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Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 29, 1999

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1100)

[*Translation*]

GLOBALIZATION OF ECONOMIES

Mr. Stéphan Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ) moved:

That this House strike a special parliamentary committee with the specific objective of considering the repercussions of the globalization of economies on governments' autonomy in preserving social cohesiveness.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am most anxious to have an opportunity to speak to day. I have alerted my colleagues to the fact that, at the end of this hour of debate, they will have to reach a decision, one that I consider quite important.

• (1105)

I would remind my colleagues that during the debate I will be providing them with a copy of the letter I sent to them last Wednesday explaining the situation. The topic of today's debate is of such importance to me that, on April 20, 1998, I took the risk of laying my position as an MP on the line, in order to make the public aware of the need for a public debate on the issue addressed in today's motion.

When I carried my chair away with me, hon. members will recall that I did so in order to provoke a debate on society's ability to reduce the gap between rich and poor within a context of global markets. Hon. members are aware, moreover, that this situation seems to be getting worse. Poverty is quietly but constantly

increasing, while at the same time the economy is growing without seeming to have any impact on society.

My concern about this widening gap between rich and poor is based on the threat this represents to social cohesion. I would remind hon. members that social cohesion is the feeling of solidarity that unifies all people regardless of their social and economic status.

Last Wednesday, we celebrated—although celebrated hardly seems to be the appropriate term—the tenth anniversary of parliament's choice to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000. After a decade, after ten whole years, what has become of this? Poverty has not even remained at the same level; it has increased. Is it a matter of political will? I hope not, since the House has said it wanted to eliminate this poverty. Is it a matter of political power? That is the question. Are there certain phenomena that take away governments' autonomy? The question needs to be asked.

With political power being national, and the laws we pass here being national, it is high time we realized that we are living in a period of great change, as the economy is becoming a global one. This is to be expected since in recent decades, thanks to technological developments, access to transportation and telecommunications is improved, thus reducing distances and opening the door to incredible possibilities, including that of trading with the rest of the world, which is now accessible to us.

Trade and the economy are being globalized and the production of wealth is increasing. These new approaches are not, however, without consequence. There are positive aspects as well as more negative ones. Would it, for example, be realistic to think that national tax rules established by national governments are increasingly difficult to apply in a global economy? I am not the only one to think so, since the former secretary general of the OECD, Kimon Valaskakis, said the following in *La Presse* on October 29:

The principle of redistribution is at the very heart of ordinary social policy in a country and is expressed in fiscal terms. But since globalization, redistribution is much

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more difficult to put into practice. On the national level, it imposes a fairly high social cost. The need to compete forces governments to reduce their payroll taxes and thus their capacity to redistribute wealth, which in turn increases inequities rather than reducing them.

There is another vital issue and that is the fact that we have gone from an industrial economy to an economy 90% of which is controlled by speculation, distorting to some degree the global financial market as in the cases of the recent financial crises in Mexico, Asia, Brazil and Russia. There seem to be economic problems in terms of redistribution, but not in terms of the creation of wealth. Are international authorities continuing to respond to the needs of the people in these instances? Does parliament, our national authority, continue to meet the needs of the people?

In short, a lot of questions and issues remain to be analyzed, since, whether we want it or not, globalization is here and growing. And, whether we like it or we do not, we cannot ignore it.

• (1110)

This is why it is important to understand in order to act. Right now certain things are becoming global, while others are not, and this creates an imbalance.

Globalization may be unavoidable, but the way to achieve it is not. It is still, I hope, under the control of democracies. It is up to us to shape it, and this is why we must hold a public debate to help everyone, particularly us parliamentarians, get a better grasp of what is going on.

This is why I am in favour of establishing a process to consult civil society, a means of thinking about this whole issue. With a committee, we will have the benefit of the public's views.

I am not alone in this belief. This idea does have support. Over 50,000 people across the country—and not all from my riding—signed the petition asking that a committee be struck, asking that their elected representatives simply look at certain issues. These 50,000 people are not asking for extraordinary tax measures or for new legislation. They are asking us their elected representatives to do our job. They are asking us to reflect on the changes that we are currently experiencing. This idea is also supported by over 200 organizations across the country and also, and perhaps more importantly, by one third of the members of this House. Indeed, 100 members of parliament signed this document, asking that the request be treated as a priority item in Private Members Business.

If the signature of these members still means something in this House, it would make sense to deal with this issue in a serious fashion. I should also point out that these 100 members of parliament represent all the parties in this House.

This issue should be treated as a priority. As I said, I am not the only one who holds that view. I am not pro-Senate, like some of my

colleagues, but during its study on social cohesiveness, the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology acknowledged that part of the difficulty in addressing this issue is that much basic analytical and empirical work on the consequences of globalization remains to be done.

The committee has concluded that one of the next steps for political leaders is to begin to give some objective consideration to new ways of thinking and doing.

Some members will probably say that there is enough talk about globalization. I admit that it comes up frequently; in fact, at the last meeting of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, which dealt with the World Trade Organization, we discussed globalization, except that we came at it strictly from the point of view of trade and economic competitiveness.

So, yes, I think it is a good idea to discuss it from this angle. In fact, I congratulate the committee, which was relatively open to all points of view. However, in the long run, such a study must be accompanied by a more in-depth examination of the social impacts of globalization.

In my view, there cannot be one without the other. They go hand in hand. We are on the eve of a very important day, the beginning of what I would describe as another step towards globalization—the WTO talks. And yet, many people throughout the world right now, including people in Montreal, seem inclined to oppose the talks and to call for a moratorium.

I do not know who is right, but what I do know is that there is a widening gap between our political positions and what society in general thinks and, therefore, striking such a committee would be a useful means of engaging in a collective dialogue, so that we will all be on the same wavelength.

We must take this opportunity and show leadership internationally, because the possible solutions suggested by such a committee could eventually be implemented worldwide.

• (1115)

Besides, would the Minister of Finance, as the chairman of the new G-20, not profit from the establishment of this parliamentary committee, since he could benefit from the expertise provided by the representatives of the civil society who would come before the committee to be heard? This form of consultation is in direct agreement with the goals of the G-20 countries which, I remind the hon. members, are committed to making every effort needed to turn the benefits of globalization into increased incomes and better opportunities for their peoples.

We have a problem here today. In spite of the obvious support from the population and the parliamentarians, in spite of the fact

that the motion and the issue have never been more topical, and in spite of the fact that the motion meets all the criteria for the selection of votable items, because of outdated, anachronistic, outmoded and ill adapted parliamentary procedures, Motion M-41 was not selected as a votable item on account of prerogatives related to quotas and random draw.

Clearly, if we cannot vote on the motion, it will automatically be dropped from the Order Paper. This would be like throwing it in the trash can. I do not want to put the parliamentary system on trial today, but I do know that a good many members realize that a reform of this institution would be a good thing. But this is not the issue.

What is important is that, even now, members present in the House have the opportunity to reverse this decision. We have the opportunity to correct this technical incident simply by supporting my request for unanimous consent.

I will first listen what my colleagues present here have to say. Meanwhile, I will send them a copy of the letter that I sent them last Wednesday, on the 10th anniversary of the motion on poverty. If, because of a translation problem, they were unable to understand everything I said, I hope they will read it.

During the last five minutes, when I avail myself of my right to reply, I will try to answer my colleagues and I will also ask for the unanimous consent of the House to allow two more hours of debate on this motion, because it deserves further examination. I will ask that it be deemed votable, so we can, as members of parliament, do our duty, which is to make decisions. It is sad that members of parliament sometimes deprive themselves of the power to make decisions and to vote.

In short, my goal today is not to condemn the parliamentary system. I have other colleagues, especially the member for Longueuil, who are considering that issue.

What is important is to be aware of the social changes we are experiencing. I am not the only one to say this. The Senate report says this. Petitioners say this. Parliamentarians and experts from all over say this. I could go on for another hour about all the people who have expressed support for this motion.

I want the House to prove to me that we can save face in this parliament. Prove to me that there is still democracy in this country. I want the House to prove to me that this authority, the parliament, can still respond to the current expectations and the expectations of the citizens. It is as if everyone in an olympic stadium were asking us to take an issue into consideration.

I will listen to what my colleagues have to say and then I will ask them a question.

Mr. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean for raising

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this issue, which is of the utmost importance to all Canadians. Increasingly, the world's economy is becoming a global one. International trade is increasing in a phenomenal manner.

Never in the history of the world has foreign investment been so important, nor has it ever moved as quickly as during the 1990s. Canada being a small country with an open economy, a significant percentage of which is trade-related, it is obviously affected by this economic and financial change.

[English]

Globalization poses many challenges, one of which the hon. member rightly knows, and that is the government's capacity to promote social cohesion. Social cohesion has been a research priority of the government for some time, consistent with the need to understand well the changing world around us.

• (1120)

A great deal of research on this issue has already been published by the policy research initiative, PRI, a network of government departments and Canadian academics established by the government in 1996 to identify and address issues likely to affect Canadian society in the near future.

Globalization offers great opportunities for growth and prosperity for smaller economies like Canada's. They will be given access to domestic markets much larger than their own, providing a level of prosperity through export that is not attainable without trade. At the same time consumers gain access to goods and services from around the world at a lower cost than would otherwise be possible. Canada is a leader in international trade and prospers because of it. Our outward orientation as measured by two way trade and investment flows has risen dramatically.

In addition, Canada exports as well as imports large amounts of capital. For instance, in 1998 the inward and outward foreign direct investment stocks accounted for 24.2% and 26.8% of Canadian GDP respectively, a significant increase from levels only 10 years earlier. Canadians benefit from this increased capital movement as capital exports allow Canadians to get the highest returns on their investments while capital imports provide employment and fuller use of our resources.

In particular, our trade and economic integration with the United States, our largest trading partner by far, has increased dramatically. Net exports to the United States have made a very important contribution to the near 3% average annual real output growth and the over 1.3 million jobs created in Canada in the last five years. Furthermore, our continued strong trade performance is one reason the International Monetary Fund expects Canada to lead in employment growth and to have the second fastest output growth in the G-7 in 1999 and 2000.

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[Translation]

Yet at the same time the rapidity of technological change is bringing people from all parts of the globe closer together, so much so that the competition for markets, for material and human resources and for activities relating to innovation and technology will be more and more keen.

Consequently, in order to reap the potential benefits of these new technologies and of trade in general, businesses and governments will need to be extremely competitive and to handle the challenges of the intense international competition and the pressures in favour of structural adjustment in the right way.

[English]

International harmonization of trade related policies is a key element in facilitating fair competition and promoting highly competitive and well managed firms. It underpins economic integration and helps to establish the framework needed for expanding economic relations and increased commercial opportunities.

