "I know kids from violent homes because they are on the doorstep when I open up the school in the morning". It was in the next half hour that the Jamaican cook put up her hand and said "I know who the kids are who are hungry because they help me clear the plates. I know they are eating the scraps on the way to the kitchen".

It is only through inclusive decision making that we end up with a result that is relevant and one which we can implement.

As a new member of the finance committee I was truly impressed with the inclusive nature of the process, with the thoughtful and impressive deputations and with the ability to analyse problems, present solutions that had been tried in other jurisdictions, present the risk of doing nothing and the rationale for government to invest in these solutions.

We heard from the grassroots across the country. We heard from the researchers, the policy analysts and the business community. We heard concerns of health care, brain drain, decreasing disposable income and our debt. We also heard their solutions. They felt that reinvestment in health care was imperative. They felt that we should reinvest in research, target tax relief and get our debt to GDP in line. We heard from all of the partners whom we will need to implement these policies.

On February 16 the Minister of Finance presented what I think was a brilliantly crafted balance of the solutions presented. The availability of resources were allocated according to the priorities stated by Canadians. Health care was without a doubt number one. Our most valued social program received the major investment.

It was clear that just money would not ensure the restoration of Canadians' confidence in the system. Experts, including the National Forum on Health, have been very clear. There has to be real accountability for the dollars spent. There have to be dollars for a health information system that will begin that process. The Cana-

dian Institute of Health Research will begin the exemplary process of co-ordinating research in the broadest definition of health from the molecule to the community. We will be able to look at health promotion, disease prevention and treatment and research into best practices in health care delivery. We know that best practices could save an additional \$7 billion a year.

• (1530)

The 1999 budget was exciting because of the other how also, the second how of how we do things. That is the landmark agreement of the social union. It will begin a process by which the federal and provincial governments will commit to a new transparent method of delivering programs. They will have to report their outcomes to Canadians.

Our Prime Minister's commitment to getting the health accord and the social union signed has rendered the dollars assigned in this budget even more important. Canadians can now be assured that every dollar will go as far as it possibly can. Evaluation and accountability are now imperative. The new social union framework values Canadians' equality, respect for diversity, fairness, individual dignity and responsibility, mutual aid and our responsibility for one another. These things have been agreed upon.

It is no longer the survival of the fittest in this big cold country. A long time ago we decided that we would look after one another. We are not going to be asking levels of government to report to one another; we are asking all levels of government to report to Canadians.

That all Canadians are created equal and should be treated equal and equal per Canadian funding was a principle of the social union.

We have to meet the needs of Canadians with sustaining social programs and services. We have reaffirmed the Canada Health Act in active participation in a social and economic life.

The second principle was mobility. This will allow Canadians to pursue opportunities. It ensures what is so important, that a Canadian is a Canadian.

The third premise which is extremely important is the public accountability and transparency in terms of getting the health information systems, achieving and measuring results, involvement of Canadians and ensuring fair and transparent practices. It is this point that will make every dollar spent in the budget go that much further.

Working in partnership for Canadians, joint planning and collaboration, reciprocal notice and consultation was the fourth aspect.

The fifth aspect was a proper clarification of the federal spending power. This means that dollars assigned in a federal budget have been predetermined and will be easily implemented. Dispute

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avoidance and resolution was obviously important, as was the three year review.

In my riding there was great debate before the budget about giving dollars to the provinces in the CHST. One very adamant constituent was very clear at our prebudget consultation that we were not to just give money to Mr. Harris.

The signing of the social union health accord has been a tremendous step forward for our federalism. Canadians need to feel confident that dollars dedicated for health care would be spent on health care. The commitment to transparency is imperative to rebuild the confidence of Canadians. It makes me very optimistic in terms of the truly positive role for government.

Social union will ensure that Canadians will continue to be consulted to set their social priorities. The federal and provincial governments have to make sure that it happens. It is only in that way that we get to deal properly with the tough issues like the preschool development of our children, homelessness, and persons with disabilities which cross all ministries and all levels of government.

Last week in St. Paul's we had a town hall meeting with the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. We also had a panel consisting of Lorne Sossin, a constitutional lawyer; Barbara Cameron, a professor of political science from York University; Martha Friendly, a child care researcher; and Andrew Coyne. It was an interesting debate in St. Paul's, a riding that is known for caring desperately about the big picture and putting Canada first.

It came from that meeting how complex our federalism is and how important it is that we deal with a matrix of responsibilities, accountabilities, but together set some real objectives as to what it means to be a Canadian and what we care about. It is imperative that we move forward with our partners, the private sector, the third sector and our provincial colleagues.

We have our choices, our policy levers and our incentives and our programs. We actually continue to ask Canadians at election time what they care about. We tell them how we interpreted that in our speech from the throne, but it is at budget time where we get to set the priorities that came forward with the dollars that have been allocated.

• (1535)

This budget was a balanced one. It reflected the true priorities of Canadians as they said to us. Therefore it will be an extraordinarily easy budget to implement because the people implementing it were the people involved in deciding what was there.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of working on the finance committee with the hon.

member. It is always fun to get into the debates and ask questions of witnesses when they come to our committee. I have a couple of questions for the hon. member.

She talked a little bit about this new federalism. The Prime Minister and the health minister with the collusion of the finance minister have altered our Constitution. By using the federal spending power, they have basically held a club over the heads of the premiers of the provinces and have thereby intruded into what is constitutionally a provincial jurisdiction.

Even though I say this somewhat reluctantly, I think it was probably only the premier of Quebec who had—what do you call it in French—the chutzpah to stand up against what the government is saying. Of course, Quebec got the money anyway so it did not really matter. The other premiers did not do this.

I have quite a concern about the federal government taxing the dickens out of us. We are overtaxed and we are talking here today about the budget. We are taxed like anything. Most families have noticed the tax pressure. The provinces have reduced tax room because of this. The federal government by taking all this money from us, really backs the provinces into a corner in terms of economic freedom of what they can do to manage the health care system. Then this government turns around and says "Okay, we are going to give you some of your money back but the condition is that it must be used only for health". That is a straight violation of the Constitution of Canada. Most constitutional experts say that.

While I certainly share the concern of the member with respect to health and the funding of health, we know that this government by its reduction of the transfers to the provinces over the last number of years has made a substantial negative impact on the reduction of health care services for Canadians. The Liberals are now gingerly giving a little bit of it back and they say that is helping while at the same time they are breaking the Constitution.

I would sure like to hear the comments of the member on that particular subject.

**Ms. Carolyn Bennett:** Mr. Speaker, I think the issue is the provinces all have agreed that this is necessary. There was no club to their heads. Even Quebec signed a health accord saying it was extremely important that people understand what it is for.

Constitutionally, actually it was only hospitals that were the provincial responsibility. There has always been an agreement that health care is a joint responsibility in terms of what we do federally, research and prevention and all of those things.

What is imperative is that throwing money at problems without any accountability would not be acceptable to any taxpayer or any business person. We are saying there has to be a set of objectives and we will then figure out what the performance indicators are,

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what are the kinds of things that the various sectors can agree on as to what is acceptable.

I agree that you cannot start measuring things unless you have an ability to remedy the things that are not working properly. A 1995 document from the University of Ottawa and Queen's University made it clear that if we moved to what is in the social union, best practices, we would be saving \$7 billion a year in health care.

We are doing too many unnecessary surgeries. We are giving antibiotics for colds. We are doing way too many things that are totally ineffective. We are ordering tons of laboratory tests that have been outdated for 20 years.

We need a way to help the provinces share best practices and help them save money to be able to provide exemplary and optimal patient care. This is not going to be if we keep allowing money to go places without the kind of scrutiny and accountability Canadians expect.

• (1540)

I am thrilled that these two things have come together. It is amazing that the hon. member would say that there was a club to the heads of the provincial premiers. They all willingly signed it.

The social union talks about transparency. It talks about best practices. It talks about accountability. It talks about involving Canadians in setting their social priorities. Hopefully at the end of the turf war of we are going to set some objectives and promise Canadians that they are going to happen together. It is the beginning of trying to get some sense out of this very complex federalism.

There were experts present at our town hall meeting last week. The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs was fabulous in explaining that fact and compared this to other countries. For example in the United States, unless the states sign on to lowering the driver's age they do not get any money for highways. We could not pull that off in Canada if we tried. Canadians would not want that kind of power for the central government.

There is also huge power for the provincial premiers. We have an interesting complex tug in terms of tension. This has been a brilliant piece of work that a lot of us were very worried about before. It is thrilling to actually see this work and now be able to implement things, to put the meat on the bones of the social union, get these sectoral agreements going, start setting objectives and actually give Canadians a bang for their buck.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the member for St. Paul's.

We will recall that, on February 4, 1999, under the social agreement signed by the premiers, except the Premier of Quebec

naturally, and the Prime Minister of Canada, the Government of Canada promised to consult the provincial and territorial governments at least a year before renewing or significantly changing the funding of the existing social transfers to the provinces.

My question is as follows: How do you explain the government's going back on its word and its signature, since two weeks later, the federal government radically changed the formula for allocating social transfers among the provinces? Please explain this change and this going back on its commitment.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member knows that he must address the Chair and not the member directly. The hon. member for St. Paul's.

[English]

**Ms. Carolyn Bennett:** Mr. Speaker, I would draw the hon. member's attention to the principle of the social union which was to treat all Canadians with fairness and equity. It was extraordinarily important to the finance minister and to the government that all Canadians receive on a per capita basis their rightful percentage of the CHST.

It was an anomaly that had been capped by the previous government and it needed to be right. It needed to be fair. It is part of the social union principle that all Canadians be treated equally. Therefore that was reflected in the budget.

**Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a brief question.

It is very clear where authority lies for health care. It is under section 92. It falls within the realm of the provincial governments. I would like the hon. member to tell the House where she sees within the BNA act, the Constitution of this country, authority of the federal government over health care. If she could tell the House that I would be pleased.

• (1545)

**Ms. Carolyn Bennett:** The issue is health care delivery and there has been a consensus that health care delivery must be dealt with by the province. Some of the standards that have been set in terms of the Medical Research Council of Canada and all of the things we have had before have always had joint agreement in terms of—

**An hon. member:** Where is the authority?

**Ms. Carolyn Bennett:** I will be more than happy to find it but I do trust—

**An hon. member:** The spending power, the federal spending power.

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**Ms. Carolyn Bennett:** It is in the federal spending power to set priorities which we think are in the best interest of all Canadians. That is separate from health care delivery.

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, budget implementation is of great interest to me because the budget was characterized as a "health budget". We have heard a lot about the health budget. The previous speaker being a physician and rather glowing about the budget obviously believes it was a health budget.

One issue has been fascinating to me. I have had an opportunity to go about the country and express this sentiment. The Liberal government has promised to put \$11.5 billion back into health care over the next five years. There was a significant amount of advertising to that effect. One would not think that it would have to advertise such good news. One would not think it would have to spend \$2.5 million to tell everyone. That message should go across the country, it is so exciting.

Why did the government have to advertise it? In truth it had to advertise it because in the previous five years it took out \$21.4 billion cumulatively since the day the finance minister took over.

I asked kids in grade eight what they thought of that as a balance and they said "Doc, we don't think that is a very good balance. Doc, we think that is a crazy balance". I have a little graphic that I used. I cannot use props in the House but I can describe a prop in the House. Here is the prop I used to show what the Liberal government did with medical funding for the provinces.

I held up an intravenous bag with 1,000 cc's of IV fluid in it. I coloured the fluid red so it would like blood. Some of my colleagues have seen this. The 1,000 cc's represents the \$1,453 per taxpayer that was being transferred from the federal government to the provinces for health care when it took over.

Then I held up another bag with 596 cc's of IV fluid in it. There is a significant difference. Anyone looking at it would say that it just about half, which is true. That is what the federal government was transferring per taxpayer for medicare just before the budget.

Then I took a big syringe and put about 100 cc's into the IV bag, which pumped it all the way up to 692 cc's. I showed the two bags, the full one and the one with 692 cc's in it. We must remember that it was at 1,000 cc's when I started and now it is down to 692 cc's. The response to that is dramatic. People just say it is not keeping up.

What has been the result, the practical down to earth result? The public does not really give a hoot about jurisdiction. If there were no effect on health it would say that was not a big deal, but the evidence of problems in our health care system are legion.

I have chosen to look at the newspaper reports over the last little while. There are too many for me to go through. It would take my

whole speaking time. However I will touch on just a few of the recent news reporting relating to health.

• (1550)

In Newfoundland 600 people need heart surgery every year. The province can only afford 400 so 200 have a choice. They can get in a waiting line or they can go across the border to the States.

On January 19 this year every surgery was cancelled at the Kelowna General Hospital in B.C. Why? Because there were not enough beds and personnel to look after them. That comes from the CANOE news of January 19. On and on they go. There are dozens of examples.

Women in Summerside, P.E.I., have to wait one year for a mammogram because one machine broke down and the government there cannot afford the \$75,000 to fix it. How will it get fixed? The foundation will go out and raise private funds to look after that.

In Montreal the waiting list for a hip operation can be as long as 15 months. For gallstone surgery, which is a painful condition, it takes 2.5 months. That information comes from the *Gazette*.

Here is another very interesting one. Patients in Manitoba waiting for an MRI are being offered from a private U.S. medical clinic in Fargo, North Dakota, a charter air service and free night in a hotel so that they can get a timely MRI. How many Manitobans have taken advantage of that? There have been 120 Manitobans who have said they will not wait. That was in the *Winnipeg Free Press* on January 27.

At the Grace Hospital in Winnipeg there were corridors jammed with patients. There was no room for them in the wards. In one case there was no room to put a baby that had sadly passed on so nurses hid the little baby behind a curtain while doctors worked on other patients beside it.

An elderly man was incontinent after days of near neglect in a hospital. His friend asked a nurse to put diapers on him. The response was "We don't have diapers. You must go and buy those yourself". On it goes.

It is interesting. We have a nursing strike right now in Saskatchewan demonstrating stress. We have an exodus of trained health care workers. In the last two years 1,400 of our best trained specialists have left and will never return.

The federal government can say all those things are provincial and we do not have anything to do with that. There is, however, a hospital at Sioux Lookout. It is interesting that the health minister mentioned it in question period today. I will go through the story of the Sioux Lookout Hospital which is a federal responsibility. This is a hospital for natives alone. The federal government has complete responsibility for that hospital.