Harmonization of policies that affect trade can be of great benefit to Canada as it promotes fairer competition and contributes to increased competitiveness in industry and greater access to foreign markets. However, pressure to harmonize policies in these areas also raises concerns about government autonomy in areas of social policy. Or, stated another way, there are some who fear that the only way we can remain competitive with countries such as the U.S. is to accept U.S. style social policies and inequalities.

Canada has continued to maintain social policies that are substantially different from those of our largest trading partner. Canada has invested more than a century in building a social infrastructure that today is considered among the best in the world. The system of social support includes universal medicare, more generous safety nets and job training support than those available in the U.S.

By protecting and improving our social programs we may attract foreign investment, not drive it away. The relatively lower cost of the Canadian medicare system in particular and features of the unemployment insurance system, together with Canada's supportive system of social services and well run cities and municipalities, have historically been a locational competitive advantage for Canada. Thus, if pressure to harmonize social policies exist, it may be on other countries to match those of Canada.

This is not to say that Canada does not face some serious structural challenges. However, it does suggest that if we approach these challenges with imagination and vision we can ensure that global economic integration does not mean sacrificing what it means to be Canadian. Developing this vision is a responsibility that the government takes very seriously.

● (1125)

That is why the policy research initiative, PRI, was launched in 1996 by the government. The initiative brings together over 30 federal departments and agencies, as well as a number of leading Canadian academics.

[Translation]

As a result, the PRI has provided parliament and Canadians in general with informed advice on a large number of multi-faceted questions, in detailed reports, public reports and minutes of meetings, all of which are available to the public via the Internet, as well as to all hon. members of this House.

[English]

Two key issues the PRI is currently looking at relating to globalization and social cohesion are what will be the effects of pressures toward regulatory convergence over time, specifically how will this affect such issues as tax and environmental policy, health care and pensions, and how the FTA and NAFTA has affected Canadian autonomy and sovereignty in particular with respect to policy making capacity.

The analysis of the impact of globalization on social cohesion has been further strengthened by the work of the social cohesion network, one of four networks established under the PRI umbrella. This virtual network of electronically linked researchers was set up to assess the state of social cohesion in Canada. This social cohesion network has found that a certain measure of social cohesion is conducive to investment, both foreign and domestic. It has also found that social cohesion can increase productivity.

[Translation]

The PRI has therefore established that the combined effects of globalization and our social cohesion might have a somewhat positive impact on Canada.

[English]

The PRI work is shedding light on how government can support social cohesion. In the context of the global knowledge based economy, government increasingly must make a strong effort to explain its new role as facilitator and as an enabling partner with other sectors of society and to act as a non-financial broker of ideas and unifying national projects.

Based on the evidence to date and with the continuing work, I do not believe that a standing committee on globalization, government autonomy and social cohesion is required at this time. The all party parliamentary business committee, the subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Procedures and House Affairs, determined that this motion should be non-votable.

I applaud the member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

[Translation]

He was elected at the same time I was. I congratulate him on his motion.

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[English]

It is because of the reasons I have stated. Although this initiative is very important and I congratulate him, I would ask that the House not support this motion being votable.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the motion by the member for Lac-Saint-Jean. His motion deals with the repercussions of globalization on economies of the world and certainly the concept of preserving social cohesiveness in the countries so affected.

The hon. member does not seem to be entirely in favour of globalization in his motion. He uses as his example the motion passed in parliament in 1989 regarding the eradication of child poverty. The Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives have both been in government since that date. I note that child poverty has been raised in the House and is now considered to be a more serious issue than it was even at that time.

The problem solving of those two governments has ended with them blaming others and now blaming globalization for the failure of their domestic policies on child poverty. I would hope that in the future that we will have another debate on child poverty. The Reform way of dealing with major issues like that one and social issues which have a domestic solution to them is to set out clear and concise steps that can be taken, are measurable and will result in a solution.

Many people are throwing around the term globalization. I think there is an unclear concept of what is globalization. Special interest groups, for instance the Council of Canadians, have a very closed concept of what globalization should mean. To them it seems like globalization means that Canada should have rules in the world for other nations to follow, that Canada should be able to protect its national interest and be relatively isolationist if it cannot dictate rules to other people. That way Canada would be able to protect its civil society and its concept of how the world should be run. It is the concept of government knows best, which is a detraction from free trade in the world.

• (1130)

My definition of globalization is simply that it is the interaction of people of different nations in all aspects of the human existence, which would include trade as one of the major components.

Globalization is neither inherently good nor bad. It is simply a fact. Globalization has been with us since the beginning of man in Africa many millions of years ago. Globalization is, as I said, most obvious in the trade of goods and services between nations. The most successful nations of the world have always been those which are successful in trading with their neighbours.

Since the second world war there have been eight rounds of world trade talks. The talks which are beginning in Seattle repre-

sent the ninth round. We can only hope that those talks will be successful.

The first half of this century saw two world wars. At that time trade and empires were built on the foundation of force. The second half of this century has seen no world wars. This is no doubt due in large part to the interaction of nations on an economic level through trade as opposed to the isolationist and self-sufficient concept which many nations have.

North Korea is the best example of the danger to the stability of a region, and ultimately to the whole world, due to its socialistic and isolationist policies. It tried very hard to be self-sufficient without trading. We saw the disaster that has had, not only on the country but on its neighbours, as it felt the need to have missiles instead of trade agreements settle disputes.

I would now like to speak specifically about the agricultural component of our trade talks that are starting in Seattle. Supply management is an important part of Canadian agriculture. Prior to the 1993 conclusion of the Uruguay round, supply management was clearly a domestic industry, not participating in the world trading scene through the use of highly restrictive import quotas. The Progressive Conservatives began the process of trading away the status quo of supply management when they negotiated the changes to import tariffs, designed to be reduced ultimately to zero. The Liberals were part of the final negotiations, and on being elected in 1993, signed the agreement. Both parties have tried to put forth the conception that they will defend supply management to the end. The Liberals in particular have stated this concept. I do not know if farmers really believe that the government's promises will be kept. The Reform Party supports supply management and is unequivocal in telling the government that it is not to reduce our tariffs at a rate faster than the U.S. and the EU reduce their protectionist measures of the supply management sector, in particular the dairy sector.

I note that this motion seems to have two components. I think that one part of the motion certainly has some merit in the idea that a committee should be struck to look at the impacts of the fur trade, for example, and the whole globalization issue and the interaction of peoples around the world. I think it would be good for parliament to have such a committee.

However, I am concerned that the real purpose of this motion is to block further gains at the next round of World Trade Organization talks. We can only look at what is happening in Seattle at this very moment. Apparently there are in the neighbourhood of 50,000 protesters at the talks who have the stated goal of disrupting and ending the talks. Certainly the David Suzuki-type environmentalists are there. The Council of Canadians with its socialist activities is going to have it its way or no way. I think the world should simply look at these groups and say "You folks have had your say, but you are not going to have your way and impose your concept of

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trade on the whole world". I am sure that is where it will end and that saner heads will prevail.

• (1135)

It has been stated many times in the past that Canada is a trading nation. Statistics tell us that 43% of Canada's gross domestic product is earned from trade exports. In the U.S. the percentage of trade is 12% of its gross domestic product. This means that we in Canada rely to a greater extent on trade than many other nations. As a result, the Seattle talks of the World Trade Organization are of great importance.

I am certainly pleased to see that China has agreed to become part of the world trade talks and that other countries have welcomed it. As I stated earlier, the danger of not having every country involved in these talks is great.

Our farmers are currently in the middle of an income crisis. The primary cause of this crisis is the subsidies of the European Union and the United States which cause the overproduction of many commodities. European wheat farmers, for example, receive 56% of their income from government and in the U.S. it is around 38%.

Reform's position on agriculture in the next round of WTO talks, to put it succinctly, is that we want to allow Canadian farmers and the Canadian food industry to reach their full potential. We will vigorously seek to free entry of Canadian products into foreign markets. That is what we are pressing the government to do. We should accept nothing less than having subsidies in other countries reduced. That will have the effect of lowering production around the world of certain commodities, in particular export grains. With that lower production prices will go up and our farmers will have the level playing field that is so important to our economic well-being.

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP): Madam Speaker, I cannot tell you how thrilled I am to participate in the debate today. As we debate the issues of globalization here in the House of Commons, trade meetings are being held on the west coast of North America. We are at a very historic point in the evolution of our economy, our culture and our history.

Let us acknowledge what the WTO is. It is a group of faceless bureaucrats, meeting in secret, carving up the future of our country with no input from the people of Canada.

My good friend from the Reform Party laments the fact that there are 50,000 Canadians in Seattle because they know that the best interests of the people of Canada are not being represented at the table.

Why do we know that? Because we have in the back of our minds as we participate in today's debate the MAI. Right up until

the 11th hour, faceless bureaucrats meeting in Europe, in secret, were about to rip apart the sovereignty of our country, along with every other country, until the people stood and said "What on earth is going on over there? Are we as a people, through our government, going to have our hands tied behind our backs when it comes to making future decisions to protect the rights and welfare of Canadians?"

The answer to that was "Absolutely". There was a massive public reaction across the country. People who identified the issues of the MAI for the first time came out and said "We have got to get off this mad train". Governments of the world were forced to back off. It was not led by our government, it was led by France, which said that it would not participate any further in the talks if culture was on the table. Canada never said that. At least I did not hear it.

• (1140)

Faceless bureaucrats damn near dealt away the future of our country in Europe just a few months ago. The people of Canada and others across the country rose up in opposition and the politicians, who can hear ballots dropping thousands of miles away, said "Hold it. We have to do a better PR exercise on this". They backed off and they said "We will be back", and they will be back in Seattle as of tomorrow morning with the same sort of mentality that the people rejected under the MAI.

Let us face it, when we talk about globalization we are also talking about the impact of the NAFTA. We are extending the provisions of the NAFTA to more than 100 nations. Where do the people of Canada stand on the NAFTA? Do they support the NAFTA? They opposed it under the Mulroney government. They opposed it under the Liberal government. Whenever the people of Canada have had an opportunity to register their view of the North American free trade agreement they have rejected it. Here we are, the NAFTA cheerleaders again, after the government said to the people of Canada that if it was elected it would not proceed with the NAFTA as it was currently written, and it did. The government is saying that the NAFTA deal is so good that it will include all nations of the world.

As we sit here, Sun Belt Water Inc. of southern California is suing the Canadian government for up to \$10 billion because we are not interested in exporting our water to the United States. They are suing us because we agreed under the provisions of the NAFTA to such a stupid clause. Is that clause going to be in the next round of the WTO? I do not hear our minister saying that they will get rid of that clause, that they are not going to stand back and let foreign corporations sue the people of Canada because we pass legislation in their best interests.

Where is our trade minister? I know he will be anxious at the WTO to export our health care and education programs. If we export our education programs and our health care, that means we will have to open our borders to foreigners and watch their initiatives in our country. What is fair for the goose is fair for the gander. That is what our trade minister is telling us on the eve of these negotiations.

We have demonstrators from coast to coast to coast saying “We do not want to export our water”. Do we see legislation from the government to close Canada’s borders to the export of our fresh water? Not a word.

What about our cultural industries? We have a long list concerning what the government has not done to protect our cultural sector.

Mr. Roy Cullen: What are they?

Mr. Nelson Riis: My friend asks “What are they?” If he had the courage to ask a single person in a cultural industry, and there are hundreds of thousands, how the government has let down cultural industries, he would be listening for hours to the concerns that legitimate people have.

Our friends in the Bloc say that we have to set up a committee to look into this. It is almost too late, but let us at least go along with that notion. We will support the idea of setting up a committee to look into the impact of globalization. I say to my friends opposite, what evidence do we have of the impact of globalization? Is the world becoming a better place for most people? The answer is no. The gap between those who have and those who have not is drastically expanding, not only around the world but in our own country as well. Never before has the gap between rich and poor in Canada and the United States been greater.

Is this protecting the 1.5 million children living in poverty? The figures are increasing. There are a litany of issues. My friends opposite represent the Government of Canada, which represents the people of Canada. They represent the people of Canada in every nook and cranny of the country. Madam Speaker, that is why we are here, to represent the people of Canada. When we listen to what the people of Canada are telling us today, are they saying “Rush into the World Trade Organization, go to Seattle and hold secret meetings about our future”? They are not saying that at all, but there are some people who are saying that. The elite of the country are saying that. For large corporations, this is their day. So far they are only stuck with Mexico, Canada and the United States. Now they have the opportunity of involving 100-plus other countries in the same deal to enable priorities to take priority over the people of those countries.

• (1145)

Somebody has to be on the side of people. Who is representing the people of Canada? Who is representing the citizens of Canada at these talks, because our government sure as heck is not. I say that because the Liberals are such enthusiastic cheerleaders when it comes to NAFTA. They now want NAFTA to include all of North America and South America. They want to make this a hemispherical deal because it is so good. So good for whom, for the people or for the average citizen?

As we arrived at work on Parliament Hill this morning, we heard on the news that corporations now want to come in and start running private educational facilities. Americans want to come in

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and start opening up our universities. They are saying that if we subsidize the university and college system in this country, they will consider this to be a major trade barrier. They want us to back off the support for public education. Can anyone imagine that they would want us to back off supporting our colleges, universities and technical and vocational schools across the country.

Somebody has to speak up for the people in the country. I heard members on the other side of the House mumbling about trade this and trade that. My friend in the Reform Party says that we are a great trading nation. Of course we are a great trading nation. We are one of the greatest trading nations in the world. We have been for many decades.

I get so infuriated with the Reform Party. The Reform Party says that we have to have two things. We either have to bow down and pray on the steps of the North America trade agreement or the WTO, or we have to get down on our hands and knees and say that whatever they want they should get. The other one says that we have to build some kind of a wall around Canada.

There is a compromise. We have to protect the human rights of the people of Canada. We have to protect the environment of our government. Why would we not want to do that? Why would we not want to have decent labour laws? My friends in the Reform Party are cheerleaders for child labour if they support this deal. They are supporters of child labour because that is part of the trading situation in the world.

Mr. Richard M. Harris: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. While I am sure all of Canada is enjoying the theatrics of the member from Kamloops, he is absolutely misrepresenting-

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I am afraid we are falling into debate right now.

Mr. Nelson Riis: Madam Speaker, they call this passionate feeling for the people of Canada theatrics because they do not have any bloody passion in their caucus. They could not care less about the people of the country. They will sell them out, as will, make no mistake, my friends across the way.

These are the crazy guys. The other people are sort of the sheep in wolves’ clothing. They say that they are concerned about education, health care and the environment, but their actions betray them. They are not. They could not care less.

Somebody in the House has to say that we have to look closely at this whole issue of globalization. What will it do to the future of our country? What will it do to our sovereignty? What will it do to the average man, woman and child in the country? We have to ask these questions.

My friend in the Bloc says that we should form a committee and look into this. I hear others saying that they are not interested in that. I know why they are not interested. It is because they know

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damn well that if the people of Canada find out what the WTO will actually do to the average person in the country it will not be supported. They did not support the free trade agreement. They did not support NAFTA and they do not support the way the WTO is being introduced. I do not apologize for speaking passionately in favour of supporting the people of this great country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC): Madam Speaker, I have discussed with the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean, and I find it unfortunate that we are not always talking about this motion as he has moved it. People are using the conference this week in Seattle as a pretext to talk about the pros and cons of globalization.

The important thing is not whether we are for or against globalization, but that we look at the impact of globalization. That is the whole point in the motion of the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

Globalization is a very important phenomenon, and it is having major impacts on the lives of all Canadians and on all businesses in Canada.

• (1150)

The importance of that phenomenon cannot be overstated. The positive impact, and certainly the negative impact also, is in the tens of billions of dollars. Can we have a standing committee to assess this impact on an ongoing basis?

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade suggested greater openness as well as public consultations. So, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean went around with his form to get members to sign. He collected 100 signatures, including some from the other side. Liberal members are signing, saying "No problem. We want to encourage young people who have good ideas". But when the time comes to seek unanimous consent, we will see what their signatures are worth. They are not worth a cent, not even a Canadian cent. And it is worth even less than an American cent.

They are saying "We want to support the young member who left with his chair last year. It is important". But among those who signed the request from the member for Lac-Saint-Jean, not one will rise. These Liberals are not even making good their own signature. It does not look good for Seattle.

What we are saying is that people should be involved. We are in favour of globalization. Everybody is in favour of opening up Canada, but there are ways to go about it. Free trade with the United States was, for the most part, a good thing. But it had negative as well as positive effects. Do we know what they were? Are able to find solutions?

Changes were made to employment insurance. We said "Let us create a transitional job creation fund because to counteract of the

negative effects of the EI reform". Could the same be done for globalization? We are in favour of that.

The NDP member spoke about water exports. Maybe we should ask ourselves questions. Wars are waged on this planet for control over drinking water. In the negotiations, could our political sovereignty here in Canada be maintained?

We are in favour of opening up Canada to the world. We cannot live in complete isolation. It is impossible. When we are asking for openness and consultation with what is commonly referred to as civil society, we have examples.

Canada has just signed a trade agreement with China. Not with any little place in the world, but with China. Nobody in the House knows what was negotiated. We have just signed an agreement with China, the most densely populated country in the world. China needs the support of a certain number of countries to be able to join the WTO. This issue has never been debated in this House.

I asked the Minister for International Trade "Why do you not take this opportunity to talk about the environment and human rights?" He answered "No, no, no, this is a trade issue". If trade can help to promote human rights, that would be acceptable.

There are examples like these that we find very disturbing, even though we are open to the world. No other party is more open to the world than our own. Quebecers are also very open minded. Quebec is one of the provinces most open to the world. Canada is one of the countries that is most open to the world. But we must not be dense and compromise on all kinds of issues. We have to know what is going on.

If a lot of Canadians take part in demonstrations in Seattle, it means something. It means that there is no way to show the other side of the coin in the Parliament of Canada. There is no permanent process to do so. Could it be done?

At stake are hundreds of billions of dollars in economic spinoffs everywhere. Could we have a committee? That would not cost too much, I am sure. Could we have one?

There are things that can be negotiated or settled in Seattle. Let me give an example. One of the first countries to join the WTO or GATT was Cuba. Is there free trade between Cuba and the United States? Of course not. Canadian corporations are penalized if they do business with Cuba. Some positive measures could be taken for Canada, Cuba and the United States. We could use that forum to this end.

Right now, agriculture is on the table and it is, of course, a very important issue. We have to settle this problem. At the same time, while we are open to negotiations, we should also share the information with the people we represent.

I am not talking about strategy here. On both sides of the House, there are very capable people who can deal with strategy, and that

is a good thing. Perfect. But right now, we have no idea where we are headed.

• (1155)

Did the House get a single official report on the preliminary negotiations in Geneva? People have been arguing for three months now and have been unable to reach an agreement on the agenda for their meeting in Seattle this week.

Three months of work. How many times were we, as parliamentarians, briefed? How many times? Not once. So, members should not be surprised if some people are rather angry. And that is why they are saying that they will go to Seattle and voice their disapproval of some points of view and especially of the negotiation process.

They are right, because last Friday, to give the example I mentioned earlier, the minister signed an agreement with China. Absolutely nobody here knew that an agreement was in the works. Just imagine what we will end up with in Seattle. It is not with one briefing in the morning, in Seattle, and another in the evening that we will be well informed. Certainly not.

But what will happen after Seattle? Could we put strike this committee? That would show people we represent that we take globalization very seriously. I submit that it would be easy to strike a standing committee and that it would not cost much.

What the hon. member from Lac-Saint-Jean is asking for is unanimous consent to make the motion votable. That is all. So, may our Liberals buddies on the other side sign on and honour their commitment for once, and we on this side of the House do the same, so that there will be a vote. This is what the member for Lac-Saint-Jean is asking. After that, we will see where people stand on it.

But, what message is the government sending the people of Quebec, of Ontario, and of Canada if it refuses to consider the matter through a vote or even rejects the creation of a standing committee on globalization and its effects?

It is not because they are afraid, but what message are they sending people? Either that globalization is perfect and its effects are purely positive or that the government is so afraid of having its cage rattled by the people in this country it is supposed to represent that the Liberals are saying "No, we do not want to touch that".

It is time to act, because Canada is becoming increasingly globalized internationally. It is also time to change the committees of this House and strike a standing committee that will examine this issue routinely.

So I invite everyone to give their unanimous support to Motion M-41 by the member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

Mr. Stéphan Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, is it not wonderful to see how this simple issue is generating a

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rather heated debate in which various opinions are being expressed? This is good, in my opinion, because what I am proposing is a non-partisan review committee.

When I left with my seat, I did not tell my party what I was going to do, because I wanted to show members of this House that this was a non-partisan issue. We are fortunate to have here five political parties with various ideologies. Could we not benefit from that situation and get opinions and views from all these sources?

I am the youngest member in this House. Many here know that I wonder what kind of society we will have in 20 or 30 years, when I will be the same age as most members now in this House. I think we have to think about that or, at least, have a vote—this is all I am asking—because we would learn from it. In any case, we will have to think about it, perhaps a few years, but for now we must support this idea.

The issue is not whether we are for or against globalization. The issue is that we must understand it, to be able to act, play a role in the world, propose solutions at the international level. This parliament could exercise such leadership, and it would be fantastic.