This is a story of incompetent bungling. In the spring of 1997 Health Canada was first warned that a crisis at the Sioux Lookout



Hospital was coming. I have three letters directed to the Minister of Health and his officials which said there would be a shortage of physicians at the hospital.

The story is quite interesting. The University of Toronto had been looking after physician recruitment for that area for 30 years and a deficit had occurred. They said they could not continue to look after the deficit. They warned that by June 1998 they would be pulling out unless that deficit could be taken care of. It was simple.

Mae Katt, Ontario regional director for Health Canada, said there was no problem, that they would have 15 physicians from McMaster on that date.

The conditions deteriorated. The warnings were raised. Health Canada refused to respond to the University of Toronto. McMaster, negotiating with the Sioux Lookout individuals and this Mae Katt, just simply said it could not do it in time.

What happened on June 30? This could not happen in a third world country. With five hours notice the Sioux Lookout emergency was closed. A closed sign was put up in an emergency department for natives and 16,000 natives were without emergency care.

• (1555)

A contract finally appeared. It was a like a contract for an F-18. It had nothing to do with medical issues. Things were crossed out and whited out. The physicians who were there just simply said they could not sign it. They were threatened with losing their seniority if they did not sign it. They lost their seniority. They left the north. Instead of 15 physicians looking after Sioux Lookout, today there are 4.

I have been privileged to look over this story and finally, in the last month, advertising has gone out for recruiting. Anyone who knows anything about recruiting physicians for the north will know how long that will take. We will not have physicians in the north until this summer at the very earliest.

What did the hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River have to say about this? These are his words relating specifically to Sioux Lookout:

The medical services branch has totally bungled everything here. This issue has been totally mismanaged.

The Liberal member for Kenora—Rainy River did everything he could do to get our Minister of Health to listen. He begged him.

Do we know what his response was? The minister sent up one of his underlings who said there was a nursing crisis that was just as big. That was the response of Joanne Meyer, an executive assistant. They went over the nursing crisis. We would think that there would be an immediate response.

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There was an immediate response. Here is the letter sent by the native communities to the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, begging for some help. We go to Switzerland to look after our native brothers in the north. They went to Doctors Without Borders.

[Translation]

They were cared for by Doctors Without Borders. It is absolutely abominable.

[English]

Sioux Lookout is an example of how the federal government looks after its specific responsibility. The diary of this story is not through. The natives today in Sioux Lookout are on a hunger strike. They are sitting there with their arms folded, saying this should not happen in a country like Canada, but it did.

Now the Minister of Health, belatedly, will trot up north, sit down with them and say "Come and get involved in my task force". I would like him to say why he did not respond to these problems when he got the initial warnings two years ago. I am willing to provide the letters specifically directed toward the Minister of Health to anyone who wants to see them. Sioux Lookout is an example of a tragic situation in Canada.

Time is so short. After talking about the bungling at Sioux Lookout, let me talk about the bungling on the hepatitis C issue in Canada. As a physician I gave my patients blood. As a surgeon I gave them blood. I trusted that our blood system was as good as it could be. I found out through Judge Krever that was not true, that we gave patients in Canada dirty blood, blood infected with hepatitis C.

Judge Krever, who became our expert in tainted blood, said we should look after everyone who is sick from receiving tainted blood; not just give them money because they are positive with hepatitis C but give them something if they are in trouble.

I understood what he said. I understood why he said that the federal regulators had made a mess. He said the provincial regulators had made mistakes and he said that the Red Cross had been involved as well. I have watched with wonder how the government could try to weasel out of that responsibility.

I have also watched with wonder a compassionate Ontario premier say that he will not just give narrow compensation to the group from 1986 to 1990 but will give compensation to everyone, and he did that. I have watched Quebec now change its proposals. It is looking at compensating everyone. I have watched as lawyers argue, fight and bicker over the funds that should be going to the individuals who are ill. I had occasion to sit down with a few of them here in Ottawa just the other night. I listened to them talk about their needs and their worries. The local regional government is taking better care of these individuals than the ones who are really responsible.

*Government Orders*

• (1600)

I have also watched Swiss authorities being charged and huge sanctions put upon them for exactly the same actions in Switzerland. I have watched the French authorities bring to trial the prime minister, the health minister, the social affairs minister of the day for the same actions. I wonder where are we in Canada for these poor people with hepatitis C. I think this will go down as one of the blackest chapters as it relates to health. Of course, I point across the way for that responsibility.

Let me talk briefly about the future of medicare as I see it. I really and truly believe that this social program is so valuable even though the Liberal motto seems to be "we will just hide our heads in the sand and have the status quo". I say that two tier medicine is alive and well in Canada thanks to the Liberal policies. There is one tier for the dead and there is another tier for the waiting. That is said with tongue in cheek, but it is truly sad.

What do we need to do to improve and protect this health care system of ours? The first step needs to be funding that is not hidden under the Canada health and social transfer. That was the way the Liberals got away with this tremendous reduction in funding. Health care funding from the federal government should be so specific, so clear, so straight, so plain that no one could ever get away with reducing it as they did. It should also be indexed to inflation.

I would cast this Canada health and social transfer into the dustbin of history and have health care funding so plain and clear, as I said. We could have the other funding just the same. That is something the Canadian Medical Association has called for and it is certainly something I personally agree with.

We also need to stop thinking of this as a system, but think of it as care. The patient must come first again. We have had a health care system that has been driven by politicians, by bureaucrats and frankly by the medical profession. I do not think that is the way to drive this system. The solutions will come from the individuals who are most affected. I would put the patient first. We need specific mechanisms to reduce the waiting lists in Canada.

Where will we go with our medicare system? It is fascinating. Last Friday was the 15 year anniversary of the Canada Health Act. Monique Bégin, a Liberal, a good Liberal, was responsible for the Canada Health Act. I listened to comments made by her. She said very plainly that the Canada Health Act needs to be revisited. She said that there are breakdowns in the Canada Health Act. What a brave woman. She is talking about looking after health rather than the politicization of our health care system. That is really, truly where I believe we should go.

I am quite optimistic about the future of our health care system. If we can get away from the name calling, if we can get away from speaking about basic changes to our health care system as being an Americanization or two tier, if we can get down to the level of actually looking at and trying to fix this system, I think we have a real good chance.

I am optimistic because of New Zealand's experience. It came so close to losing its health care system when it hit the debt wall, and it did. New Zealanders lost virtually all their social programs. Their senior citizens programs were battered. They lost transportation subsidies. They lost all the subsidies for their agricultural projects.

They did not lose their medicare. They did everything they had to do to save their medicare system. They went so far as to put advertising on their ambulances to pay for the fuel so they would not lose their medicare system. They chose a route I do not agree with. They chose the route of user fees to improve and increase the cash flow for their medicare. But losing virtually every other social program, New Zealanders clung to their medicare system.

• (1605)

As I consult with Canadians across the land, I hear them say "Don't let go of this medicare system". In my view, medicare will survive not because of the actions of this Liberal administration, but in spite them.

**Ms. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have two questions for the hon. member.

In the litany of individual provincial problems with health care delivery the member made it sound like this is only about money.

I would ask the member to comment on the Ontario Hospital Association's presentation to the finance committee. The association said that this is not about money. This is about mismanagement. It is about not having income-outcome measures and setting best practices and those kinds of things.

How can the member prove that this is just about money? How can he blame the federal government for what some people feel is a mismanagement problem in terms of the delivery system?

I am astounded that as a physician, a profession which is criticized for over-medicalizing our health care, the member could actually think that we could fund a sort of fix it part of the system instead of a holistic model that the patients know works. A health transfer does not deal with the social determinants of health, poverty, violence, the environment and all those things.

The only way to a sustainable health care system is to keep people well and not let them get sick. It is only the doctors that seem to have trouble getting the picture.

**Mr. Grant Hill:** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member missed the initial comments I made. Those comments were fairly specific.

There will have been \$11.5 billion put back into health over the coming five years, with \$21.4 billion taken out in the previous five years. Does the member see that balance? My colleague will shake

her head and say this did not happen. I ask her to look at the amount transferred to the provinces in 1993 and look at the amount transferred at the end of the next five years. The member will find that this is an incredible reduction.

My time is relatively short here but we could go beyond my comments on the issue of mismanagement in the system and we certainly should go beyond my comments. I am not trying to talk about the whole health care system. I am talking about the federal responsibility when it relates to the funding component. If that is beyond the ken of the Liberals, I can understand why they would go ahead and make those reductions and think they are not a big deal.

Does the Ontario Hospital Association have the capability of finding some mismanagement in the system? You bet and it certainly should do that.

It is also interesting to note that the province of Ontario spends more on medicare in one year than the federal government transfers to the whole country. Where is the rubber hitting the road? The rubber is hitting the road for the provinces and this administration made it difficult for them. In spite of those reductions the provinces found more money for health care.

It is a dreadful debate when we look at just a narrow component. This government has done more to harm medicare than any other government in Canadian history.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague's very accurate description of the truly painful situation in most hospitals. He is a doctor himself and can describe up close what we see from the outside.

In my riding, a rural riding, there is the hospital in Ste-Anne-des-Monts, the one in Maria, the one in Amqui and the one in Matane.

• (1610)

Having spoken with many doctors, nurses and especially patients, I know things are difficult. When the Rochon reform began, certain adjustments had to be made. Doctors and nurses, particularly those on the front line, had to work twice as hard to provide more or less the same level of care.

Last week, one of my friends died in the hospital in Rimouski. Her husband and children told me she had received exceptional care, despite all the federal cuts.

I take this opportunity to thank the doctors and nurses who deal with this situation, who often work overtime with a limited staff to preserve the quality of patient care.

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I congratulate these people because they really care. When staff cuts are made, it is not easy to continue to provide the same quality of care, because we are dealing with human lives, not objects.

I have a question for the hon. member, who is a doctor. Earlier, he mentioned that many doctors are moving abroad, particularly to the United States. Nurses are also leaving. Of course, salaries are a factor. The fact that these people are not paid the same as doctors in the United States might be a reason for their leaving the country.

Would it not be possible for a government to remove some of the quotas in universities? As we know, there are quotas in medical schools. It is hard to get accepted in medical school. We are told there is shortage of doctors. I agree that doctors work really hard, but there are not enough of them.

Does the hon. member think there is a way to train more doctors, particularly in the regions? Each year, we have to go to the universities, almost beg young doctors and give them special benefits to convince them to come to our regions. Every year, we have to go through this exercise, which should not be necessary, in my opinion. The regions should be served as adequately as the large urban centres. I would like to hear the hon. member on this.

**Mr. Grant Hill:** Mr. Speaker, there is a big problem in rural areas with the numbers of physicians and nurses.

They are not specifically money problems. There are equipment problems. In some northern hospitals the equipment is inadequate to meet the needs of patients and physicians alike.

There are other problems too. I toured Saskatchewan two weeks ago, and 50% of physicians come from South Africa. There are no more Canadian doctors in northern Saskatchewan. There are huge problems.

Is there a solution to the recruiting problem? People do not go up north. Those who practice in very difficult areas should be adequately compensated. I agree with the member, there are huge problems in rural areas.

[*English*]

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during the member's speech he referred to waiting times for certain procedures. I believe he talked about hip replacements.

I wonder if the member would simply comment that it is hospitals that have to deliver balanced budgets for their institutions. There is a restriction on the operating theatre time that they have, as well as on the amount that they have funded for prosthetic devices. Therefore, waiting times are not necessarily due to funding, but rather to other factors beyond—

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• (1615)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Macleod has a brief response.

**Mr. Grant Hill:** Mr. Speaker, the member is correct. There is a whole host of factors concerning waiting lists. One factor is the amount of money available for the prostheses themselves. Another factor is the number of nurses and doctors available to do that.

The fact is that waiting lists in Canada are the longest they have been in history. I do not believe that is acceptable and I look for solutions from an individual like this who is actually constructive in his comments.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-71, the budget implementation bill. I want to begin by advising Canadians about the process.

Canadians know that a budget was delivered by the finance minister with a number of provisions, of which I will review a few. Preceding the budget there were substantial consultations with Canadians. I want to assure Canadians that there is much more to the budgeting process than simply finance officials determining how they might deal with the fiscal affairs of the country.

The Standing Committee on Finance conducts an annual budget consultation in which its members not only hear from officials as to the current fiscal state of affairs and apprise themselves of the current numbers, estimates and forecasts that are coming forward, they also go across Canada to each and every province and territory to consult with Canadians who wish to appear before the finance committee to have their say as to what priorities the government should have with regard to the next budget. That process starts to take place just after the House resumes from its summer recess.

During that process individuals, as well as groups and organizations, come before the committee. They are on panels. They have an opportunity to make their presentations orally and in written form. They also have a dialogue with finance committee members. There is often repartee where people are asked to elaborate further on some of the matters they have raised. There is no question, notwithstanding that people are asked to come before the finance committee to present their views on the national finances and our national budget, that many of the groups focus entirely on their own specific interests without putting them in the context of how they line up with the priorities of all Canadians.

It is a very difficult process that we go through. The committee is represented by all parties. In that process all parties have an opportunity to make comments, to question witnesses and to give the kind of input that I think is necessary to craft a report which ultimately makes recommendations to the government with regard to the options and opportunities which we saw in our budget consultations.

When we finish our cross-Canada consultations we also receive in Ottawa other expert witnesses representing major organizations, such as research organizations, health organizations and major national organizations on poverty. Poverty certainly was a very large component of the testimony that was received by the committee in its consultations across the country and indeed in Ottawa. Health care was very strong. I recall a very strong presentation about the significance of diabetes in terms of what we could do with regard to funding and obtaining measurable results to deal with the consequences.

There were also a number of economists. There were representatives from organizations like the Fraser Institute and the Caledon Institute of Social Policy who came to talk in a more macro way about the kind of direction we are going in with regard to estimates of growth and interest rates, with regard to the strategy of having prudent assumptions and of having a contingency for adverse economic fluctuations so that we would ensure the budget would be balanced.

• (1620)

All of these things come together in a very comprehensive way so that parliamentarians from all parties can come up with a report. That report, as I said, goes to the finance minister, to the finance department and in fact is available to all parliamentarians and all Canadians so that they can see the kinds of things that were gleaned out of the consultation process and the kinds of recommendations which flowed from those consultations.

The finance committee has had quite a good track record in terms of identifying substantive options and opportunities for the government, and the process, I believe, has served us well.