This is why no member of this House should go against the will of 50,000 citizens, and possibly many more, because there are many more— This is why I am asking for the unanimous consent of the House to make Motion M-41 a votable item.

• (1200)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The hon. member is asking for the unanimous consent of the House to make the motion votable. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the item is dropped from the order paper.

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[English]

CANADIAN INSTITUTES OF HEALTH RESEARCH ACT

The House resumed from November 25 consideration of the motion that Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian Institutes of

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Health Research, to repeal the Medical Research Council Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak to Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian institutes of health research and to repeal the Medical Research Council Act.

It is not very often in the House when I compliment the government on its direction, but I must compliment the government in recognizing the need for Canadian medical and science researchers to be supported financially. It is the hope of the official opposition that the new institutes of health research will be accountable to the Canadian taxpayers who will be providing the financial resources in order for the research to take place.

Research and development has had very strange support from governments. I remember the former Conservative government made lots of promises to the people of British Columbia, particularly to the University of British Columbia with the Kaon project but it became very apparent that it was only a vote-getting promise. Other promises have been made across the country by governments maintaining that they recognize the need for research and development, but when the time comes the financial support is never there.

We are very supportive of research and development because that is how Canada will lead the way. That is how the Canadian economy will be able to compete with other nations of the world. So often and for so long we have watched our best and our brightest go elsewhere because the financial support has not been available in our country to develop and fund research projects and to put those research projects into a viable market.

We are very pleased that the government at least is recognizing the need to put financial resources into research and development, but even more so the need to be accountable to the taxpayers for that money, not only with this direction on research and development, but certainly with other government programs. What has happened is that money has gone into an area and the taxpayers have had no idea where it has gone, if the money has been well spent or if there is any benefit from that money being put there. It is quite clear that the government recognizes the need to hold these new institutes accountable to the taxpayer.

The amount of dollars will be divided between the institute development fund, which will get 20% of the earmarked dollars, and the strategic initiative fund, which will get 80% of the total budget. Both will be overseen by a body. Although the director may be appointed by the government, the other members who will be sitting on the committee will be appointed or nominated by their peers.

That is a very important step forward. There will not be more patronage positions for the government to fill. Rather, the people

who will be showing leadership and who will be determining which project will be prioritized, that determination will be made by the peers of the scientific community and the medical research community. They understand and will be able to weigh the importance of the projects. They will be able to prioritize them in such a way that the taxpayers' funds will be well spent.

It is also important to note that the government is not interested in creating a new bureaucracy. The government is not interested in long term appointments to government paid salaried positions. The individuals who will serve as an advisory board will not be paid a salary. They will be paid a per diem fee for the amount of time spent in committees or the number of committee meetings they attend. Instead of having somebody on a salary of \$80,000 to \$125,000, we are talking about a per diem fee with expenses being covered.

● (1205)

I think we will get people who really want to serve the scientific community and the Canadian people. They will not be out for their own personal benefit, they will be out for the good of the whole. That is a very important step for our government to take.

It is important not to create an establishment where the majority of the dollars goes to support the bureaucracy itself. I understand that only 4% to 5% of the total funds will go toward administration. I think Canadians will uphold the government's decision. Hopefully we will see in the long run that taxpayers' dollars do not go toward an increasingly huge bureaucracy or, as we sometimes hear people call them, these little kingdoms that develop, but rather that the money will actually go into research and development.

We are very pleased the government is going in this direction. We hope in the end these appointments will prove that the system is right and that this model of an agency can be used in other areas.

The head of the institution will be appointed by the governor in council and the other members will be appointed by their peers. The names of individuals from the scientific community will be given to the individual who will be appointed to run the institute. He or she will select from the names. It is an interesting direction for the government to be going in.

We understand the agencies will be reporting twice annually. Their spending can be watched by the Canadian people. Over the years we will be able to assess whether or not they are doing the best they can, whether they are using the money wisely through the reporting process that has been put in the act.

It is important to acknowledge that the scientific community has been hard done by in years past. Most of the money which has gone into scientific research has been used for administrative purposes or for supporting bureaucracies. I think the scientists themselves are looking to the new act to free up dollars for actual research projects and that the money will go into research.

Hopefully at the end of the day not only will Canadian taxpayers be pleased with the results, but those in the scientific and medical research community will also be pleased. This will mean more money will go into research than into the bureaucracy. The appointment of members and the overseeing body will be done in an open and democratic manner which will be accountable to the people with a reporting process involved.

Years from now we look forward to seeing a strong scientific and medical research community which will lead the way internationally. Hopefully this will stop the serious brain drain of our best and our brightest.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is, of course, with interest that I rise to speak to Bill C-13, at the request of our health critic, the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve.

• (1210)

For the benefit of our viewers, Bill C-13 is a bill to establish institutes of health research, which will replace the Medical Research Council.

I will provide a little background. The federal government, through the Minister of Finance, plans to allocate a surplus of \$65 million for the year 2000-01, plus \$240 million for 2001-02, for a grand total of approximately half a billion dollars, because it includes the 2001-02 budgets already earmarked for the Medical Research Council.

The fact that the federal government, through the Minister of Finance, is investing an additional \$65 million next year, and \$240 million on top of that in the second year, obviously requires a very broad consensus here in the House of Commons. The member for Chicoutimi has just told me that the Progressive Conservative Party will be supporting Bill C-13. The Reform Party member just gave me her backing. Last week, the NDP health critic also came on board. This means that, with the Bloc Québécois, support for Bill C-13 will, to all intents and purposes, be unanimous.

However, Bloc Québécois members will be introducing a few amendments to make sure of two things: first, that Quebec will receive its fair share, and not get the short end of the stick, as it did with the automobile plants. Nineteen out of twenty in Ontario, and only one out of twenty in Quebec, and every six months, somebody talks about closing it. Quebec should get its share of this \$500 million budget.

We will recall that, in research and development, Ontario traditionally gets between 50% and 60% of the overall federal R

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and D budget, while Quebec, with 25% of the Canadian population, only gets some 14%.

We will also have to make sure that the federal government, the government of the Prime Minister and member from Shawinigan, is not slipping us a lump of coal, that he is not firing up its steamroller and once again invading areas of provincial jurisdiction. We will keep a close eye on that.

We know that the Canadian institutes of health research will deal primarily with organizing, co-ordinating and financing. I want to focus on research co-ordination here in Canada. Our researchers should not be competing against one another, neither should our institutes, and findings that, if shared, could speed things along and benefit our ageing population should not be hidden. To this end, we quickly emphasize research into cardiovascular disease, arthritis, cancer, heart disease, Alzheimer and, of course, respiratory disease. The Bloc Québécois is in favour of the general thrust of Bill C-13. It is a necessity.

I should recall that, last Friday, I was invited by the president of the volunteers of the old Thetford Mines hospital, Lucien Roy, and Treasurer Remi Vachon to join a group of hospital volunteers for a social diner. On this occasion, those patients who could be “taken out”—in the words of Lucien Roy—gathered in the chapel for dinner. I had an opportunity to talk with about 30 patients, and all of them asked that more money be put into health care.

• (1215)

What does not impress me, but surprises me, is that this same government has made \$3.4 billion worth of cuts since 1993. The same finance minister and the same health minister, who have cut \$3.4 billion over less than six years in Quebec alone, now want to put \$65 million into research. It certainly takes a lot of nerve.

One day, during question period, Jean Charest, when he sat in this House, at the far right, close to your chair, Madam Speaker, put a question to the Prime Minister, stating that, if Quebec had problems in the health care sector, he was primarily responsible for it. He was referring to the Prime Minister of Canada and member for Saint-Maurice.

Today, the same government is bragging about putting \$65 million more into research. In Quebec alone, the shortfall for the year 1999-2000 totals \$1.7 billion. For health alone, the total is \$850 million for the current fiscal year. It is a lot of money.

Quebec is not the only province to experience health care problems. Problems exist across Canada. Unfortunately, it is the finance minister's doing.

This is why hundreds and thousands of protesters rallied in Hull yesterday to speak out against what this government has done in the area of health care and social services. It has made cuts almost everywhere, including in social housing, and it did it unilaterally.

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Today, to ease its conscience, it is planning to include in next year's budget a meagre \$65 million more for health research. The Prime Minister and member for Saint-Maurice really does have nerve. He is a Quebecer willing to sacrifice Quebec to increase his popularity in the rest of Canada.

He is the one who, as you will recall, when he was the justice minister in 1982, with 74 members of his political formation, had orchestrated with Pierre Trudeau the unilateral patriation of the Constitution. He had organised all that despite all the opposition from Quebecers, including Claude Ryan, who was the leader of the Quebec Liberal Party at the time.

Fortunately, he was prevented just in time from playing this dirty trick on us when the National Assembly, where all parties were against him, and all Quebec newspaper editorials, including *La Presse* and *Le Soleil*—which are not fundamentally separatist papers—condemned the Prime Minister's plans.

It is not surprising that ministers from Quebec, including this minister here, who is the President of the Treasury Board, distanced themselves from him. I am happy to say that she distanced herself from her leader, which could only be to her credit. She is one of the few in Cabinet. Sure, there is also the Minister of Finances, but he can talk for ten minutes without saying anything.

That is what he did. Fifty per cent plus one will do it for him. That is what international law and democracy demand. Will the vote of Raymond Setlakwe, in Thetford, count for 1.2, while that of the member for Frontenac will count for just one? In democracy, it is one woman one vote and one man one vote. That is what I want to remind the House.

• (1220)

[English]

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise to address Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian institutes of health research and to repeal the Medical Research Council Act.

At the outset of my brief remarks I rise in qualified support of the legislation. My arguments in support of the bill are focused on improving the health of Canadians through research. Who could possibly be opposed to that premise?

My problems with the bill are based on the difference between the fundamental beliefs of the Liberal government and my beliefs as a Reform member of parliament. While our goals are the same, to improve and lengthen quality of life for all Canadians, the differences lie in how to obtain this goal.

I note that we are coming at this from two different directions. The government's approach certainly appears to be how to perpetuate and protect the existing health care industry. In other words it

views it as the system. It believes that we have to hold on to and stand fast with the Canada Health Act, not look at making any changes, even though the government fully recognizes and is in agreement with opposition parties that the health care system is rapidly deteriorating. Its present form is failing Canadians and failing to address their needs in the area of health care.

In contrast to that the official opposition has said that we have to change the focus from the system and from the industry of health care to that of the patient. We have to broaden our research and the way in which we look at the whole issue of health care, with the intention of focusing on the individual, on the patient, and what is best for him or her, not on what necessarily is best for our so-called universal health care system.