Have we articulated in our reports the budget as we might ultimately see it on budget day? No. There are always matters which come from other sources for the government to consider, but the consultation does serve Canadians very well.

I want Canadians to know that preparations are already in place for consultations for the next budget, which will begin in October. Canadians who wish to make representations to the government and to the finance committee with regard to the budget process are welcome to make inquiries and they can do that through their member of parliament.

With that by way of background, I simply want to highlight a few of the key budget themes or issues within the last budget to remind members and to remind Canadians about where we are.

The budgets which have been brought down since the government came to power in 1993 have built upon each other. Canadians will know that the year the government came to power the deficit, the excess of spending over revenue coming into the government,

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was about \$42 billion. It was a very significant burden to Canadians. It has accumulated a large national debt which is still there to be dealt with.

By taking prudent steps, by making sure that the fiscal decisions of the government maintained its perspective with regard to balancing the needs of Canadians, as well as our need to get our fiscal house in order, we now have a balanced budget. We no longer have a \$42 billion deficit; we have a balanced budget.

In the last few years, having balanced the budget, we have also had an opportunity to make sure that we continue to meet the social needs of Canadians, the health requirements, as well as to pay down real debt. Canadians will be pleased to know that the government is paying down its national debt each and every year, not only meeting its interest payments but also paying down principal payments, minimally at \$3 billion a year.

As a result of these budgets there is some very good news. The best way to balance our books and to pay down our debt is to make sure that Canadians have the opportunity to have the dignity of work, to be part of the paid labour force. Indeed, 453,000 jobs were created in 1998 and another 87,000 jobs were created in January of 1999 alone. Our unemployment rate has dropped. When members came to this place in 1993 our unemployment rate was about 11.2%. Today it is 7.8%. It is at the lowest level since June of 1990.

We have had balanced budgets or better, which is expected this year again, and the government is committed to balanced budgets in the years 1999-2000 and 2000-2001. Canadians can be assured that fiscal prudence and proper fiscal management of Canadian taxpayers' money continues to be a top priority for the government.

We must live within our means. We must service our debt. We must pay down our debt. But we also must make sure that the fundamental needs of Canadians with regard to health, education, research and development, social programs and other things are met to ensure that Canadians are taken care of and live in the dignity to which they are entitled.

• (1625)

As Canadians know, we are also making major investments in health care. There will be an increase of \$11.5 billion in transfers to the provinces and territories over the next five years, as was discussed by previous speakers. Breaking it down, support for the provinces in health care will be increased \$2 billion in the current fiscal year, with a further \$2.5 billion in each of the following three years.

We also propose to invest a further \$1.4 billion over the remainder of this year and the next three years to strengthen our health system through research and innovation, and health informa-

tion efforts to prevent health problems and improve services to the first nations and to the Inuit.

Canadians may have heard that recommendations such as report cards for our health care system have also come in. The health accord with the provinces is a major positive development on behalf of all Canadians, as is the social union which has the support of all but one province.

There are some major developments which actually complement and tie into the budget initiatives which I have outlined.

We are also going to invest over \$1.8 billion for the remainder of the fiscal year and the next three years in support of the creation, dissemination and commercialization of knowledge and to support employment by building on the Canada opportunities strategy. It means going after more job creation to promote an environment with low interest rates so that companies will be able to enjoy an environment in which economic growth and expansion are possible and in which more Canadians who want the dignity of work will have that opportunity, particularly our young people who have experienced the highest levels of unemployment in Canada for some time.

With regard to these overall themes, over three-quarters of the new spending in the 1998-99 budget reflects two of the highest priorities for Canadians. What Canadians told us through our consultations and what they said directly to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and their members of parliament was that they wanted increased funding for health care and access to knowledge and innovation. In other words, there will be education and the knowledge base will be built upon for Canadians to learn, to ensure that they, particularly our young people, are ready to take those jobs.

Canadians will also benefit from personal income tax cuts of \$7.7 billion over three years, for a total of \$16.5 billion in tax cuts in the 1998-99 budget.

Is it enough? Are those all of the things Canadians wanted? There are many other aspects that would be useful which Canadians are interested in promoting. However, we still have to maintain fiscal responsibility in attempting to deal with our significant priorities. We also have to continue to promote and stimulate other areas. As I said earlier, each budget has built on the one before it. We start to see the trend line. We start to see the rebuilding of our fiscal health, and fiscal prudence continues to remain the hallmark.

Others have talked about health care, so I will talk briefly about income taxation. It is an issue that is going to seize the House of Commons. It already has, to some extent, with regard to the taxation of families. It will also seize the House because there is a growing interest in income tax reform and in continuing to reduce the tax burden of Canadians.

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In lay terms, to reduce income taxes for Canadians means that they will have more dollars to prepare for their retirement, to spend and to stimulate the economy. I recall in one budget it was referred to as a virtuous circle in which there are benefits.

In the 1998 budget there was a modest tax cut. There was a \$500 increase in the personal non-refundable tax credit which went to Canadians who earned less than \$50,000 a year. In the 1999 budget that amount was increased by an additional \$175, bringing the total increase in the non-refundable tax credit to about \$675.

• (1630)

In addition, that same amount was also extended in 1999 to the remainder of taxpayers in Canada who made over \$50,000 a year. Non-refundable tax credits benefit all Canadians when we consider the combined federal-provincial rates. It means that the \$675 is worth about 25 cents on the dollar of a non-refundable tax credit. It is about \$170 in the pocket of each and every taxpayer. That is good news. It also helps to remove people who work part time or are low income Canadians from the tax rolls as a whole. Those numbers have also been significant.

The budget in 1998 began the process of eliminating the surtaxes. We have a 3% surtax and a 5% surtax. The 3% surtax was eliminated in 1998 for taxpayers with incomes of up to \$50,000. In the last budget the remainder of that building process was to extend the elimination of that 3% tax increase or the surtax on Canadian taxpayers whose incomes were in excess of \$50,000.

A couple of constituents wrote to me and spoke very strongly about the 5% surtax which continues to exist. These surtaxes were imposed as deficit elimination initiatives. Canadians know we have a balanced budget. They are now asking, since it is balanced, for the government to get rid of the 5% surtax. The taxpayers are quite right.

We have to deal with that 5%, but there will be some backlash in that regard because it will be seen as a tax break for the rich. It will be seen that the highest income earners will get a reduction or elimination of the 5% surtax which is applied against their federal taxes otherwise payable in excess of \$12,000.

This generates for the Government of Canada about \$650 million a year. It is a substantial item and to eliminate it in one fell swoop, or any of these items, would have put the balancing of our books on an annual basis under some pressure and likely in jeopardy. We must continue to balance our books and still be within our means.

Although it is little comfort to those who are paying the 5% surtax, they should know that the finance committee recognizes the need to address that. In our report we recommended the 5% surtax on Canadians be eliminated over a five year period by reducing it

1% each year. That has not happened but it does recognize the need for us to address it. It was \$650 million that instead of being eliminated was put into the health care system. It was a choice to be made.

Although investing in our health care system benefits all Canadians, the 5% surtax was a deficit elimination measure that is still there. We have to deal with it and I know all members will have to come forward with a position on the appropriate way to address that \$650 million. Because it must be eliminated, what is the fairest way to do it? What is the most timely way to do it and still maintain the priorities, the prudence and the balancing of our fiscal affairs? That is certainly something that will come before us.

In the 1998 budget there was a top up of \$850 million provided with regard to the Canadian child tax benefit. This was good news for low income Canadians. We have had no shortage of inputs from Canadians with regard to child poverty and family poverty. The real issue is family poverty.

We invested an additional \$850 million in the Canadian child tax benefit. We could not have done that and got rid of the 5% surtax of \$650 million and maybe just put \$200 million into the child tax benefit. The priority was to address low income Canadians who needed assistance.

• (1635)

There are priorities and trade-offs. There are decisions we have to make every year in every budget. We cannot do it all at once but we are moving in the right direction.

I suspect Canadians well know this was a health budget following on the heels of an education budget. I believe there is substantial support in this place. I hope we will look again at the priorities as we build on the fiscal renewal of Canada. I hope children and the family will have a significant place in the envelope of the next budget. I hope members will take the opportunity to work with the finance committee and to consult with their constituents to help us to identify the immediate priorities, the medium priorities and the long term priorities so all Canadians will benefit in the long term.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague across the way mentioned income tax refunds.

I hope he knows that a taxpayer who makes on average \$30,000 a year will get a \$90 tax refund; divided by 365 days, it is not even enough to buy a cup of coffee.

Does he not believe that the best way to be fair to everybody would be to index tax tables?

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[English]

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure I understood the member's question. If I understood him, he was referring to someone making \$30,000 a year only getting a \$90 refund. That is probably not the case.

If the withholdings or instalments were made there should be no refund. Someone who makes \$30,000 a year, assuming it is a single person filing the tax return, would get a non-refundable tax credit of \$6,452. If he had bought no RRSPs he would be paying income tax on about \$24,000. Assuming a 50% provincial tax rate, that would mean the effective tax rate of someone at that level is about 25 cents on the dollar, so I would assume that someone would pay income tax of about \$6,000.

I am not sure if I misunderstood but Canadians do pay income taxes. Someone who makes \$30,000 a year pays about \$6,000 in income tax or about 20%.

**Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the member referred to last year's budget as the education budget. I remind the House that was the same year 12,000 students declared personal bankruptcy because of their inability to get jobs and pay off their student debts. That was the year of the education budget.

This year is the year of the so-called health budget. The amount of money announced by the finance minister, although a substantial \$11.5 billion which by anyone's imagination is still a lot of money, will only bring us back to 1995 spending levels by the year 2005. In other words, we will be 10 years behind by the time we catch up after the government having stripped \$17 billion from that same budget. How does he square these numbers as a CA?

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, sometimes I get a little frustrated with the presentation of members with regard to transfers. If members want to talk about the facts of health care transfers, they know that the cuts to the provinces were a lower percentage of provincial revenues than they were for the federal government. In other words, the federal government cuts to its own spending were higher than were asked of the provinces.

• (1640)

Members will also know that the National Forum on Health, an independent body, made the report that there was enough money in the system but the problem was how it was spent, the wisdom of spending money.

The member also did not say, and he should say, that the transfers to the provinces were not just cash. There are tax points. Even under the old system, as growth in the economy occurred and the provinces were able to generate more money through income tax revenue, the amount of cash was going down. We have to take

into account how much the cash transfers would go down as a result of economic growth and increased tax revenues to the provinces.

There is no question that there was a cut, but the member will also have to recognize that the delivery of health care in Canada is through the provinces. We have provinces such as my own province of Ontario that decided to give 15% income tax cuts and at the same time cut health care.

Where are the priorities of the province of Ontario? I know the priorities of Mike Harris. Mike Harris wants to buy an election. He cut health care. He cut it badly. It reflected on services and I am not denying that, but the provinces have a responsibility to deliver health care and Mike Harris did not do it.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I too listened with interest. I think the hon. accountant has his numbers wrong. It is quite clear if we look at the actual numbers that the amount being restored is considerably less than the level before the Liberals took over in 1993. There was a substantial cut.

For the hon. member and his colleagues to continually rip into Harris in Ontario and Klein in Alberta for cutting health care is like whipping a guy because he is running in a race and his leg has just been cut off. They think that whipping him will make him run faster. It just does not work that way.

Originally the federal government financed health care to the tune of 50% of expenses. It has been cutting back, cutting back and cutting back. That happened under the Conservatives and it has been greatly increased under the Liberals. The fact of the matter is that while the government is still continuing to tax us more and more and more, it is giving back less and less and less to the provinces. The poor provinces with limited funds just do not have the money to put into health care.

If we take a province like Alberta, for example—and it is the same in Ontario—the actual component of what the province has put into health care has increased in the same length of time as the government was cutting its funding for health care. Then the federal government turns around and blames the provinces. It is unjust. Let the hon. member try to defend that.

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, the member is incorrect. He said the provinces did not have the money to put into health care. Mike Harris cut income taxes at a cost to the provincial treasury of \$5 billion. The cuts to Ontario for health care were under \$1 billion. It is a matter of priorities. In Alberta the Klein government is running surpluses and it cuts health care.

Why is it that a province can choose to give tax breaks, run surpluses, cut health care and blame the federal government? The Reform Party is suggesting in the alternative budget to cut \$9 billion from spending on health care. The only way Reformers will pay for the spending on health care is that they make a wild assumption that the economy will grow by 5% a year.

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When members are in opposition they can say a lot of platitudes and make lots of promises without having to articulate exactly how they will pay for them or how they will be delivered. That is the difference. Canadians understand and I think they reflected their understanding in the results of the election in Windsor—St. Clair when the Reform Party did not even get its deposit back.

Canadians will not stand for this nonsense of playing with numbers. Let us always give them the facts and let Canadians have an opportunity to understand those facts and decide. As far as I am concerned members of the Reform Party continue to give half the story and only the story that suits their own purpose.

• (1645)

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I do believe the hon. member is a member who does not mislead intentionally. I would like him to respond to this simple question.

The Harris government has put \$1.5 billion more into health care than there was being spent in 1995. Would the member tell me how he can make that a reduction in health care in Ontario? It is not so; \$1.5 billion more since 1995. Argue with that, if he will.

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, the fact is that we cannot have it both ways. Mike Harris is saying, "We've spent \$1.5 billion more on health care than we did back in 1995". That is what he is saying to the public.

However, \$750 million of that was severance costs for nurses. I think he had to spend the same amount again to get them back. That is not delivering health care.

The reason that I say we cannot have it both ways is that if the member is standing in the House saying that waiting lists are up, health care is down, health care is awful because we have had these awful cuts from the federal government and yet the province of Ontario delivered \$1.5 billion more in spending, how do we rationalize that we spent more but got less service? It has to do with the provincial administration of health care.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** 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 Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, shipbuilding industry; the hon. member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, shipbuilding; the hon. member for Vancouver East, justice; the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville, firearms registry.

**Mr. Paul Mercier (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, with your permission I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière.

I am pleased to take the floor to cast light on what I consider to be some of the most troubling aspects of the federal budget of last February 16. Although my time is too short, I will begin by addressing the underlying trends of this budget, which are evidence of a growing desire by the federal government to invade areas of jurisdiction defined by the constitution as provincial.

Then I shall attack the myths being spread by the federal government about Quebec's receiving its fair share of Ottawa's spending, every year in every budget. To do so, I merely need to refer to the insufficiency of job-creating spending by Ottawa in Quebec on the one hand, and on the other the orgy of spending on federalist propaganda in Quebec, spending that is anything but job-creating.

The Martin budget confirms the Ottawa government's strong tendency to use its spending power to gradually centralize all power within its hands. The federal budget for 1999-2000 fits within a continuing trend which is most revealing of the long-term political objective of the Liberal Party of Canada. Some editorials have rightly described this as a political budget.

Once again this year, the federal government's spending power is being used as a Trojan horse in order to sneak into areas of provincial jurisdiction. After education, this year it is health care, and this time there is no attempt at disguise.

The Canadian Constitution ensures that health is an exclusively provincial responsibility. Yet this budget is taking away funds the provinces need to administer their health systems so that it can create bureaucratic monsters that will usurp provincial powers and duplicate programs. The obvious purpose of this is federal exhibitionism.

I was amused to hear my colleague from St. Paul's say, in response to a question from my Bloc Québécois colleague on social union, that health services were certainly a provincial matter, but the establishment of standards was a federal matter. I find that revealing. My hon. colleague considers therefore that the establishment of standards is a federal responsibility, while carrying them out is a provincial one. This is an original view of an area of jurisdiction.

• (1650)

In invading the health care field, the government did not trot out a single Trojan horse, it released an entire stable of them. These Trojan horses are the national health surveillance network, the Canada health network and the Canadian institute for health information. This last one is the most insidious, since it amounts to putting Quebec and the other provinces under guardianship in the area of health care.

The Canadian institute for health information will monitor, diagnose and provide treatment to these health care networks, unilaterally and against their wishes.



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Furthermore, programs such as the research and evaluation fund for nursing staff, prenatal nutrition, rural community health and the telehealth pilot project represent very costly and totally useless Canadian flags planted beside Quebec government programs in these areas.

On the political level, it is remarkable that this slow job of sapping provincial responsibilities has produced no major reaction from the provincial governments, except that of Quebec. Despite the commitments the provinces made in Saskatoon, they signed the social union agreement without balking, selling the birthright of their jurisdiction for a plate of federal largesse lentils.

I come to the second part of my remarks. Ottawa has for years claimed that Quebec receives more than its share of federal budget spending. We must take the wind out of this statement once and for all.

First, let us talk about equalization. What is the equalization program? It is a federal initiative designed to compensate the relative poverty of certain provinces. Sure, we get money under that program, but why are we poorer in the first place? It is easy to find at least one reason. It is well known that, given its demographic weight, Quebec receives much less than it should when it comes to productive investments and the procurement of goods and services by the federal government.

Indeed, while Quebec accounts for 24% of the Canadian population, it always gets less than 15% of the federal money for research and development. By comparison, beloved Ontario, which accounts for 37% of Canada's population, gets close to 60% of that money.

This lack of productive spending is a fundamental cause of Quebec's relative poverty. Now, Ottawa is trying to justify its reduced social transfers to Quebec with this compensation under the equalization program. However, by its very nature, that compensation is absolutely not guaranteed in coming years. This strange calculation clearly sets a precedent which might later be used to justify the reduction of overall federal spending in Quebec. This will happen as soon as our province's economic situation changes, at which time Quebec will become a contributor instead of a receiver under the equalization program.

Like me, members probably wonder how Ottawa hopes to impress Quebecers with this budget. While we do not have the federal government's recipe to promote its visibility, we know those who are trying to use it.

We also know of some of the ingredients used in that recipe. There is the Canada Information Office, a propaganda tool with some \$21 million to spend this fiscal, the Treasury Board, and the Department of Canadian Heritage, which have explicit instructions to bury Quebec deep in directives and programs all sporting bright red maple leaves.

How are we to explain that Ottawa spends close to 60% of its Canada Day budget in Quebec every year? Flags, flags, and more flags. They are the only thing the federal government gives us way more than our share of.

In conclusion, I would say that the reaction, or non-reaction, to this new federal budget in other provinces once again proves that there are two incompatible visions of government in Canada: Quebec's, calling for decentralization, and the rest of Canada's.

• (1655)

Quebec being in a minority in Canada, about the only option left for Quebecers is to choose sovereignty or go along with a vision of government at complete odds with what they believe in.

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ):**  
Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have my turn to address Bill C-71, which relates to certain provisions in the budget tabled in the House on February 16.

A budget can be labelled either good or bad, and this is, I believe, a bad one, because it contains some bad provisions. It can also be looked at according to what it should contain but does not.

As the member representing Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, I can be excused for speaking of a matter of great importance to my riding, the Lévis shipyard, and for pointing out that this budget contains no additional measures relating to shipbuilding.

After a number of questions from us, mobilization of the unions and demands from the shipbuilding association, the Minister of Industry still maintains that there is, in his opinion, no need for additional measures.

But what is it that the industry is calling for? Not subsidies but tax measures, a loan guarantee program, consideration of leasing as a tax compensation, as other major industries are treated, including railways and especially aerospace.

In this budget, there is also a very glaring lack of new measures to create employment and to help small and medium businesses, although these are the main creators of jobs in the country.

In addition to not creating employment, this budget adds nothing to compensate for the cuts experienced by the regions, particularly those affected by seasonal unemployment. Obviously, each riding has faced cuts in this regard. In my riding, the cuts to benefits amounted to \$20 million or \$21 million a year. That had an impact on the economy. In certain ridings, however, in the more remote regions, which have seasonal unemployment, it was even worse.

We would expect that the government would set aside additional funds for these regions. Instead of doing that, it cut more than \$100 million in the budgets for regional development, in the west, the

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maritimes and Quebec. It cut \$27 million in Quebec in regional development. Real sensitivity.

Yesterday, I spoke in the House on the motion by the member for North Vancouver on western alienation over the money that comes from Ottawa, or the way this money is managed for the west. I not only mentioned the amounts allocated to regional development in Quebec—because I am most familiar with this—but I also noted certain anomalies.

For example, the figures I had for the first six months of 1998 indicated to me that the riding of Westmount—Ville-Marie in Quebec received the most money for regional development, an amount that is usually given for regions far from the major centres. The riding of Westmount—Ville-Marie is represented by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

I note that in this period, the ridings represented by the Liberal members had, oddly enough, budgets 50% higher than those of other ridings in Quebec, regardless of whether they were represented by Conservatives or members of the Bloc Québécois. That was fairly distressing.

In addition, there were cuts to employment insurance that permitted the creation of an employment insurance fund. If it were an independent fund, it would soon be worth \$20 billion. That is a lot of money.

• (1700)

What takes the cake is to see the Minister of Finance use this surplus to solve his deficit problems, pay back part of the debt and use new money to intrude in provincial programs and jurisdictions, especially since the social union agreement reached with nine provinces.

In exchange for money, nine premiers out of ten gave up their claims and told the federal government “these are not your jurisdictions, but give us money”. Quebec did not sign that agreement.

The cuts that this government decided to make to the transfers to the provinces between 1994 and 2003 are of the order of \$33 billion. This is not peanuts. But now the federal government has decided to put money back in the health sector, to the tune of \$1 billion in Ontario and \$150 million in Quebec. Ottawa also gave a cheque of \$1.4 billion under the equalization program, but let us not forget that this same Liberal government cut \$6 billion in the transfer programs for health, education and social assistance. To give back \$1.4 billion after making cuts of \$6 billion is not fair.

The hon. member for Terrebonne—Blainville spoke about something I wanted to mention regarding equalization and tax points. Since I do not have much time, I will not repeat the examples he gave, but I will say that this is not necessarily linked to the transfer

payments, as a number of economists have shown. These are pre-established formulas and the Liberals have nothing to do with them. They were established through agreements a long time ago.

It is exasperating for Quebec to see that it is not getting funds through productive expenditures in the area of research and development, and the procurement of goods and services. I could start a war of numbers regarding taxation and equalization payments, as the federal and Quebec governments did.

Quebec commentators and those who know history will recall that, at first after Confederation, the federal government did not tax individuals directly, the provinces did. The federal government went about it indirectly through excise taxes and customs duties. This is how it raised money.

As provided in the Constitution in cases of emergency and for the sake of public order, during both world wars, the federal government asked the provinces if it could tax Canadians directly through personal income taxes. This was to finance the war, but once it had a taste of it, it got used to it and never went back.

It had reached an agreement with every province, except Ontario and Quebec, in order to continue taxing Canadians directly. Eight existing provinces had agreed. Ontario, which was reluctant, finally came on board after it was offered a very advantageous auto pact. Quebec found itself isolated, and since that time we have been the only province where individual taxpayers must file two returns, contradictory returns with provisions that sometimes cancel each other out.

During a referendum on sovereignty, we will have to make it very clear to people how urgent it is to repatriate all our taxes to Quebec so that we can spend according to our own priorities. Quebec has a distinct culture, and we do business in a distinct manner. The Civil Code is distinct. In every field we see, feel and act differently.

I conclude with the hope of being asked a few questions.

• (1705)

[*English*]

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Canada Health Act is the instrument which the federal government has to enforce health standards in this country.

There are five principles enshrined in the Canada Health Act. One is universality, which means that the health care system is for all Canadians. The second is comprehensiveness, which means that it will cover medically necessary health costs for all Canadians. The third is accessibility. It is accessible to all Canadians. The fourth is portability so that no matter where you are in Canada, no matter where you live and where you may travel it is going to be available. Finally, it is publicly funded, which means it is on a not for profit basis. That is why we do not have a two tiered system. We

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do not have a system for the rich and a system for those who do not have the funds. We have one system for all Canadians.

How the federal government manages to enforce those standards is by the cash transfer system. Before the CHST, under the old system we had established program funding. One of the programs was health care.

In Quebec's case, the combination of cash and tax points amounted to what it was entitled to based on the funding formulas. The cash portion in Quebec was going down and was expected to hit zero. I believe the cash amount going to Quebec would have been zero by the year 2005.

If that is the case, I simply ask the member, how can he argue that there were transfer cuts which were inappropriate relative to the Quebec situation?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, I have great respect for the member who just spoke. I worked with him on the Standing Committee on Health. He is a very caring person.

That having been said, I urge him to reread the Constitution. Under health, the wording is very clear: except for certain things, such as drugs, or the introduction of potentially diseased animals or plants into the country, health is recognized as a federal jurisdiction under the Constitution.

But for the rest, specifically health care administration, the Constitution is very clear that this comes under provincial jurisdiction. We are forever hearing that, because certain provinces were perhaps not operating exactly as the present federal government would have liked, it is important that all Canadians be treated the same.

This specious principle can be used to flout the Constitution. That is what is creating problems.

After slashing EI and making all the other cuts mentioned earlier, suddenly the federal government finds itself with a bit more money. With this money, which belongs to Canadian taxpayers, it wants to tell the provinces how to run their health care systems. This is unacceptable.

It is also unacceptable that the premiers of all provinces except Quebec agreed to the social union framework in order to get money. They renounced their powers and jurisdiction under the Constitution for money. I dare not use the word that comes to mind, because it would be unparliamentary, but I cannot help thinking it.

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** It is my duty to inform the House that the time for questions and comments on the speeches is over. We will now go to 10 minute speeches with no questions and comments.

**Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC):** Mr. Speaker, this debate is reminiscent of any budget debate. It always amazes me to listen to the government side. The Liberals have this institutional memory but it is a very selective memory when they talk about what they have done in terms of the management of the economy.

• (1710)

Of course the Liberals refer back to the government I was a part of. They blame the ills of the world on that previous government. It is true that I was a member of that government. We did not do everything wrong and we certainly did not do everything right. But I remind the House that in the timeframe of the Trudeau era, between 1968 and 1983 when the Liberals left office, the federal debt increased by 900%. That is not a lot to be proud of.

The Liberals fail to mention another statistic. It is a memory lapse. It is a selective institutional memory I am speaking of when I speak of the Liberals. They forget to remind the Canadian public that program spending increased by 800% in that same time period. It is important to put that on the record.

The government does take credit for some of what it has done and maybe we could give it a little credit. It is talking about a balanced budget which at first glance is pretty good. No one will argue with that. It is something we would all like to see, and apparently we have one.

This really confuses me. When the Liberals talk about this balanced budget, they never talk about the \$22 billion brought in by the GST. I know why. Because everybody sitting on that side of the House, with the exception of a few, were brought in on that promise to scrap the GST. What happened to that promise? I guess it got lost in the red book. I suppose the red books have been recycled and are now compost. Maybe they are growing tomatoes or something else with the remains of those old red books.

The Liberals conveniently forget that \$22 billion. Where would their balanced budget be today without that \$22 billion? They would be far short of the mark. I can even see some government members nodding in agreement.

There is another thing that is really interesting. Where is the \$26 billion in the employment insurance fund? Does that show up

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somewhere in the books? My guess is that it does. The government is effectively taking it out of the hides of employees and employers. It is a hidden tax the Liberals are using to balance their books.

Every time I speak on budget measures in relation to the government, I am reminded of the old Mark Twain expression "lies, damned lies and statistics". I always question into which category the minister's figures fit. It is probably the latter category. There is also the old expression that liars figure and figures lie. The minister is a master at manipulation of the figures. The truth is they have balanced the budget and they have done it on the backs of ordinary Canadians and on the backs of the provinces.

The Liberals take great pleasure in calling it the health care budget. The sad reality is that after putting back \$11.5 billion, which is a lot of money if that is what they are putting back, over the course of the next four or five years, in the year 2005 we will be back to the same spending levels in health care that we were at in 1995. Can that by any measure be called a success or an accomplishment? I would not call it that. There is nothing to brag about in this budget when it comes to health care.

I have a clipping regarding the health care budget. It comes from the province that runs the *Daily Gleaner*. It was in the April 12 edition of the Fredericton *Daily Gleaner*. It refers to the 122 recommendations contained in a report for the long term recovery of the New Brunswick health care system.

• (1715)

There were 122 recommendations. Why so many? Because health care was destroyed in every single province. Because premiers like Premier Thériault in New Brunswick stood in silent agreement as funding was ratcheted away from health care. Now they are scrambling to pick up the pieces.

The premier is quoted as saying they cannot afford to do it. They cannot afford to do it because it is going to cost the little province of New Brunswick in the vicinity of \$400 million.

A lot of that \$11.5 billion that was announced as going back into health care, is going to pay off previous debt incurred over the last number of years since this government took office. It is nothing more than smoke and mirrors.