When it comes to health care, currently the provinces are paying almost 90% of health care costs. Yet Ottawa continues to defend the Canada Health Act to the extent that it should dictate the terms, the levies and fines to provinces which are trying to accommodate the ongoing legacy of the government cutting billions of dollars from health over the last number of years. In the last year or two, once the government achieved a balanced budget and started to run surpluses, it put back a few billion dollars, a mere fraction of the billions that it cut from the Canada health and social transfer.

The government expects some applause from Canadians for doing that at a time when Canadians are suffering under the weight of a taxation system which has seen them as the most heavily taxed we have ever been as a society, as a country and as Canadian taxpayers in our history.

What a legacy for the Prime Minister. What a situation for Canadians to find themselves in as they go into the next millennium. We will turn that corner in about a month's time and will find that we are the most heavily taxed we have ever been in our history. At the same time Canadians are an aging population which has to rely more and more on health care and faces the reality that the health care system is failing and is deteriorating.

I welcome the opportunity to speak to the bill today. I want to broaden the context of it. There is no point in trying to have a debate when we agree with something. What we have to do is try to focus on what we do not agree with. I have already laid out the difference in the approach of the official opposition to that of the government. I also want to talk about the so-called two tiered health care and the fearmongering on the part of the government every time the official opposition, the Reform Party of Canada, brings forward new or innovative ideas about health care and how to address the needs of Canadians in the whole area of health care.

We are immediately bombarded with the comments that we want to change it, that we want to destroy the universality of the Canadian health care system. Nothing could be further from the truth, but unfortunately that gets lost in the very heated and emotional debate we face every time we try to bring forward ideas.

• (1225)

I note that some of the most innovative thinking in the last while has been by the provinces. As I said earlier in my comments today, they are struggling under the weight of the cuts the government has instituted and the cuts they have had to face in administering health care to Canadians, to provincial taxpayers, their citizens.

Certainly much to the disappointment of the official opposition, when a premier or provincial health minister comes up with an innovative plan on how to address the needs of Canadians in the area of health care, instead of some co-operation from the government we see that it attacks the provinces and the individual who brings forward some innovative and new thinking on the issue.

We are all in agreement that we need more funding and more focus on research in the area of health care. We could go down a long list of debilitating and life threatening diseases that require some urgency in the area of research. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that we should be concerned about priorities and how scarce tax dollars are spent.

The solicitor general announced the other day that he would institute under tremendous pressure from the official opposition a research facility at the cost of \$2 million to \$2.5 million to look at the whole area of drug addiction, how it relates to prisons and the prison system, how it relates to crime and recidivism rates, and why people do what they do in the area of crime if they are under the influence of drugs.

Certainly we have been pushing for a national drug strategy. We have been drawing the attention of Canadians to the fact that drugs are more rampant and readily available in prison than they are outside prison. I have to question the sanity that would go into announcing supposedly never ending research into this issue and having it headquartered in Prince Edward Island, in the minister's riding.

Why take a vitally important issue to Canadian society and denigrate it by making it into a patronage issue? He has announced that he will temporarily house the research facility until such time as a new federal building can be built, which will just happen to be in his riding, to house the 20 permanent staff members he envisions to look into the drug issue.

Unfortunately I am almost out of time. All of us, especially my colleagues in the Reform Party, in the official opposition, could go on at great length talking about the issue of priorities, how the government spends scarce tax dollars, and our concerns in that regard. I only had time to briefly highlight one issue.

With all the empty federal buildings across the country, I am sure the government could have found one, heaven knows, in areas that have serious drug problems in prisons such as the lower mainland of Vancouver or in and around Toronto. That might be a better location for a facility such as this one.

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I sum up by stating that the Reform Party prime health care objective is to improve the quality and length of life of all Canadians. For that reason my Reform colleagues and I support the legislation, as I said. I must state unequivocally that we in the Reform Party do not support the government's irresponsible approach to managing Canada's health care system. The government has gutted funding for health care, yet it has increased taxes every year since coming to power. If Canadians are sick of anything, they are sick of paying more and getting less.

The bill will provide increased moneys for medical research, but will Canadians get their money's worth? I do not think so. Canada has some of the world's best research and development. However, our incredibly high level of taxation leaves Canadian companies little or no money left for research, and a substantial tax cut for Canadians, including Canadian businesses, will improve the lives of Canadians, create jobs and keep our kids at home. We often hear about the brain drain.

• (1230)

I believe this is in line with the wishes of Canadians who want to pay less and get more from their government, instead of the current Liberal system which is exactly the opposite; paying the highest taxes in history while facing a deteriorating national health care system. What a legacy for the Prime Minister.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to speak on Bill C-13, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research Act.

First of all, I would like to congratulate my colleague from New Brunswick, the member for New Brunswick Southwest, for his excellent work at the Standing Committee on Health. I also want to point out to the House that this is the first significant bill dealing with health care that has come before us during this parliament. It is incredible that this is the first bill dealing with a matter of such significance.

This reminds us of the fact that the present government is the laziest of this century. It is absolutely incredible that, today, the government is putting an emphasis on health. The Prime Minister recently reopened the constitutional debate. To him, it seems more important to debate constitutional matters than to discuss the priorities of Canadians regarding health, education and employment. This is absolutely incredible.

Mr. John Bryden: The question must be clear.

Mr. Jean Dubé: Yes, the question must be clear and specific. I would like the government side of the House to answer clear and specific questions.

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Since it took office, this government cut \$17 billion from health care. It is absolutely incredible because, meanwhile, the demand for health care is increasing. We all know that the ageing of the population is increasing the demand for health care and yet the government cut some \$17 billion in health care.

In the last budget, the Minister of Finance gave back some of that money, in transfers for health care, but that simply brought us back to where we were ten years ago. To have such a government in this day and age is absolutely incredible.

Canadians are furious at the Prime Minister for having revived the constitutional debate. Given the government's record in the House right now, I can assure members that Canadians want change. I can hardly wait for the next election, because then the people will have the opportunity to say exactly what they think about this government.

Let us consider the problems in the health field. During the past year, I had the privilege of being a member of the Conservative Party's committee that toured Canada to study poverty. The government has nothing to brag about when it comes to poverty, which is growing in Canada. We have seen much evidence of this. I had the opportunity to meet some university students during the tour and, believe it or not, I discovered there are soup kitchens in Canadian universities. It is absolutely incredible that there should be soup kitchens our Canadian universities.

We wonder why health costs are so high. It is because of the constant stress Canadians are under. In some regions, Canadians are looking for jobs, they are having a hard time making ends meet and they are under heavy stress as a result. And where does stress lead? Stress gets people into the hospital, sometimes for long periods of time. We also know that stress has an impact on the cardiovascular system.

• (1235)

I think all the hon. members in the House know only too well what this causes and what it costs. We should be focusing our efforts on this, to reduce health costs.

I totally support Bill C-13, but I think we should examine the origin of the problem and the causes of skyrocketing health costs. Again, we have an aging population in Canada. Nowadays in Canada, young families are like mine, with two young children aged six and two; there are no more families of six and more; we do not see that anymore.

So, we have an aging population, which has an impact on taxes collected. We will have to pay attention to this. We have serious problems, and we really have to focus our attention on the causes of health problems.

I want to go back to what I said a few minutes ago. I was saying that I was deeply disappointed with the government's work during this session. I honestly think this is one of the laziest governments we have seen.

[*English*]

It has to be the laziest government in this century. It is totally unbelievable. We are going on to the constitutional debate again when Canadians really want to hear us talk about health care. I know I want to talk about health care and I think most of the people in here want to talk about health care. I am sure most of the people on the government side want to talk about health care as well.

Unfortunately, today and for the past week in the House everyone knows what we have been talking about. Who initiated all this? I think it was our friend across the way, the Prime Minister of Canada.

It is totally unbelievable to throw gas on the fire like that. It is ironic because our party, the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, believes in a united Canada. This was demonstrated when Jean Charest left our party to head the federalist party in Quebec. He seems to be doing a good job there trying to bring up the popularity of federalist troops in Quebec. We saw in a poll about two weeks ago that the federalist forces in Quebec were on their way up. I think it was at 57% and the Lucien Bouchard troops were down to 30%.

We should keep an eye on the polls in the coming weeks to see what happens in Quebec. I am sure we will see a change in the polls.

Members of parliament were debating clear issues that people were concerned about. We were talking about jobs and health care. We must be getting close to an election because it seems to me that every time there is an election in the country we talk about the constitution. Believe me, we should be talking about much different things.

When I say that it has to be the laziest government in this century, I think that is why the PM is trying to hook onto this.

Let us look at what we did as a Conservative government and at the balanced budget today. Why do we have a balanced budget today? Let us take a look at what free trade did to the country. Free trade was brought in by this government. It is one of the biggest pieces of legislation this country has had in this century. That was a proactive government taking care of business.

[*Translation*]

What free trade has done for us in Canada is to raise our exports from \$90 billion to \$230 billion over five or six years. That is absolutely incredible. These are very fine figures indeed and I believe the government is very proud of them today.

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Had the Liberal government had it its way, free trade would not be what it is today. However, the Minister of Finance must be very pleased with that \$230 billion figure today. The Liberals are patting themselves on the back now about having a balanced budget. But why is it that they have that balanced budget? I think the \$230 billion certainly has something to do with the fact that there is a balanced budget. Let us be realistic.

• (1240)

As for the GST, I was not much in favour of that as a businessman, and many people in Canada were also opposed. We saw what happened in 1993. Looking a little further, we can see that the GST will bring in \$24 billion in revenues to the Government of Canada this year.

Looking at what we did as a government and what the present government has done, it is evident that the employment insurance cuts have hurt the poor, particularly women. It can be seen from last week's Statistics Canada report that the poor are the ones most affected by employment insurance reform.

I am pleased to take part in this debate, and we are going to support Bill C-13.

[*English*]

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak today to Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and to repeal the Medical Research Council Act.

For those who are reading through *Hansard* or watching on television, I will repeat that the official opposition supports the bill, which I think is taking medical research in Canada in the right direction. It is more of an arm's-length relationship between the government and the medical research business in Canada. It is very important research that I think all Canadians support. It is the type of thing we have long advocated as a necessary role for government to be involved in.

There are many things governments should not be involved with but medical research is certainly a good use of dollars. It benefits all of society and it benefits people around the world. It is a good use of our tax dollars. And I do support the bill.

I want to talk about a theme I developed the last time I was on my feet here, which was that when governments choose to head in a certain direction they basically have chosen one priority over another because almost always the bills and acts that we discuss here in parliament involve the expenditure of tax dollars.

When the government chooses to spend money on a research facility with hundreds of millions of dollars involved, it means that there is some money that cannot be spent on something else,

assuming there is a finite amount of money involved. That means something else has dropped to the bottom of the priority list, which is as it has to be. Governments have to make choices. I would urge them to be a little more stringent in their choices. I would urge them to drop a few more things off their very full plate to allow for some tax relief and tax breaks for Canadian businesses and families. Be that as it may, it always involves a priority.

I draw to the attention of the House today another research facility I just became aware of this weekend that was announced by the government last week. The research facility is sort of health related. It has to do with developing research into the use of drugs in prisons, the impact they have, how they affect crime rates and all those sorts of things. It is not a bad idea to study that, although it is so rampant and so widespread I am not sure what exactly they will discover is new.

I bring this up because the announcement was made by the solicitor general that this research facility, sort of health related, sort of crime related but interrelated, would be put in his own riding in Prince Edward Island. There are a couple of million dollars involved. It is a priority of the minister to spend the money, not just on the research but on building a facility in Prince Edward Island to house it.

I asked our solicitor general critic how many federal institutions of incarceration there were in Prince Edward Island. There are no maximum or medium security facilities there. So I asked why this was put in the solicitor general's riding. What is the scoop? Why has he decided that this has to be the place?

• (1245)

For example, I think of the lower mainland of British Columbia which obviously is the area I am most familiar with. In the immediate area in and around my riding there is Kent maximum security prison, Mountain medium security prison, and the regional psychiatric or Matsqui prison, which does the assessments of all people who are incarcerated in the federal system for British Columbia. In other words, everybody goes through this system which is in my riding. The Sumas centre, the Elbow Lake institution and six or seven provincial institutions all are within 20 or 30 kilometres of my part of the Fraser Valley.

In addition there is the entirely vacant CFB Chilliwack base and facilities. It has been vacant since the government moved everybody out of there to Edmonton to the justice minister's riding. She enjoys that in her part of the world. The buildings sit empty. The buildings on this site are available for any federal department to use. Some of the buildings are so new that they were still being built when the place was shut down. They are brand new state of the art buildings which were built for the Canadian forces as a training facility. They are classroom type facilities and are fully wired and computer sensitive.

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If I wanted to get a handle on researching drug use in prisons there would be a couple of things I would do if I were the government. This is part of the prioritization of spending. I would investigate actual prisons. I would not just conceptualize it, I would access the minimum, medium and maximum security prisons. I would want access to all the prisoners in the federal system, in other words like those at the Matsqui institution. I would check up on them following discharge to see how they were doing in the real world and see the rate of recidivism, which is alarming when drugs are involved. I would want to be aware of where those people were.

I would want to do a follow up and be close to other medical research facilities such as those at UBC. It has world class medical research facilities and is about a one hour drive from my place. I would want the facilities in a place that would cost the taxpayers the least amount of money. I would want good facilities and good use of them. As far as the drug problem is concerned, I would want to be where the action was and at the lowest cost possible to the taxpayer.

One of those places would be in the lower mainland which would meet all those criteria. The buildings and the facilities are there. If we did not like CFB Chilliwack, how about CFB Aldergrove which has also been shut down. It has facilities and land and is in the middle of all of these prisons. There is the ability to study these individuals.

The solicitor general did not bother to do that. Instead, he is going to build a brand new place in his home province because what the heck, it is a couple of million bucks for back home. I cannot think of a single other reason why he is doing this. There are no prisons or medical research facilities or a building there. There is no inmate population to study. There is no reason to build it there except for one. It is the home province of the solicitor general.

That is very unfortunate. It shows Canadians that priorities are being made based on political considerations and not on the best interests of medical research or the use of tax dollars. Neither one of those is the paramount consideration. The partisan use of tax dollars has taken precedence over the good and judicious use of limited tax dollars. That is a shame.

Every time I see a bill, like Bill C-13, that involves medical research, I am happy to support it. I think of how important the work of medical researchers is and how difficult it is for them to get funds. When I see other money being wasted, as I described, for partisan political reasons and not being given to a new and improved research facility, I wonder why that choice of priority, instead of the priority which is in the best interests of taxpayers, drug users, drug abusers and so on. We are trying to fix a problem in our penitentiary system. I do not believe that long term facility in Prince Edward Island is strategically located or will be a good use of tax dollars.

• (1250)

That means something else has to give. Some other priority has to come in below that. The millions of dollars that will be spent on it will not be available for other things such as medical research and community housing. It will not be available because it is being spent for political reasons.

In closing, I would like to say again that the official opposition is happy to support Bill C-13. Medical research is important to our country. I hope the government will not only encourage medical researchers to do the hard research that they must do, but that the government itself will move away from being the protector of the system and toward the protector of the health of individual Canadians.

That does not mean we throw out the Canada Health Act. It does not mean there is not a lot of good, obviously, in our Canadian public health system. However, as we move into the new millennium we have to encourage people to think outside the box on medical research, the medical system and the delivery of medical services so that all Canadians are cared for the best.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak on Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, to repeal the Medical Research Council Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

This legislation stems from an announcement made initially in the budget of last February, when the health minister mentioned plans to establish a virtual network of research institutes. Then, the latest federal budget announced that an initial amount of \$65 million would be earmarked for fiscal year 2000-2001, to be followed by an additional \$175 million. If we add all these figures to the existing budgets for the Medical Research Council, we can see that the government's objective is to raise the total amount to close to \$500 million.

The act also provides for the establishment of all that is required to manage these health research institutes, so that these facilities can be operational the beginning of April 2000.

The act includes several parts. Some clauses state the objects of the CIHRs. Others, such as clauses 6 to 11, deal with the organization of the CIHRs. Others still deal with the governing council, including its establishment. A series of other clauses include transitional measures or consequential amendments to other acts.

Of course, no one can be opposed to the idea of allocating money for research. Everyone agrees that it is extremely important to conduct health research. Various subjects have already been pro-

posed as being worthy of study, such as aging, research into arthritis, musculoskeletal development, cancer, muscle biology, heart disease and so on.

An hon. member: The flu.

Mr. Pierre Brien: Unfortunately, there is nothing yet for the flu.

There are things that will lead to discoveries, other research, other discoveries in the medical field, and that is important.

An aside. I had the opportunity to accompany, together with the Minister of National Revenue, who is also responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions in Quebec, a group of Quebec businesses that recently took part in a trade fair called Salon Medica, where the greatest discoveries in the field of medicine were displayed. These were medical equipment manufacturers.

We saw extraordinary things. It is not clear how we will be able to provide all these services, because the technologies are obviously extremely expensive. They will have to be made more affordable. The more they are used, the more marketing will bring the prices down.

• (1255)

It is incredible to see what is available to provide support for or treat various diseases, increasingly advanced discoveries, and increasingly sophisticated rehabilitation equipment. What is clear is that humans are moved by a desire to push ever further back the inevitable appointment with death or disease, and to attenuate their effect.

We are all in favour, but there are operational efficiency constraints facing the government in its efforts to make sure the public gets the best medical service possible. Obviously, this is a problem for several areas in Canada, and it involves health as well. In the case that concerns us in Quebec, there are two levels of government involved in the delivery of health care, in addition to various institutions, regional boards and hospitals.

The Government of Quebec, whose jurisdiction it is, must run this system and come up with the money to pay the entire workforce involved, as well as operating costs. In the meantime, the federal government agrees that this is a provincial jurisdiction, but is stepping up its interference.

It has always been present in research but, with its various foundations, is becoming more so. I could name the Canadian Foundation for Innovation, and a host of other foundations, financial tools created by the federal government that encroach on the health care system in various areas, which is easier for the federal government because it does not have to shoulder all the recurrent costs, all the more complex side of the health system, or negotiate labour agreements and whatnot.

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But it interferes wherever it can come out looking good, looking like it is really concerned, such as in health care. The big problem is that, when we arrived here, in 1993-1994, this same government made real, not virtual, transfer payments of almost \$17 billion in hard cash under three provincial transfer payment programs—in health, education and social assistance. Now, those payments are closer to of \$12 billion. There have been various cuts, which annually amount to about \$6 billion in direct funding that the provinces used for health care delivery.

By reducing this funding, which is used to pay for the system, where costs are not going down, the federal government is putting tremendous pressure on the health care system in view of all the new discoveries, the new medical solutions, the level of care required, an informed population demanding more and more services, the increased availability and high cost of drugs, and all the rest.

Provincial governments have seen their budget reduced drastically due to cuts in transfer payments, and smaller contributions from the federal government while it is increasingly interfering with important initiatives in areas such as research where it can get more visibility without being involved in the mechanics, while providing less support to the funding of the whole system than it did in the past.

This is quite deplorable. How can provincial governments successfully plan and orchestrate health care services when they have no control over the level of financing coming from the federal government? The cuts that are being made or were made were unilateral. One fine morning the federal government said “I am withdrawing from this area”.

Yet it is introducing initiatives, saying as usual it is going to co-operate with the provinces. However, when we see how little it recognizes the role of the provinces in this bill, which puts them on the same footing as all the other players, we know it does not want to recognize the crucial role provincial governments must play, namely to properly plan for the management and organization of health care services.

The level of federal funding is beyond the control of the provinces and nowadays, with the budget surpluses which are accumulating in Ottawa and which are not virtual, but quite real—the federal government mentioned something in the order of \$90 billion over the next five years—there is a very strong desire to interfere more and more in numerous areas.

• (1300)

It is difficult to have plan properly in our health system, when the left hand does not know what the right hand is going to do. There is an obvious lack of co-operation here.

The federal government wants to play an ever larger role and it has no intention of increasing transfers to the provinces to provide

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them with some relief, to help them absorb regular costs and have the required flexibility in their own budgets to fund necessary initiatives in research and so on.

The federal government wants to take full control over this area and the best way to do so was to reduce funding for the provinces so much that they now barely have the means to pay the regular operational costs of the health system.

I am convinced that this was well planned and thought out by the federal government and that it is no coincidence. Considering that the government now has annual surpluses in excess of \$10 billion to \$15 billion, why is it unable to reinvest the \$4 billion to \$5 billion that were once used in transfer payments to directly fund services to citizens?

It is all fine and well to do medical research, but we must also ensure that the public has access to existing basic traditional services. Health professionals are very good, but the problem often has to do with access, with the time required before we can see certain specialists.

So, it is definitely not by just funding initiatives relating to research, development or government visibility that we will achieve the necessary balance to have a good health system.

The bill includes many interesting things, but we will have to make some important cautionary remarks when it is debated in committee. We agree with the bill's principle to allocate more money for research, but we are very concerned about how the government is defining its role in relation to that of the provinces as regards the management and delivery of services to the public.

[English]

Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.): Madam Speaker, as my colleagues who have spoken before me have indicated, the Reform Party will support Bill C-13.