We have a crisis in the country and it is called health care. It is quite interesting that the Liberals call it the health care budget, but why not? Last year they called the budget the education budget. That was the same year that 12,000 students declared personal bankruptcy because of their inability to pay off student debt and get a job. If this is the same type of budget in terms of health care when compared to the so-called education budget, then it is going to have a very short shelf life indeed.

It does not stop there. Another difficulty we have in the Canadian economy, which all goes back to the budget and the management or

mismanagement of the present government, is in terms of productivity.

We have the lowest rate of productivity in the G-8. That is not just me speaking. The government has been told this by a number of people, including Sherry Cooper who is the chief economist with Nesbitt Burns. If we do not believe her, how about Michael Marzolini who is the Liberal Party's own pollster? He says that Canada has the lowest rate of productivity among the G-7.

What is the difference if it is the G-7 or the G-8? Productivity in this country is extremely low and it is costing us. The only way we can compensate for that is with a low Canadian dollar, but that is not the way to do it. What the country needs is sound fiscal management. Unless we have that, our standard of living is going to continue to decline year in and year out, which it is doing.

The question we would ask ourselves is: What would happen in Canada if the Canadian dollar suddenly rose? I know where we would be. We would be in a heck of a lot of trouble, because the government has paid scant attention to productivity. We are relying on a low dollar to move our goods into the marketplace. At the end of the day, we are all going to be poorer because of it. There will be a day of reckoning.

The government does not want to talk about this. When it does talk about it, it tries to remove itself from its own very words, as did the Minister of Industry not long ago when he actually gave a speech and spoke about our dismal productivity levels in this country.

All I can say with the little bit of time I have left is that I am pleased to take part in this debate. I think what Canadians want is some real information from the government so we know exactly where we stand in terms of the Canadian economy, in terms of taxation and in terms of productivity.

Let us get real about some of those numbers. I see them always hacking away at that so-called inherited \$42 billion debt. Let us talk about the 900% increase in that federal debt in the period when the Liberals were in power from 1968 to 1983.

• (1720)

**Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I will comment about the broad economic philosophy of the government as represented in the bill, and the themes of its economic measures by using the example of some aspects of the personal income tax form. For what we see helps us put into perspective what social attitudes underlie the bill before us today.

First, the big myth is that the Liberals are good managers of the public trust. They are not. It is a myth that they have presented balance to the country in their budgets? What myths. I challenge

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the media and the folks at home to check the numbers rather than the Liberals spinning machine. The Liberals have shown not to be wise managers of the public trust.

Specifically, to help with general understanding today about the appropriateness of the underlying philosophy of the bill, I cite the historical social attitude of the Liberals toward traditional families in the tax category where parents decide that one of them will forgo a working income to stay home and provide quality child care.

That social choice is denigrated by the government through its tax policy. It is expressed clearly, in the unashamedly unfair differences that it has given since at least 1993, and have deepened in each successive budget. The government's record is that it is not family friendly. Reformers have been talking about it since 1993, but the news media has finally woken up, so when we talk about it and make a point we are now getting it reported.

The finance minister was wrong when he said that his tax discrimination against one income, two parent families was a recent issue for Reform. The Reform blue book as far back as 1993 said:

The Reform Party supports a revision of the federal income tax regulations to end discrimination against parents who provide child-care at home—and—supports equitable treatment for one-income families with dependant children.

Our election platform of fresh start for the June 1997 election clearly included the desired changes on taxation for families. The *Hansard* shows that I spoke about it clearly in the debate for last year's 1998-99 budget, because by then the hurt against families was really getting deep.

We have been asking why the finance minister would not even admit in the House that his policy documents and budgets have delivered tax discriminations since his first budget in 1994. Why will he not change? Perhaps because he is a Liberal and the cabinet has a mindset of socialist engineering from another era that it cannot let go of. Belatedly, he has now sent the hot potato to committee. It will buy him some political time for now.

The insincere answers that we have received in question period from the finance minister on this subject is avoidance when he claims we Reformers voted against budget measures related to children. His falsity boggles. Reform has voted generally against the tax and spend habits of the Liberals, not specific child programs. We have voted against the lack of accountability in government spending.

The budgets continue to spend too much, therefore tax too much, and thereby the country still owes too much. It is about competence to govern. It is about fairness. It is about helping instead of hurting and equality before the tax law. It is about a Liberal mean-spirited view of the family as expressed in tax law, and about penalizing parents, like giving them a fine for having a traditional family child care arrangement. What hurts the most is that it does it openly and

justifies it while it calls us on this side of the House, who have defended the family since coming here, as being just too negative.

The evidence is that the Liberal economic policies hurt people. The whole country knows it, and I am again reminding the House of this again today.

I ask: When will the finance minister provide the tax changes we are talking about today? When will he begin to help rather than hurt families with his tax discrimination? Roughly 82% of Canadians want the tax code changed to make it easier for parents with young children to have a parent stay at home. According to a November 1998 Southam-Compas poll, this is a very high priority for 42% of Canadians, a high priority for 23% and a priority for 17%.

The C.D. Howe Institute's latest report, entitled "Giving Mom and Dad a Break", states:

Current Canadian tax policy affords no universal recognition of children. In effect, it treats children in middle and high-income families like consumer spending, as if parents had no legal or moral obligation to spend money on their care. This treatment is indefensible.

The balanced budget was achieved by squeezing the people: 76.7% of the balancing came from higher tax revenues; 14% from slashing health and social transfers; 7.2% from cutting transfers to persons; and a minuscule 2.1% by cutting federal spending itself. Where was the government required to live within its means instead of imposing on the weak individual taxpayer? Children are directly hurt by Liberal policy design.

• (1725)

In the 1999 prebudget submission called "Taxes and Health Care: It's Critical", we proposed an alternate budget. It would include \$26 billion in total tax relief and \$19 billion in repayment of the national debt over the next three years; increased health transfers to the provinces by \$2 billion a year; and an immediate \$1 billion reinvestment in Canada's armed forces.

On February 2, 1999 the Ottawa *Sun* reported that "Sherry Cooper, chief economist for Nesbitt Burns, said Reform's proposals are realistic. This is feasible" she said. Cooper said "If spending is kept in line, the government should have enough money to fund both tax cuts and debt reduction because the surpluses are going to be huge".

Parents know that the best child care program is a dad and a mom but sadly, commercial day care is the only child care option recompensed by the Canadian tax code. In her 1998 submission to Parliament's finance committee Heather Gore-Hickman, chartered accountant, found that only 16% of families with kids claim the child care expense deduction for commercial day care.

Roughly speaking, in 19% of families, both parents work full time but they either use informal child care, work out of home, or

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work flex time. So one parent is always at home. Twenty-two per cent of families have a second part time income while providing parent care. Over 33% of families have a parent providing full time unpaid child care.

According to the Fraser Institute in its pamphlet "Tax Facts Ten", two earner families earning \$30,000 paid \$3,492 in income tax, while a one earner family paid \$4,317, or 24% more in 1995.

A report showed that a family earning \$60,000 paid \$6,383 in federal income tax; if a two earner, \$10,300; if a one earner, a whopping 61% more.

The tax code of this government sends the message that private parenting has no public value and if chosen, families will be penalized. The suggested changes to bring fairness can be made. These policy problems are only the tip of the iceberg of an outdated Liberal ideology.

I have already cited how the administration is incompetent and how it hurts people and then runs from responsibility, how it fails to fulfil the public trust; but the capper of it all is that when serious policy problems are outlined by the opposition parties and then constructive alternatives are presented from this side to help Canadians, the smugness of the cabinet continues the old style Liberal way and they assert that they have all the answers.

The point is that the Liberals are part of a harsh culture that hurts family life, puts unreasonable pressure on families and poorly serves kids. Heaven help us when the next generation of children returns the favour to our culture. Just 38% of people voted for Liberals, and they still behave as if they had the divine right to govern with impunity and with little accountability.

The bill before us today is the implementation of spending intentions. This legislation is a big fuzzy housekeeping bill that contains a lot of feel good stuff. The Liberals have failed to simplify the tax code. They are announcing money they have already deleted from the taxpayers' surplus in previous budgets. They have failed to give Canadians what they really need, which is massive across the board tax cuts and smaller government.

I trust there will be some better economic policy thought on the Liberal side as a result of these debates. If there is not, we in the official opposition are ready and waiting to govern for the 21st century.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Perhaps we could call it 5.30 p.m. Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 5.30 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]

**LEGALIZATION OF MARIJUANA FOR HEALTH AND MEDICAL PURPOSES**

The House resumed from March 4 consideration of the motion and the amendment.

**Mrs. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is a growing body of evidence, most of it still anecdotal, that strongly suggests that marijuana has unique therapeutic properties in the treatment of several life and sense threatening diseases. For example, some people with multiple sclerosis believe that smoking marijuana helps them to control their spasticity. In certain instances the use of marijuana has helped to reduce nausea and stimulate the appetite of those living with HIV and AIDS.

Last year the board of directors of the Canadian AIDS Society passed a position statement on the medicinal use of smokable marijuana stating that people living with HIV-AIDS and their physicians should have access to marijuana for medicinal purposes in the treatment of these conditions.

• (1730)

There are indications that smoking marijuana can likewise reduce nausea and vomiting brought on by chemotherapy, principally among cancer patients. This is not simply a matter of comfort, as some cancer patients have had to cease treatment because the constant vomiting can make it impossible to continue taking the therapeutic drugs they need. Many chemotherapy patients complain that other anti-nausea drugs are ineffective and in some cases produce unwelcome side effects.

Marijuana is reputed to be helpful in the treatment of glaucoma through the reduction of intraocular pressure caused by fluid accumulation.

Other medical conditions or situations for which marijuana is reputed to have some effectiveness include an anti-convulsant action which may have an application in the treatment of epilepsy, and an analgesic action for pain relief. Marijuana cannot be said to cure any of these conditions but the potential exists with rational, medically supervised use to help alleviate pain and suffering. One recent report would term this belief based medicine. In Canada we strive for evidence based medicine.

The therapeutic products program, the regulator in Health Canada, has in place an expert advisory committee that since last year has been examining a number of issues relating to the medical uses of marijuana.

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I am delighted that Canada will be among those jurisdictions to gather evidence in a safe and controlled manner so that our body of evidence can be evaluated along with that being done elsewhere.

In the U.K., GW Pharmaceuticals has been granted licences by the British Government to cultivate cannabis plants and to store and dispense the cannabis preparations for research. Initially it will develop standardized extracts of cannabis plants grown under controlled conditions. Research will also be concentrated on the best way to give the drug to patients and on which conditions it can safely treat.

They intend to proceed to clinical trials with a smokeless whole plant extract while also supplying marijuana to other investigators interested in medical research and pharmaceutical development.

Earlier this year the International Narcotics Control Board, which is responsible for the implementation of United Nations drug conventions, released its annual report for 1998. In the report the board called for unbiased research into the possible medical benefits of marijuana.

If the medical usefulness of marijuana is established, which I believe it will be, it would remain a drug no different from any other narcotic drugs. It would still be subject to licensing and other control measures according to international treaties, just like morphine and opiates.

Last month the American Institute of Medicine issued its report entitled "Marijuana and Medicine: Assessing the Science Base". It declared that the medical use of marijuana may be one of the most effective treatments available for people with serious diseases such as AIDS and cancer.

This study, the product of more than 18 months of research, highlights continued concerns about marijuana but says it clearly controls some forms of pain, was not particularly addictive, and did not appear to be a gateway to harder drugs. The report also states that new research on the medical uses of marijuana should try to develop a non-smoked rapid onset delivery system to simulate the action of smoking marijuana.

To assist desperately ill patients who may not want to wait for a safe alternative to be developed, the report suggests doctors be allowed to launch clinical trials of marijuana, telling each test subject the benefits and risks of smoking it, including the negative impact of the smoke itself.

At the present moment a licit supply of medical research quality marijuana for clinical trials in Canada is potentially available and obtainable from the American National Institute on Drug Abuse. GW Pharmaceuticals may also be interested in performing some

clinical trials with its developed alternate delivery systems outside its jurisdiction of Britain.

In Canada no scientific evidence that smoked marijuana has medicinal benefit has been submitted to the therapeutic products program. I believe very soon there will be a need for researchers to come forward and present proposals to study the benefits of the medicinal use of marijuana.

Under the Controlled Drug and Substances Act there is sufficient latitude to distribute marijuana without having to now change the law.

Under the CDSA the Minister of Health can enact regulations to authorize the possession, import, export and production of cannabis for medical purposes. Section 56 of the act states the following:

The Minister may, on such terms and conditions as the Minister deems necessary, exempt any person or class of persons or any controlled substance or precursor or any class thereof from the application of all or any of the provisions of this act or the regulations if, in the opinion of the Minister, the exemption is necessary for a medical or scientific purpose or is otherwise in the public interest.

• (1735 )

Under the regulations of the CDSA, the minister also has the authority to authorize research on controlled substances. Together with others, specifically those in our social policy caucus at the time, I worked on the rework of the relevant bill in the 35th parliament. *Hansard* debates recorded this.

In the summer of 1997 I commissioned the Library of Parliament to prepare a report regarding the use of the new CDSA act and medicinal marijuana. This report was delivered to me in September 1997, at which time I provided it to our Minister of Justice and our Minister of Health.

I have pushed this matter very hard inside my government and since that time with these departments. I, with others, understand that even now there will not be overnight change; but let us not underestimate the progress made. The answer to my question to the Minister of Health on March 3 was a significant embarkment on a new policy direction for Canada.

There are drugs that contain THC, the active ingredient in cannabis, which have received therapeutic drug approval by Health Canada. These drugs went through the drug submission process, received a notice of compliance and then were granted drug identification numbers. The drugs can be sold legally in Canada pursuant to a prescription by a practitioner. Since the active ingredient in cannabis is already available for medicinal purposes in Canada, expanding its use may seem to be an appropriate development once we have the supportive research in hand.

At the present time in Canada there are two approved drugs that contain the active ingredients derived from the marijuana plants in

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pill form: Marinol and Cesamet. For many patients these synthetic versions of marijuana's active ingredients are expensive, unpalatable, and if they are trying to control nausea to be able to take oral medications they are ineffective oftentimes.

Smoking marijuana meanwhile appears to provide immediate relief of nausea and a stimulation of the appetite, allowing people to hold down both their pills and some food. There may be better mediums, for example inhalers, that reduce the negative side effects associated with smoking marijuana. These are still under development.

Currently some people who suffer from these diseases discussed above, for whom the legal medical options have proven ineffective or painful, have made choices. Some have obtained marijuana illegally in Canada and therefore risk suffering consequences such as arrest, fines, court costs, property forfeiture, incarceration, probation and criminal records.

Once evidence has been gathered the federal government will need to establish quickly an approach that would provide medical quality, licit marijuana so that people suffering from disease do not have to take further risks with their health by buying potentially impure, contaminated or chemically adulterated marijuana as is the case currently in Canada.

The concept of legalizing marijuana for medical purposes has been debated on and off in Canada for a number of years. I stress today that it is not the so-called legalization of a controlled substance that is the real issue. It is the legal access through the CDSA, which could be dealt with easily. In a recent court case in my riding, *Regina v Clay and Prentice*, Ontario Court Justice John McCart stated:

Parliament may wish to take a serious look at easing the restrictions that apply to the use of marijuana for the medical uses as outlined above as well as for alleviating some of the symptoms associated with multiple sclerosis, such as pain and muscle spasm. There appears to be no merit to the wide-spread claim that marijuana has no therapeutic value whatsoever.

It is a welcome step what we are doing. We need solid research efforts to commence soon. We also need to help set up a system so that those on trials are not open to criminal harassment. It is a matter of compassion. It is not fair to these people who have to fight both their disease and the law at the same time.

I applaud members on all sides of the House who have worked on this matter over the years. I think it is very important to recognize them. I also think it is important to recognize the Minister of Health who has taken this step forward at this time.

I want to also thank my constituents and those across Canada who have brought the poignancy and the tragedy of this issue to my attention. I am proud to be part of our government as we move forward on this issue.

• (1740)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in today's debate on the use of marijuana for health purposes.

This is a health debate, a justice debate, based on the values of fairness, mutual aid and compassion that we all share as a society.

Unfortunately, the motion, as amended by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, no longer mentions the legalization of marijuana, which is a matter of concern. It now talks about the "possible legal medical use of marijuana". In our view, this is a step backwards since the government has asserted many times that it was open to the idea and eager to look into it further.

In fact, more than a year ago, my colleague from Rosemont asked the Minister of Health to set up a parliamentary committee to consider the issue. The minister replied that the question was under consideration, that some people were already studying the matter. He said, and I quote: "The issue is under consideration by my department and by the Department of Justice. Along with my colleague, we are reviewing all the aspects of the issue. We hope to present our policy in the coming months".

Thirteen months after this statement, we are still waiting for some answers and for some concrete measures by the minister or his colleague, the Minister of Justice, who, a year ago, had already started to review all the aspects of this important issue.

In our view, at the present time the government is holding hostage thousands of people who are suffering and waiting for a sign of hope while risking six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine in order to buy marijuana on the black market.

Currently, this debate is about medical issues. But it is also a matter of compassion. More often than not people with HIV/AIDS or other diseases suffer from extreme nausea and are unable to eat. This is a problem, since some of the drugs prescribed to them must be taken with food.

If the patient is successful in taking his medication in spite of the nausea and lack of appetite, he might be affected by side effects: more nausea or even total intolerance to the drug itself.

For some, the solution to these problems has been to smoke or inhale marijuana. It eases nausea and stimulates the appetite. Currently these men and women must break the law to get relief. This is intolerable in a country boasting one of the best health care systems in the world.

Nobody doubts the therapeutic effectiveness of THC, the main active ingredient in marijuana. As a matter of fact, for a number of



years already physicians have been prescribing Marinol pills containing synthetic THC. This drug is available in drugstores. However even Marinol is not as effective as inhaled marijuana.

Many physicians are asking to be allowed to prescribe THC, arguing they are in the best position to determine in which form marijuana will be the best able to help their patients.

The positive effects of THC have been known for a long time, but, strangely enough, it is only recently that medical authorities have started to examine seriously through clinical research these effects and potential medical applications.

Last March, the American medical institute published a report that found, once again, that marijuana has an excellent medical potential.

In November of 1998, the British science and technology committee of the House of Lords took a strong stand in favour of the legalization of marijuana for therapeutic uses. The chairman of the committee stated "We have enough evidence to be convinced that physicians should be allowed to prescribe marijuana to ease the suffering of the sick or the symptoms of multiple sclerosis, criminal code notwithstanding".

• (1745)

Recent research has confirmed earlier reports, including those of the World Health Organization, which are more and more dispelling myths about the therapeutic value of marijuana.

Since the beginning of his campaign, my colleague from Rosemont has gathered a great deal of support, and more support keeps coming in. The Canadian AIDS Society, the Quebec chapter of the Canadian Hemophilia Society and the Coalition des organismes communautaires québécois de lutte contre le sida support motion M-381 without any reservation.

Not too long ago, the National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Federation urged the health minister to act quickly on this issue. The Canadian Medical Association has been defending the decriminalization of simple possession of marijuana since 1981 and deplores the lack of any systematic scientific research on the issue.

Support for decriminalization of marijuana for therapeutic purposes does not come just from the medical associations or social groups; according to a survey carried out last month, close to 80% of the population are in favour of this major change.

Health Canada has had a program since 1966 whereby certain patients may receive unauthorised drugs so that they do not have to suffer needlessly while awaiting authorisation of a product that could help them. Jean-Charles Parizeau and James Wakeford, among others, have applied to obtain marijuana. The government has not, however, given any concrete response as yet.

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This is a problematic situation, because a recent Ontario Court decision on the Wakeford case almost found the Narcotics Act unconstitutional, since it has the effect of depriving certain individuals of the only effective treatment to alleviate their condition. It did not do so for just one reason: there is a way to obtain marijuana and other drugs, such as morphine and other unauthorized drugs, under the current legislation, via the special access program.

This means that, if the government persists in refusing to respond to requests, or refuses access to marijuana through the special access program, part of the Narcotics Act will become unconstitutional, not by law but by fact.

Mr. Parizeau and Mr. Wakeford, and others in their position, would have two choices available to them. First, to play the good citizen, to suffer and to die in the near future, or second to improve their condition and their quality of life by an illegal act. This is the impossible choice this government offers to those in need. It is unacceptable.

In conclusion, the government must stop holding sick people hostage, stop waffling, stop letting the courts decide for it.

I would therefore like to propose an amendment to the amendment of Motion M-381. If the government is sincere in its desire to settle this important question, it will acknowledge that the change is well-founded.

I move:

That the amendment be amended by deleting the words "concerning the possible legal" and substituting the following:

"to legalize the"

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Motion M-381 as well as to the amendment put forward by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health.

First, I will take a few moments to give the history of *Cannabis sativa* and to talk about the various reports and commissions on this issue, and I will then explain why I strongly support the motion and the amendment to legalize the use of marijuana for health and medical purposes.

To better understand the issue, I did some research and I consulted the Le Dain report, among others.

*Cannabis sativa* is cultivated or grows wild in most countries in tropical or temperate zones, including Canada.

• (1750)

This plant, which probably came originally from Asia, has been cultivated for a very long time. The street language has given

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marijuana different names, including pot and grass in English. In India, medium quality marijuana is called bang and high quality marijuana is called ganga. It is called kif in Morocco, dagga in South Africa and ganga in Jamaica.

Cannabis also produces an amber coloured resin which, in the almost pure state, is a drug called charas in India and hashish in western and middle eastern countries.

As for the word marijuana, its etymology is not clear. Some sources say that it is the contraction of two first names that are popular in Mexico, namely Maria and Juana. Other believe that this word comes from the Mexican word mariguano, which means intoxicant, or the Panamanian word managuango, which has the same meaning.

Cannabis has many uses. Its stem provides strong textile fibres that are used in the manufacturing of wires and cables. They can also be used to make blankets, clothes, flags and boat sails. The seeds contain a kind of oil similar to linseed oil that is used in the manufacturing of soap and paint. In Canada, people used to grow cannabis to fight erosion and strong winds.

After this brief historical overview, I will now look at the medical use of that plant.

Our first description of cannabis comes from a medical treatise attributed to the Chinese emperor Chen-Nong, who lived around 2700 B.C. In addition, archeological discoveries at a site in Egypt between 3,000 and 4,000 years old have revealed its use. Herodotus, a Greek historian, mentions in his writings that inhaling the smoke from cannabis was a funeral purification rite of the Scythians, a people speaking Iranian and living between the Danube and the Don starting in the 12th century B.C.

The oldest of the Veda, the sacred Hindu books, written in Sanskrit after 1800 B.C., indicates the properties of cannabis.

Similarly, the Avesta, the holy book of the Zoroastrians, who originated in Northern Persia, which dates from 600 B.C., mentions that the cannabis resin produces drunkenness. One of the Hindu god Siva's titles is lord of the bong and even today, the bong plays an important role in many Hindu religious practices, both symbolically and therapeutically.

In Europe, interest in the use of cannabis did not really develop socially and medicinally until 1798, or after the return of Napoleon's expeditionary forces from Egypt.

In the 19th century, western medicine paid a lot of attention to cannabis because of the influence of two authors: Dr. O'Shaughnessy, an English doctor who returned from India in 1843, and Moreau de Tours, a Frenchman who wrote considerably on the medicinal use and the abuse of cannabis in 1848.

In Europe, cannabis only began to gather a following in 1844, when the Club des Hachichins, whose members included Balzac, Hugo, Baudelaire and Gautier, was founded in Paris.

In Canada, the French apothecary, Louis Hébert, who arrived with Samuel de Champlain in 1606, was the first colonist to cultivate marijuana in North America.

There have been many studies and commissions on the subject, the most exhaustive being the 3,281-page, seven-volume Indian Hemp Drugs Commission report, published in India in 1894. It was followed by the Guardian committee report, named after the mayor of New York, England's Baroness Wootton report, and our own Le Dain commission report.

One argument used against legalizing marijuana for medical purposes is that marijuana now exists in the form of a drug, THC or tetrahydrocannabinol, marketed under the name Marinol.

The problem is that THC, like most drugs, is absorbed by the gastrointestinal tract slowly and irregularly and its speed of absorption can be affected by the stomach's contents.

In addition, THC frequently has undesirable side effects, and patients stop taking it.

As for marijuana, which admittedly also has harmful side effects, its rapid absorption by the pulmonary route is a real benefit to certain patients.

• (1755)

Despite all that medicine has done to understand the human being and try to stave off death as long as possible, it seems that compassion for human suffering sometimes falls short.

There is still a wide range of treatments, medical cocktails, for the seriously ill, of course. But what good are they if ingesting them makes people sicker.

Earlier, its benefits for those with MS, glaucoma, epilepsy or cancer were mentioned. There is also the wasting, or loss of muscle and fatty tissue seen in those with HIV and AIDS. In this particular situation, inhaling marijuana not only brings speedy and significant relief, but also helps patients' physical and psychological recovery.

Demonstrating compassion towards the sick is also the role of politicians and that is why I support any legislative measure to provide controlled access to the therapeutic and medical use of marijuana.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before continuing, I want to point out that debate will now be on the amendment to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Drummond.

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[English]

**Ms. Elinor Caplan:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It seems to me that the subamendment changes the intent of the motion and the amendment and I question whether it is in order.

**The Deputy Speaker:** In the opinion of the Chair, the subamendment does fall within the amendment that was proposed. It simply clarifies the amendment. If the clarification is such that the House finds it objectionable, the House can reject it when voting on the subamendment. However, I think the subamendment appears to be in order and I have accordingly put it to the House.

[Translation]

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. member for Rosemont for this motion on the medical use of marijuana. This debate needs to be held.

[English]

In my view, cannabis for palliation has a place. There are instances of terminal cancer, AIDS, chemotherapy wasting, epilepsy and glaucoma where it looks like cannabis has a positive effect. I especially believe that it has a place when there is no other product that works.

We are debating the medical use of marijuana only. I think that good medical practice would say yes to the medical use of marijuana if there were no other choice. As an example, heroin, which is considered to be an illicit drug in Canada, is available to medical practitioners for this very purpose and if heroin, which is a potent illicit drug, is available, the argument would say, why not the medical use of cannabis.

There are some difficulties with the medical use of marijuana. This is not a straightforward issue. Smoked marijuana is impure. In fact it is a chemical cocktail.

• (1800)

Many of the medications we use for palliation are in fact a cocktail, but we have some choice over their constituents. The impurity of THC and the other constituents in marijuana is a problem. THC or cannabinoids are but one component of smoked pot, which is the common expression for this medication.

There are some new studies that state that cannabis has some positive medical effects. The recent one which I would like to quote from today is from the Institute of Medicine in the U.S. This was reported recently in *The Washington Post*. The Institute of Medicine is an independent advisory body and the study did take some time. It was quite eagerly looked upon for some help in this debate, a debate that is complex.

The basic conclusions of this study were that marijuana smoke can have an important effect on certain disease states. The study states "While we see a future in the development of cannabinoid

drugs, we see little future in smoked marijuana as a medicine". There we have the division. The cannabinoids in marijuana have a fairly positive future. This study suggested that smoked marijuana might well not be the way to go.

As the study went on, there were very specific issues raised.

Pain relief is probably the biggest commercial marketplace for cannabinoids. It went on to say that for nausea and vomiting caused by chemotherapy, cannabinoids are mildly effective but other preparations may be just as good. For the other things, glaucoma, migraines, Parkinson's, Huntington's disease and whatnot, not nearly as impressive results were found.

If I can summarize this report, I would say that cannabinoids or THC in marijuana do have some positive benefits, especially in the treatment of pain. That would suggest to me for pain relief in a palliative sense for serious illnesses such as cancer and possibly AIDS this may well be a useful product.

One of the other big difficulties with the medical use of marijuana is the likelihood that recreational use will become more difficult to control. That is not the case with other products, like heroin, which are chemically produced.

Marijuana of course can be grown and is fairly easily grown. It can be grown in a house under certain circumstances. It can certainly be grown in the summer in Canada. That makes the control of recreational use more difficult. There are some who say that recreational use should be allowed unfettered. That is not something I agree with at all.

I would like to suggest some potential solutions for the problems we have. On the one hand, it looks like cannabinoids may well be useful for palliation. On the other hand, there are some difficulties with control of the recreational use.

The potential solutions would be, number one, to isolate these cannabinoids for specific use. There is some new research being done along those lines.