Canada has a long and honourable tradition of medical research. However, it is ironic that in the land of Frederick Banting and Charles Best we have seen a long, slow decline in the level, if not the quality, of our research. I do not know the causes for that, but I suspect they may have something to do with internal bureaucracies or perhaps bureaucracy emanating off of the Hill.

There is no question that we need an accountable, well administered health research institute. That appears to be what is going to come out of this legislation, at least that is our fond hope. The projected 4% to 5% administrative cost is certainly commendable. I hope that goal can be reached because there are not too many organizations that can operate within parameters of that nature.

I am very pleased that this institute will operate at arm's length from government, from the politicians and the bureaucracy. It will

be run basically by the people directly concerned, the researchers, and in this respect it should be as useful as many other professional organizations which have existed in this country for decades without direct government interference.

I would like to diverge a bit, since I have already stated that I support the legislation, and talk about the gradual long term decline, not just of medical research, but of the entire health care system which, to a great extent, is tied to the research establishment.

I want to talk about the lack of reasonable distribution of the fruits of medical research within this country. We hear talk across the way about the danger of Canada slipping into a two tiered medical system. I wonder where these folks have been living for the last 15 or 20 years. We probably have a multi-tiered medical system, but for a rural person like myself, boy, do we ever have a two tiered system.

• (1305)

If people try to access modern, state of the art medical technology in my riding, I wish them luck, because we simply do not have it. If people want decent medical attention they either have to go to one of the major centres in Canada or, unfortunately, sometimes for efficiency and for expeditious treatment, they head south to the United States. There is a bit of an epidemic, a good medical term perhaps, in the flight to seek better medical care.

I would like to give members an example of the sort of thing I am talking about. Magnetic resonance imagery units are ubiquitous in the United States. Any small or medium sized city in the United States will have one or two of them. In Canada we have to go to a major medical centre and wait in line sometimes for months, depending on the seriousness of our need, to have access to one of these machines.

I do not understand why we have to live in the past with our medical facilities. I say that I do not understand it, but actually I do understand it to a point. The problem is that the government has gutted the medical system. It has taken billions and billions of dollars out of it and thrown the responsibility to the provinces to maintain the level of service. Therefore, we do not have access to the good stuff. By the way, MRI units are not really state of the art now. They have been around for quite a while, but we have not caught up.

I do not see any reason, other than the bloody mindedness of the government, for which we could not have state of the art medical treatment all over the country, instead of a two-tiered system which gives it to the urban areas, and the devil take the rural folks.

We cannot blame the provinces. Under the Canada Health Act we started with a 50:50 sharing of the cost of medical care. It is now about 85:15. The provinces are digging and scratching. That is simply unfair. It is indecent. The federal government made a deal

30 years ago. If it made a deal it should stick to it. This will have historical ramifications.

By all means, let us have a better developed medical research organization in this country. Let us encourage research. Let us fund research. That is something which really has not been mentioned much in this debate, but we cannot do medical research without something in our jeans to pay the bills. We have to fund this research. We have to encourage it. We certainly should encourage the new organization.

There are a few problems in the bill with respect to how the organization will work. There are a lot of details that have to be worked out, which can be managed in committee. That is what committees are for. I am hopeful that in this instance, since there is no debate about the desirability of function as committees were designed to function and let it actually have some real input into the legislation, instead of having the whip sneak over to make sure that the good little boys and girls do not stray. I hope the committee will actually be able to do a bit of thoughtful work. I think this is a great opportunity.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for being so patient and not cutting me off when I diverged. I hope the people out there in TV land will take note of the fact that there are some people in Ottawa who realize what is going on with health care, and we are those people.

• (1310)

[Translation]

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is with great interest that I rise today to speak to Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, to repeal the Medical Research Council Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

I am particularly interested in this bill because I am the critic for seniors and seniors organizations. As they are sometimes very prone to health problems, health is an issue of concern to them.

The Bloc Québécois is in favour of increasing research funding, particularly for health. The Bloc Québécois therefore supports the principle of establishing these institutes. However, Quebec must receive its fair share of federal R&D funding.

But the CIHRs involve much more than research. The federal government must not designate any CIHRs in Quebec without the approval of the provincial government.

Investment in R and D is necessary. The hospital and university research community badly need funding. We all know that Quebec

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has received the short end of the stick when it comes to funding. The federal government must rectify this through additional funding to researchers and the university community so that they can carry on their research.

A recent article in *Le Devoir* about the health of seniors in Quebec described the situation facing the province's beleaguered Department of Health and Social Services:

This time, the association of CLSCs and long term care facilities is calling for funding. Today, with the need for services going up, but not the funding, long term care facilities can meet only two-thirds of the demand. The problem is the widening gap between the needs of seniors and the ability of facilities to meet those needs.

By not giving Quebec its fair share, particularly in the health sector, the federal government is responsible for this state of affairs. Of course we are not opposed to an increase in research and development budgets for the creation of virtual institutes.

Quebec is not getting its fair share of federal research and development funding. We know that, historically, Quebec has received only 14% of federal spending on research. The Government of Quebec will table, at the beginning of next year, a report on scientific policy. Quebec is in favour of biomedical research and has made commitments to support it.

I mentioned that, as spokesman for senior citizens' organizations, I think health research is essential, particularly for seniors, who represent one of the fastest growing segments of the Canadian population.

In 1998, the estimated number of Canadians 65 years of age and over was 3.7 million, a 57% increase over the 1981 count of 2.4 million. With this tendency, the percentage of seniors within the Canadian population has increased over the last few years. In 1998, seniors accounted for 12% of the total population, compared to 10% in 1981 and 8% in 1971.

• (1315)

The number of older persons should keep growing in the decades to come, especially with the baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1965, starting to turn 65 years of age early on in the second decade of the next century.

Therefore, about 1 out of 10 Canadians is 85 years old and over, compared to 1 out of 20 Canadians at the beginning of the century. As we approach the millennium, we do have to consider the health of our people.

I remind the House that the UN declared 1999 the International Year of the Older Persons. The purpose of the IYOP is to improve understanding, harmony and mutual support between the generations and to better recognize the contribution of the elderly to their communities.

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I have often stood up in this House to defend the rights of the elderly. The federal government has tried to hold the seniors hostage and make them pay for the deficit.

The federal government did not succeed because our senior citizens are no fools and made their opposition known. Life expectancy for older Canadians has increased quite a bit since the beginning of the century. By 1996, life expectancy for a 65 year old Canadian had increased by around 18.4 years, six months more than it was in 1991, three years more than in 1971 and five years more than in 1921.

Heart disease and cancer are the main causes of death among senior citizens in Canada. In 1996, 30% of all deaths among people aged 65 or over were from heart disease and 26% from cancer. Hon. members will understand that medical research is very important to an ageing population.

Take, for example, Alzheimer's disease, which is affecting increasing numbers of seniors. In 1999, 78% of all people aged 65 or over with this disease lived in an institution. In that same year, people with Alzheimer's or some other type of dementia made up 35% of the total population in such institutions.

In general, though, seniors are involved in numerous activities and take advantage of the freedom offered by their retirement years. Many seniors are physically active. They travel far more than in the past, as well, making an average of 3.2 trips within Canada and 1 out of the country in 1994-95.

Overall, Canada's seniors are in fairly good health. Most live at home with family members, consider themselves in good health, and keep relatively active.

The Bloc Quebecois is not, therefore, opposed to Bill C-13, but it is opposed to the potential for direct interference in an area of provincial jurisdiction, population health, without any consultation whatsoever with the provinces.

The federal government is creating parallel structures rather than supporting actions undertaken by the provinces. It is vital to point out that, with the creation of the research institutes, the Canadian government is clearly giving itself the power to impose its priorities and convictions in the health field.

The federal government must respect the specific characteristics of researchers in the various regions of Quebec, and not go ahead with the designation of any health research institute in Quebec without the agreement of the Quebec government.

It is, therefore, essential to ensure that, if there is interference with provincial jurisdiction with the Canadian institutes for health research, Quebec will play an integral part in the process of selecting and administering the institutes.

In closing, we are in favour of Bill C-13 in principle, but respect of Quebec's jurisdiction must be a priority.

• (1320)

[English]

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak today to Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian institutes of health research and to repeal the Medical Research Council Act. I have to first say that I always have a concern when I look at these new government bodies that they are actually being set up as creations of the government for the purpose of providing jobs for the Prime Minister's friends.

I am well aware a consultation process is built into the bill that will supposedly base grants upon the information from leading experts in every conceivable field. I certainly hope that is effective. Otherwise the bureaucrats appointed there by the Prime Minister, presumably for life, will have control of the system and the process will break down just the way it has in the previous organization.

In having high hopes for some rational decisions by the peers reviewing the various applications, I hope that they provide some priority to prostate cancer research as they begin to look at the grants that come across their desks.

Many members of the House will know my interest in prostate cancer research and my work with prostate cancer information groups across the country. Unfortunately it is one of those diseases that has been overlooked for a long time. Men, for one reason or another, did not talk about it or did not even know that it was a common disease that they should be talking about.

It has been left now in a situation where although it is as common as breast cancer is in women it receives one-eighth to one-tenth of the research funding that breast cancer receives. That is certainly not to detract from the money that breast cancer gets. Nobody would want to deprive that worthy cause of getting research funds, but it is certainly time to bring prostate cancer up so that it is more in line with what is being spent on a similar type of hormonally driven disease.

In addition, prostate cancer receives only about one-fiftieth of the research funding that AIDS research receives. Yet it kills about 10 times as many men. It is completely out of proportion and needs to be rectified fairly quickly. If there is one thing I would hope this new body does, it would be to correct the imbalance out there right now.

One of the other aims of the legislation according to the drafters is to take care of the brain drain of researchers and qualified people down to the United States, which of course the Prime Minister claimed does not exist but which this act recognizes.

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I would argue that most of that is actually caused by the tax regime in this country. If we talk with anybody who has moved to the United States, it is very clear that the salaries and the amount of disposable income after taxation are so much more attractive in the United States that it is no wonder people move down there.

Certainly it would be nice if some of the research funding draws some of those people back, but I think we have to address the taxation issue as well. If we do not address the taxation issue, I am afraid we will end up giving grants every year to people who are not actually very competent. We will be left with the people in Canada who do not want to move to the United States or are incapable of getting a position in the United States. I would not want that to happen.

Certainly passage of the bill and implementing its provisions would have to be done in conjunction with some sort of meaningful income tax reduction to help researchers and scientists who need to be spending their time in Canada.

As I mentioned, for prostate cancer certainly Vancouver is a centre of excellence in this research. There are many skilled people there who are well recognized. In fact, the Vancouver Island Prostate Cancer Network recently produced two videotapes on early stage prostate cancer and late stage prostate cancer which won an international award in New York about two months ago. Those educational tapes are recognized world wide as being some of the best in the whole world.