We could also find alternate routes of administration. As my hon. colleague across the way mentioned, the oral route is not the best route for this particular preparation. Gastric absorption is not perfect and patients have told me that. There are three other potential routes.

There is a new waxy capsule that has been developed. This is from the University of Mississippi in the United States. Initial research there looks very positive. It is absorbed quite rapidly. It is not the ideal way to administer for many people, but for individuals in these tough circumstances I think that might be a fair alternate.

An oral or nasal spray of the very specific THC might also be possible. It has been suggested and in fact has been used in research.

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• (1805)

A patch which is another mechanism of administration has also been looked at.

This would not be a controversy at all if it were not for the recreational use of marijuana. This would have been done long ago under an enlightened medical system.

There are a host of individuals who use the medical use of marijuana as a gateway toward a larger use. As a practitioner, I had the opportunity to treat patients for drug problems. I do not go down the road of softening marijuana use for recreational purposes for one second. The reasons are legion but I do not have too much time so I will be narrow in this focus.

Some 5% to 15% of the youth using cannabis become habituated. I did not use the word addicted because that is not the appropriate word for marijuana. Habituated is a more appropriate word. There are those who say not to bother with those small numbers because many, many kids who use this preparation go on to become perfectly healthy. I grant that as absolutely true.

I would ask those individuals to attend in any city in the country a drug rehab facility. Go to a NarAnon meeting and listen to the youth and sometimes the adults who talk about the problems they have had with marijuana misuse. Ask about the school attendance from youth who have been habituated to marijuana. Ask about the personality changes these youth undergo. Ask about the problems they have undergone with the legal system, not just because of their marijuana use but because of fencing and the other things that go along with the drug subculture.

The medical use of the specific components of marijuana have some merit. I am quite cautious about going down the road of recreational use and in fact am vigorously opposed in that regard. Purifying and looking at THC in its purest form is ideal. Smoked marijuana for those who have absolutely no other choice or those at the end of life could be approached.

This debate is one that is timely.

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for Rosemont for bringing forward private member's Motion No. M-381, to allow the legal medical use of marijuana.

This motion is a very good demonstration of what we can do as parliamentarians to examine an issue. In some ways this institution of the House of Commons is sort of far behind public opinion, even where the medical community is. Certainly people who are suffering from pain and diseases like AIDS or cancer are very eager to see this motion pass.

I congratulate the member for his diligence in bringing this issue to the House and seeking out support from other members. I think

that support is now quite strong. Many of my NDP colleagues are very supportive of this motion. Our health critic, the member for Winnipeg North Centre, spoke on March 4 and outlined very well the medical evidence that already exists to demonstrate that this motion should be approved in full rather than with the amendment put forward by the government.

There is lots of evidence before us to show that the medical profession has made it quite clear there are very good grounds and information to show the medical use of marijuana is actually something beneficial. It helps people who are suffering from HIV, AIDS, cancer, MS and other ailments. We have received communications from groups such as the Canadian AIDS Society. It has very strongly outlined and advocated its support for this motion.

• (1810)

There is no question there have been numerous studies. Also, very brave individuals in our society have taken on the justice system, sometimes almost alone, to challenge the archaic laws when it comes to the medical use of marijuana. People like Jim Wakeford, Terry Parker and others with a lot of expense and anxiety have had to take on the system to get this issue before the courts and to challenge the sanity and the rationale of why this law still exists.

Numerous polls show us that even the Canadian public believes very strongly that the medical use of marijuana is something that should be sanctioned and supported. It creates a very strange situation that we have public opinion, and we even have judges making court rulings, we have health professionals, and the medical profession all telling us that this is the right thing to do. The lack of political will and commitment to follow through is now the greatest obstacle we face.

I along with other members were very happy to see the Minister of Health make his announcement on March 3 that Health Canada will study and develop a plan around clinical trials for the medical use of marijuana. I do think we have to question whether or not this is simply a stalling tactic that is going to cause people more harm and more suffering as they wait for more studies to be done.

We have to be very clear that the Minister of Health has the discretion and the power today. He had it last year and the year before that but he has it today to approve applications on compassionate grounds for the medical use of marijuana. There are applications before him.

The Vancouver Compassion Club is an organization in my riding with a membership of about 700 individuals. Marijuana is actually dispensed for medical purposes. They have a lawyer who is signing people up to apply for an application for exemption. They are even prepared to go to a legal challenge based on their constitutional rights to have this medical exemption take place while the trials are taking place.

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I encourage members of the House, particularly government members, to continue to put pressure on the health minister. It is a useful and good thing to have these clinical trials go ahead as there are things that we need to learn. However, we have enough information now to ask the minister to go ahead with the exemption so that people can get relief, help and support now without having to become criminals if they seek help through places like the Vancouver Compassion Club or other organizations.

Why are we afraid of taking immediate action on this? Why is the government afraid of doing that? It is partly wound up in the morals we have. We heard from the health critic of the Reform Party. It is all wound up with people's concerns about recreational use. This is part of a debate which I think is very necessary on Canada's drug laws. We need to have progressive reform in our drug laws.

I have been working on an issue that affects my riding very much. It deals with injection drug users, heroin addicts who are literally dying on the streets. I have been advocating for heroin prescription trials as a way of medicalizing support and help to actually prevent people from dying, to get support for those people who now are completely outside of the system.

The biggest barrier is not from the medical community, nor even from the public. It is from elected representatives, particularly the government representatives who are afraid to take this issue on. It deals with the taboos around a drug policy.

I say very strongly that this is a place to begin in terms of drug reform policy. There is strong public support but we do have to go further.

• (1815)

We can make a very rational, articulate and well reasoned case why the motion should be approved. The Minister of Health should be approving applications today for exemptions so that Canadians do not suffer any longer, so that they can get the relief they need without having to go to all kinds of difficult means and being made to feel like they are being marginalized and stigmatized by having to get medical marijuana illegally. That is a shame. It is something that does not need to exist if we had the political will and the leadership.

I thank members of the House who support the motion. We must continue this work. There is a lot at stake here. This is an important debate. We must put pressure on the health minister to provide those exemptions.

We must make it very clear that we do not want to wait another two or three years for the trials to be conducted. We do not want to wait for another study or another plan. We want help and relief to be provided now while those trials are going on. That is what we must urge the government to do in the interest of compassion and of providing people with real help and assistance.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today on an issue that is important for the well-being of some sick people.

Legalizing the use of marijuana for health purposes is an urgent necessity for many sick persons, and the government's reluctance to set up a concrete plan of action is unacceptable to the many sick people who must act like criminals, even though they are using a drug prescribed by a doctor.

This debate is a first in the history of the House of Commons. At last, thanks to the motion of my colleague, the hon. member for Rosemont, we have a unique opportunity, as representatives of our fellow citizens, to discuss the legalization of marijuana for medical purposes.

But the issue is not a new one. In this regard, we lag far behind our civil society. We want to catch up by making sure that Motion M-381 gets the support of a majority of members from all sides, when we vote on it here, in this House.

Let me explain why this is such an important issue. First, the Ontario court has already found part of the Narcotic Control Act to be unconstitutional, including the provisions on the use of marijuana for health purposes.

As legislators, we have a duty to make a decision before the current legal vacuum forces judges to make that decision for us. Judges are not elected and should not be forced to make the final decision in a debate involving all of society because we hesitate to play our role as legislators.

This is also a matter of compassion towards those who suffer from nausea, vomiting and other symptoms that often accompany chronic illnesses or are side effects of their treatments. Thousands of patients affected by cancer, AIDS, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy and other illnesses reported considerable relief from smoking marijuana.

The effects are so positive that many patients and their families are ready to risk jail sentences to buy their drug on the black market.

It is always shocking, especially for parents, to see relatives suffering when there is no efficient drug to alleviate pain. For all those who suffer, it is unacceptable that someone having to live with a chronic disease should risk six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine for using a drug recommended by a doctor. In several cases, marijuana is the only drug that can effectively reduce some symptoms associated with an illness.

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Above all, it is unacceptable to make a criminal out of a person who uses for medical purposes a product whose therapeutic virtues are well established.

In fact, practitioners have been prescribing Marinol pills for years. This drug is known to contain tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC—that is a lot simpler to pronounce—which is the main active ingredient of marijuana. Indeed, no one will deny the therapeutic value of THC, which is prescribed to relieve terminally ill patients from nausea and to stimulate their appetite.

• (1820)

However, this synthetic pill is not a valid alternative to inhaled THC. According to the famous American medical magazine, the *New England Journal of Medicine* of January 30, 1997, inhalation is the only way to increase rapidly the level of THC in blood. Hence, inhalation of THC considerably improves the therapeutic efficiency of this substance.

Besides, numerous patients who would use marijuana for therapeutic purposes already have to swallow every day an astronomical number of pills. This can cause vomiting and patients are therefore forced to swallow again the medication they have rejected. This is totally inhuman. It is obvious that in such cases, it would be better to administer THC by the pulmonary route rather than by the digestive route.

I will now answer a question that many people ask about therapeutic inhalation of marijuana. Are the side effects of this practice acceptable?

The inhalation of marijuana has well-known side effects. One only has to think about the damages caused to the lungs by inhalation of noxious smoke or about certain psychotic effects. We must understand that many medications, and not only marijuana, have side effects.

Think, for example, of the undesirable and serious side effects of chemotherapy or AZT treatments. Let us consider, as well, the precautions that must be taken by those who use, for therapeutic purposes, by-products of morphine and cocaine. Even in the case of a simple Sudafed tablet, it is recommended not to drive a motor vehicle because of side effects. Indeed, this restriction would probably also apply to those who take marijuana for therapeutic purposes.

We must bear in mind, however, that the side effects of marijuana are considered less harmful than those of at least two products that are widely used. As a matter of fact, a report produced by a group of French and foreign experts, and entitled *Problèmes posés par la dangerosité des drogues*, came to the conclusion that the use of marijuana is less hazardous than the use of alcohol or tobacco. These conclusions are consistent with the results of a similar study conducted on behalf of the UN World Health Organization.

The side effects of a drug cannot be dissociated from its benefits.

For many patients the various benefits of marijuana far outweigh the side effects known to be less serious than those of alcohol or nicotine. It is in this context that the British Medical Association publicly asked the police and the courts to tolerate the therapeutic use of marijuana.

In its report, the association says that some patients are condemned to using an illegal drug to relieve symptoms no existing medication can control and that there is compelling evidence that marijuana can help in some circumstances.

The British government responded to this request by allowing a pharmaceutical company to grow and supply cannabis for medical research, which led the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain to say she is confident prescriptions will be allowed within the next three years.

In the U.S., 28 states already have laws on the therapeutic use of marijuana. During the 1998 elections, six other states held a referendum on the issue. In all six cases, measures favouring the therapeutic use of marijuana got the majority of the popular vote.

In Canada and Quebec, physicians are mobilizing to make the medical benefits of marijuana better known. They point out that marijuana relieves nausea and stimulates the appetite, which can help save the life of patients suffering from anemia because of chemotherapy or AIDS treatments.

A cross-Canada poll has shown wide support, 83%, for the legalization of marijuana for therapeutic uses. The *Globe and Mail* commissioned that Angus Reid poll on November 4, 1997.

• (1825)

On the political front, the Progressive Conservative Party, the NDP and the Bloc are in favour of legalization of marijuana for therapeutic uses, and individual members of the Liberal Party and the Reform Party are also in favour.

As far as the federal government is concerned, the health and justice ministers stated in the House in March 1998 that this important issue was under consideration in their departments.

There is no place here for petty politics, for this question is too important for thousands of patients.

Nine months have gone by, and the federal government has still not come up with a policy, and the ministers have not yet given a date for one. This is cause for concern, because people are suffering. I urge all legislators to support this motion so that people affected by diseases like AIDS or multiple sclerosis who do not have any suitable drug available to them can at last be relieved of their pain.

*Adjournment Debate*

I ask for a unanimous vote on this motion.

**Ms. Diane St-Jacques (Shefford, PC):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to commend the hon. member for Rosemont for putting this private members' motion before the House and for the key role he has played these last few weeks in urging the federal government to take concrete measures to support the use of marijuana for therapeutic and medical purposes.

I also want to congratulate all those who, in their own way, have constantly put pressure on the elected representatives so that this debate could be held and concrete measures could be implemented to help the people who need to use marijuana for medical purposes, who need to find some relief from pain and suffering or to deal with the symptoms of chronic or terminal illnesses.

Of course, I am glad to join all those who have worked together to urge the federal government to have the political courage and the leadership to recognize the medicinal value of marijuana by immediately implementing measures to legalize the use of marijuana for therapeutic purposes.

As my colleague from New Brunswick Southwest said, this issue must be addressed from a compassionate point of view. We must keep an open mind and show compassion throughout this debate.

We have to keep in mind that for the sick who need marijuana for therapeutic purposes, every day they suffer is one day too many. Do not think I am talking in abstractions. I know what I am talking about, because my mother died of cancer after many long years of suffering. I will never forget how useless I felt as I watched her suffer and I wish I had known the therapeutic effects of marijuana at the time.

However, it was unfortunately only a few years later that I learned about its therapeutic use, and I support the actions of those fighting for its medical use.

I will tell you that this decision was very easy when I learned that the leaders of this campaign were those who were themselves sick and had to obtain marijuana illegally at the risk of being arrested.

I think it is totally unacceptable that someone who is chronically ill or in the final stages of AIDS is being penalized for medical treatment that many doctors would recommend if they could.

Experiments have shown—and a significant number of health care professionals have recognized it publicly—that the use of cannabis has beneficial effects in the case of at least four serious diseases. First, by lowering eye pressure, it controls glaucoma. Second, it reduces spasms in victims of MS. Third, it reduces nausea and suffering of those with cancer. Finally, it helps those with AIDS fight depression and regain the appetite they need to survive.

It is also felt that marijuana can help those suffering from certain diseases such as migraines and emphysema.

The other factor working considerably in favour of the use of marijuana for medical purposes is that it produces no side effects, as too often occur with other treatments and which can be of such intensity as to discourage those who are ill from taking their medication, despite their suffering.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. The order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

• (1830)

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask for unanimous consent of the House in order for the hon. member for Shefford to finish her speech.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to continue?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Shefford will have six minutes to complete her speech the next time the motion is debated in the House.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

### SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise on behalf of my colleagues in the Marine Workers Federation and other organizations on the west coast, on central inland waters and on the east coast. The reason I am rising is because of a very fundamental and important issue to my colleagues on the east coast, specifically in Atlantic Canada in my home town of Halifax.

What this country does not have, and I will repeat it throughout my four minute presentation, is an industrial strategy for a shipbuilding policy. We just do not have one. Italy has one. France has one. Britain has one. Spain has one. Korea has one. China has one. The United States has one. We do not, and we are a mariner nation.

I asked a question of the Minister of Industry in the House. He has been in that portfolio for six years. I asked him whether he would at least meet with these people, the unions and the workers, to discuss their concerns. His answer was no.

*Adjournment Debate*

For six years Les Holloway, head of Marine Workers Federation in Atlantic Canada, has been asking to meet with the minister, and the minister's answer is no.

My question is quite clear. I want the parliamentary secretary, or whoever will respond for the government, to tell me why the government is refusing to meet with these workers.

Government members say that they have open, transparent policies, that they want to be open to Canadians. However, in an era of solidarity, in an era of co-operation which I have heard the government constantly preach about for the last six years, it is unbelievable that it would act in the way that it does.

Mr. Buzz Hargrove, head of CAW, is aligned with the Marine Workers Federation as is Mr. Irving who represents one of the largest corporations on the planet, a billionaire. An empire builder, Mr. Irving, and a labour activist, Mr. Hargrove, two people from the opposite ends of the political spectrum, are singing out of the same hymn book. They are both saying that the country needs an industrial policy for shipbuilding.

Why is the government not grabbing the opportunity in co-operation, in transparency, in openness and in fairness? It could put these two people in a room with the government industry officials and come up with a policy that will benefit thousands of Canadians in hundreds of communities?

Why is the government so intransigent and not willing to help Marystown Shipyard in Newfoundland; Saint John, New Brunswick; Halifax, Nova Scotia; the Pictou yards; Vancouver; the Great Lakes; and ports in Quebec? It is probably because it is a central based government and the extremes of Canada outside this place mean absolutely nothing to it.

If the government can be very proactive when it comes to the high tech and the aerospace industries and give them hundreds of millions of dollars, all I am saying is why can it not come up with an industrial policy for shipbuilding. Why will the minister not meet with the workers to come up with a decent proposal?

• (1835)

**Mr. Walt Lastewka (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to answer the question of the member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore. He has given me the opportunity to speak on the subject of shipbuilding. I am sorry he did not mention the shipbuilding in my area.

Let me first say that the industry minister and I met with the representatives of the shipbuilding industry on March 25. On that day we had a very frank discussion with the president of the

Shipbuilding Association of Canada and presidents or vice-presidents of most of Canada's shipbuilding companies. I should also remind the member that I met with the shipbuilding industry and the unions previous to that in the fall of 1998.

During the meeting on March 25 we discussed the generous package of measures the federal government currently maintains to support shipbuilding. May I make perfectly clear some of these measures: a 33.3% accelerated capital cost allowance for Canadian shipbuilding, a 25% duty on most non-NAFTA ship imports, domestic procurement on a competitive basis for all government shipbuilding and ship repairs, a favourable research and tax credit system, and Export Development Corporation financing for commercially viable transactions. In 1998 we extended that from 8 years to 12 years in discussions with the shipbuilding industry.

We also explained that Industry Canada had the enabling technologies element of Technology Partnerships Canada. I must remind the member that shipbuilding programs lie with the departments of foreign affairs and international trade and that is why we coordinate them on a sector by sector basis. These representatives have met with EDC and have made these improvements.

In summary, substantial support has been provided to the shipbuilding industry in the past and we will continue to support—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am afraid the hon. member has run out of time.

[*Translation*]

## SHIPBUILDING

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my speech will surely enable the parliamentary secretary to continue to speak, because I too wish to address shipbuilding.

On March 5, I asked a question of the Minister of Finance, but it was the Minister of Industry who replied. The Minister of Finance, having had interests in shipping, does not wish to answer questions. Even if his interests are held in trust, he does not wish to answer questions.

My question was on taxation, and went as follows:

Can the Minister of Finance tell us why he does not want to do for the shipbuilding industry what he did for the film and television production industry, that is to harmonize federal taxation with measures introduced by the Government of Quebec?

These measures include a tax credit for the shipbuilding industry. This program has been in place for two years. The federal tax almost wipes out the benefits provided to shipbuilding companies through the provincial tax credit.



*Adjournment Debate*

I am glad the parliamentary secretary is here—I met him last summer when I visited the Port Weller shipyard, in Ste. Catharines—because he knows the shipbuilding industry.

Why can he not convince his minister or the Minister of Finance to add tax measures? We are not asking for subsidies. We are asking for tax measures and additional tax deductions, as asked by the Canadian shipbuilding association, the employers, with the support of unions, and the various stakeholders in the industry.

When the shipbuilding industry is not doing well—it is currently operating at 40% of its capacity—it means that millions of dollars are not invested in the regions and this has a very significant impact, particularly in the maritimes because, as we know, that region is affected by seasonal unemployment.

• (1840)

The argument is just as valid for any region in Canada with a shipyard, like the one in my riding of Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière.

There was a time when people would have pointed out that the question was coming from a Bloc Québécois member. I wanted to change that perception by touring all Canada's shipyards, with the exception of Port Weller, which I visited at the same time as the parliamentary secretary. He was kind enough to be there.

However, we realize we are miles apart on design and productivity, as people realize that the pay and the productivity in Canada's shipyards are better than in other countries.

But, as the NDP member has just said, unlike certain European and Asian countries that subsidize their shipbuilding, we do not. Some countries, such as the United States, adopt protectionist measures for shipbuilding, but we do not.

Canada is in the worst of all possible situations: we do neither, and the world is passing us by.

[*English*]

**Mr. Walt Lastewka (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member from Lévis for giving me this opportunity to speak. As he mentioned we visited the Port Weller dry docks, and I thank him for that.

The hon. member is well aware of the generous package. People need to understand that there is a very generous package in the shipbuilding industry, especially the accelerated capital cost allowance. That is a very quick writeoff.

I keep repeating that the following items are in place: duty on ship imports, domestic procurement for all government shipbuild-

ing and ship repairs, Export Development Corporation financing, and a very favourable research and development tax credit.

Also the federal government participated in an industry led rationalization process that culminated in a more streamlined and viable industry. The federal government contributed \$200 million between 1986 and 1993.

Let me talk about shipbuilding in Quebec. The federal government invested \$1.6 billion in Davie Industries during the period from 1983 to 1996 in the form of contracts, contributions and loan guarantees. Moreover, commercial arrangements for EDC are currently moving forward to provide additional support to this company through a loan guarantee on the *Spirit of Columbus*.

As the member acknowledged we have an overcapacity of shipbuilding, in fact 40%. The OECD workshop on shipbuilding policies reported that there would be 40% world overcapacity by the year 2005.

Canada is poised to be a leader in a global knowledge based economy for the 21st century. While focus is based on these knowledge intensive sectors where we are strong, where the opportunity for growth and leadership is highest and where the opportunities for young Canadians are greatest, the government has not and will not abandon an important sector like shipbuilding. In fact the EDC—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Vancouver East.

JUSTICE

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, every day people in my riding of Vancouver East come to me with their hopes and their concerns for their families and their community. Lately the concerns that I hear very often centre on the issue of safety. People are concerned for their own personal safety. They are concerned about keeping their children out of harm's way and they are concerned that their neighbourhoods are becoming less secure.

On two recent occasions in the House of Commons I raised the issue of safety and asked the government to respond. On February 16, I asked the government what it would do to support B.C.'s request to keep people safe in their homes as there is a huge concern about home invasions. I also called on the government to support the initiative of the Vancouver Safety Coalition for a community based crime prevention program funded under the national crime prevention strategy. Unfortunately the response from the government has been very inadequate.

As I pointed out in the House on March 2, in order to be effective the recently announced \$5 million revitalization program for the downtown east side must be directed toward programs and social supports that will benefit residents and improve safety. So far we have been told that the funds will be used to open an office to study ways to bring people together.

*Adjournment Debate*

● (1845)

Instead of providing jobs for social facilitators we need to ensure that these funds are used to help stabilize our communities. We need to improve social conditions. We need to improve housing and addiction treatment programs. These are the types of programs that will make our neighbours and our neighbourhoods safe.

Committing to a sane approach to the drug crisis is also a crucial step in securing safe communities. We know that drug treatment programs are capable of reducing crimes by 80%. Research shows that for every dollar we spend on drug treatment services \$7 can be saved in medical, social and criminal enforcement costs. Reducing the harm of obtaining illicit drugs on the street is critical to saving lives and improving safety for all of us.

Toward that goal I have worked for accessible detox and treatment services, better housing conditions, a safe resource centre for drug users so they can get away from the desperate life on the street, and for clinical trials for a national heroin maintenance program modelled on successful programs in Europe.

At the same time I have called on the government to show leadership in providing adequate funding for the establishment of community policing and neighbourhood safety.

The federal government must have the courage to support a comprehensive strategy for increasing community security that includes commitments to social supports and community policing. The people of Vancouver East are demanding some assurance that safe and healthy communities are achievable goals, not just catch phrases of a political public relations campaign.

Keeping our families and our neighbourhoods safe is something that concerns us all. That is why I will continue to fight for the resources and the commitment necessary to address this important issue.

**Mr. Walt Lastewka (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Vancouver East for her efforts and for her continued work in this area. It is very important that we continue to provide information to the minister and the department, especially the work done by the member for Vancouver East.

The Minister of Justice wants the member to know that her message has been heard and is being reviewed by herself and by the department. The minister has worked with various groups across the country to understand better and to be able to continue to work with the member opposite and all members of this House.

I thank the member for her work. As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry I join her in her efforts and I will continue to work on her behalf.

FIREARMS REGISTRY

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, March 17 I asked the Minister of Justice an important question which she failed to answer, so I will ask her again. How would the justice minister like it if her face showed up on someone else's firearms licence?

That is exactly what happened to Mr. Robert Soltis of Abbotsford, B.C. He received his firearms licence from the Canadian firearms registry and it had someone else's picture on it. He has no idea whose licence his picture ended up on.

When I asked the minister about the serious breach of Mr. Soltis' privacy, the minister responded "Our firearms registry system is working quite well, thank you very much". She went on to brag about all of the paperwork the CFC has processed. She was not bragging about the lives saved or how much public safety has been improved, but about the paper shuffled by her bureaucrats. She said that they have processed 40,000 applications for licences and registrations, issued over 17,000 registration certificate numbers and over 12,000 photo ID licences.

If I had the chance to ask another question that day I would have asked how many of the 12,000 licences issued had the right pictures on them.

Mr. Soltis wrote:

The person with my photograph on his card commits a heinous crime. The (firearms licence) as a primary piece of identification is found on the scene or the (firearms licence) data bank is accessed. Either way my photograph will be on law enforcement circulars, in newspapers and on television as the person wanted for committing the crime.

Imagine an officer attending a domestic dispute. He or she accesses the firearms registry through the computer board in the patrol car and it shows John Doe as associated to that address and he has certain firearms registered to him. But, instead of a photograph of John Doe coming up on a computer screen, it is my photograph. The officer approaches the house and encounters John Doe on the street. Not associating him to the photograph, the officer would not recognize him as a possible threat. I need not explain the possible disastrous consequences of this scenario.

● (1850)

Since Mr. Soltis has informed me of this blunder by the Department of Justice other law-abiding individuals have complained to me.

Mr. William Dennis Moss of Hawkestone, Ontario never applied for a firearms licence but received a firearms possession and acquisition licence that belongs to Mr. William Arthur Moss. In his letter he asks:

I feel my privacy and security have been invaded. The person pictured would, I am sure, feel the same. Who is this other William Moss who is waiting for his certificate? If he gets into trouble, the government has MY address. Would you like to be in this position?

*Adjournment Debate*

Mr. Moss returned his bogus licence to the Ontario Provincial Police and was told about a number of similar mistakes that have been reported to them.

This is not a frivolous complaint. A firearms licence is a primary piece of identification. Have members ever heard of a passport, or a social insurance card, or a health card, or a driver's licence being issued with someone else's picture on it, or being sent to the wrong person at the wrong address? Just think of the possible abuses that could occur. Yet the minister seems unconcerned or unaware of the consequences that these colossal errors made by her department could have.

Individuals who receive faulty licences will be stopped by the police. If they are in the possession of a firearm, the accuracy of their government issued licence is the only thing that will keep them out of jail. If even one law-abiding firearm owner is harassed by the police because of bureaucratic incompetence it will be inexcusable.

The key question remains. How many other mistakes like these have been made by the Department of Justice? Do we have to wait until each and every individual holder of the licence complains about the breach of privacy? How does the minister propose to find all the mistakes that have been made by her department? Will she stop—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry, but the hon. member's time has expired.

**Mr. Walt Lastewka (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to address the question of the member for Yorkton—Melville. It was an isolated case of issuing a firearms licence with the wrong photograph.

Here are the facts.

An individual in British Columbia applied in November 1998 under the previous legislation for a firearms acquisition certificate, an FAC. Since the licence was issued after December 1, the date the new law took effect, he received a new possession and acquisition licence.

The licence was processed under the procedures of the previous legislation which relied on local police personnel to handle the photograph and paperwork. This is a responsibility they no longer need to worry about under the new system, which I might add is saving police forces considerable sums of money which they may redirect to other important local policing priorities.

Many firearms owners waited until the last days of the old law to apply. We have so far handled over 23,000 of these cases under the old system. It is not clear where the mistake happened, whether it was at the local police station where it handled a flurry of last minute applications or whether it was when the photograph was scanned.

What is clear is that under the new law and its procedures this would not have happened. Under the new system firearms owners do not visit the police station, but rather fill out the form at home. It includes all relevant information, including a photo of themselves. I can assure the member that the Canadian Firearms Centre central processing site has taken precautions to ensure that this type of switch will not happen under the new system.

I must say that we are pleased with the way this new system is working. We are indeed very pleased with the emerging proof that it already has made a difference in public safety.

I can also tell the House that 159 new licence applications in the first four months of the program, between December 1, 1998 and April 1, 1999, were refused, mainly due to public safety concerns, and 129 licences were revoked.

There will be many examples of enhanced public safety in the months to come. I hope that the member understands.

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** 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 6.54 p.m.)



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