I have some copies of those tapes in my office. I will shortly be notifying all members that those are available for loan from my office, because I would truly like them to become well aware of the effects of the disease.

When I look at the bill I see that there is peer review of the applications for grants. I certainly feel it is a shame that we did not have some peer review of the Nisga'a agreement when it was introduced. If the government had bothered to do a little peer review it would have found, for example, the Gitkanyow calling it an act of aggression. Lawyers all over the country are rubbing their hands together in glee at the thought of all the cases that will be brought before the courts as a result of that agreement.

• (1325)

A Queen's counsel, Mr. Bill Irving, in Vancouver on Friday said it would not matter to him whether he was on the side that supported the Nisga'a bill or on the side that was against it. He could live for the rest of his days off the court cases that will be started on constitutional grounds against the bill. The only certainty that the Nisga'a bill will bring is certainty of income for the lawyers.

What worries me about Bill C-13 is that it will slip gradually into certainty of income for researchers who produce maybe questionable or indifferent results. I can think of an example in the Social

Sciences and Humanities Research Council. Professor Tremblay has managed to extract about \$18,000 a year since 1983 out of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council to send questionnaires to members of parliament every year.

My rough calculation is that she has managed to extract about \$270,000 out of taxpayers for this exercise. She sends out the questionnaires every year to members of parliament asking us to suggest ways that there might be more women represented in the House of Commons. They are questions that completely ignore the fact that it is voters who elect members of parliament and not members of parliament who elect members of parliament.

After doing this since 1983 it seems that nothing useful has come out the other end of that exercise at all. I questioned Professor Tremblay about the issue and pointed out that having a proportional system of electing people to the House would do a lot more to help women get in here than just about anything else. She was unwilling to admit that would be the case. She would rather stick to her surveys and collect her \$18,000 a year.

That is what worries me about this bill which sets up another quasi-government body that has a bunch of the same people, these peers, every year reviewing applications that are identical to the year before. If we look at Professor Tremblay's applications they are identical every year. They have the same wording. They are renewed every year, over and over again. It becomes like an old boys club or an old girls club where they just keep giving the same grants to the same people over and over.

I certainly have professors in my riding who have never had grants from places like the Medical Research Council or the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. They approach with stories about some of their colleagues who use these grants to travel all over the world. They treat them like vacations.

There was a very well publicized one recently from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council where a researcher received a grant of \$60,000 for three years to go to Vanuatu, a small island in the Pacific which is a tax haven. I think there was an unfortunate earthquake there over the weekend. The researcher was going to this tax haven for three years to study tax havens and how people lived, the housing in Vanuatu. What a complete waste of Canadian taxpayer money for that sort of thing to be going on.

These examples are just pouring out the doors of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council one after another. I saw another one from someone in my riding who managed to extract a grant to study English poetry from the 1400s, or something along those lines. I really have to ask what value my constituents got from that extraction of their tax dollars to support somebody's hobby.

When I look at Bill C-13 and the provisions in it for peer review and increasing budgets year after year, I worry about where that

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money will go. One can bet that I will be watching very carefully to see where the money goes.

There is another example of foolish giveaways under these programs. The millennium fund has been widely touted by the government. They are celebrating the millennium. It is even in the wrong year. The new millennium does not start until January 1, 2001. Even the Canadian Mint, which is selling 1999 quarters and claiming they are millennium quarters, admits on its own website under frequently asked questions that it is not even the last year of the millennium. They are actually selling them falsely, but it says in the frequently asked questions that we are not to worry, that it will be issuing year 2000 quarters which will be the correct quarters for the last year of the millennium.

We waste tremendous amounts of money doing foolish things. The millennium fund gave \$278,000 to a group in my riding to produce a program called "Visions of the North Shore". What a waste. I certainly hope that medical research institutes do not turn out like that.

• (1330)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Madam Speaker, just like all my other colleagues, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, to repeal the Medical Research Council Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

I have been listening with a good deal of interest to the speech by my colleague for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, a very articulate man who dealt with the principles of this bill, a bill he and the Bloc Québécois think must be supported, despite its lack of emphasis on consultative federalism.

The government is making decisions all by itself, and is imposing its own position. Research will be oriented in this sector or that, without much consultation with the provinces, if any. This is cause for concern for Bloc members and also for members from other provinces.

I believe that scientific research must not be determined by chance discoveries or the whims of researchers or visionaries, but that it should be channelled. In the case at hand, this does not seem to be what is going on, with the leeway the government is giving to the so-called transitional council. I am convinced that my colleagues, the hon. member for Frontenac and the hon. member for Laval, agree that indications should be given as to the direction in which research ought to go.

Here is an example. A few years ago, in 1996, Bill C-46 was introduced and read a first time on June 14, 1996. This bill was entitled an act respecting human reproductive technologies and commercial transactions relating to human reproduction.

This bill attracted a lot of interest from the population and members of parliament who saw in it an opportunity for the government to set its priorities and orientations in the area of medical research on human reproduction, and the commercial transactions that could arise from it.

As I said, the Bloc Québécois supports the bill before us today, despite the fact it lacks clear direction and does not provide for consultations with the provinces and various stakeholders. It will result in some \$65 million more being invested in research. I hope Quebec will get its share of research dollars and that it will not be as it has always been when it comes to research and development: 50% goes to Ontario and the rest is to be shared between the other provinces and territories.

I hope that—contrary to its habit—the federal government will show some fairness and will give a little bit more, or at the very least their fair share to Quebec and other provinces where research is being carried out.

This bill is not about building offices. As the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve said, there is no concrete, no wood, no glass structure. It is about building a network, which we are very happy about.

For instance, researchers at the University of Alberta, who are working on a particular gene, and who might be isolated—in terms of their research—will be connected through a network to a researcher in Chicoutimi, Montreal, Halifax or elsewhere. These people will finally be able to speak to one another thanks to this famous network which is being planned. This is good.

• (1335)

However, specific indications have to be given to the transitional committee made up of 34 members, including several prominent persons in the medical as well as the psychological sectors.

I am happy to see that this bill is about research. It is not limited strictly to pharmaceutical or medical research. Many sectors of social activity are included in the word "research". Reference is made of course to fundamental biomedical research and to molecular isolation for marketing purposes. Reference is made also to clinical research, which of course has to follow the primary stage of molecule identification and find an application likely to be of benefit to the human being.

As for research respecting health services, my colleague, the member for Argenteuil, referred earlier to seniors. Perhaps I should talk now—and I would not want to upset him—about the very elderly, since there is talk of an increasing life expectancy, set at close to 83 years for women and a little less for men. Life expectancy has considerably increased since the 1950s.

Over half a century, average life expectancy for men has gone from 50 years or so to 76 or 77 years. Within 19 years, from 1980 to 1999, life expectancy increased by about three or four years for men, and by five years for women. All that is due to scientific and medical research.

There is a fourth aspect. I mentioned the first three, which are basic biomedical research, clinical research and research respecting health services. The fourth one is health of populations and the societal and cultural dimensions of health. That could include psychology, psychiatry and many other things. However, the main thrust of the research must, in all cases, be human health, increased longevity or assistance for reproduction.

On that subject, I must say that I am extremely disturbed by the fact that Bill C-47, on reproductive technologies and the commercial operations surrounding them, of which I spoke earlier, died on the Order Paper last summer. That bill had been rewritten by the committee that studied it before sending it back to the House. Of course, it was not perfect, but at least it gave direction. Let me give one example of medical research leading to weird situations.

I know that right now, in Montreal, there is a doctor barred from practicing in England because of the nature of his research. His speciality involves taking ova from female foetuses, which are really unborn children. It seems that a female foetus, no matter how small it is, possesses the complete feminine genitalia. The ova taken are cultivated in laboratory and once developed, they are used for insemination. That means that a child could be born from a woman who was never born.

England banned this technique for ethical reasons. The doctor in question came over here. He now works at McGill University and does research in this area. This type of research is dangerous. For example, we can say the discovery of the atomic bomb was a great discovery but, knowing its very tragic impact on humanity, can we really say it was a good discovery?

• (1340)

We must not go down that road; it often leads nowhere and augurs ill for humans and human dignity.

That is why I am sorry this bill does not set any parameters or give any direction for research or the type of research we would like to see done in Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have the privilege to enter into the debate in the House on a very important issue to Canadians.

Government Orders

I know there are a lot of people who will be directly and indirectly affected by the outcome of the legislation. First of all, there will be the people who are involved directly in research in the country. I hope the passage and perhaps some proposed amendments to the bill will have a positive impact on the ability of Canadians to participate in worthwhile, meaningful, efficient research in the area of health care in Canada.

Hopefully there will be thousands and maybe millions of not only Canadians but people around the world whose lives will be made more enjoyable and, in some cases, whose lives will be made possible because of the research that will come out of this particular initiative.

In case the people listening, either in the House, in the galleries or on television, are not aware, we are debating Bill C-13 today. It is one of those cases where the government is saying that it will end one organization and put in place a replacement organization. We are talking about the old Medical Research Council, which will be phased out with Bill C-13 and replaced with this new organization called the Canadian institutes of health research. It is a very noble sounding title with very noble objectives by this particular group.

I am one who firmly supports the funding and promotion of research in the medical field. I am not at all convinced that it should all be done by direct research grants funded by governments. I said that I support funding, but I am not sure that having a government bureaucracy involved is the most efficient. As a matter of fact, even before I get into some of the details of my discussion, I will put forward an idea for people to think about.

Perhaps what we ought to do is shift governments out of this more and more and allow private companies and individuals to receive a greater benefit in the tax regime so that they can directly support those particular areas which they support.

I know of many individuals who, because of involvements in their families with certain diseases, are very prone to supporting funding for research in order to find a cure, help to ease the problems of living with a particular disease and perhaps even in the preventative end. They would be very willing to support a research project in this area or that area. Many of our large corporations in Canada would support it.

I think that if we had that we would have a better allocation into areas of need than we do now when government bureaucracies and politicians, being subject to the vocal lobby groups, tend to respond to that. I think we are all aware of the fact that there are a number of groups that get a lot more money than the statistics would show are warranted simply because they make the most noise on Parliament Hill. I am thinking of a couple of specific organizations in different areas of research.

Government Orders

I had the privilege this morning of meeting with Barbara Nathan-Marcus. She is a volunteer. She is a diabetic who has learned to cope with the disease.

• (1345)

I have had several friends in my lifetime who have coped with diabetes. It is a very difficult disease. I do not know if members are aware of this fact, but there are some really interesting statistics in the brochure that I got from them which surprised even me. One statistic shows that the economic burden of diabetes alone is estimated to cost the Canadian economy in excess of \$3 billion a year. I was also amazed to find out that there are approximately 2.25 million Canadians affected by this disease and many of them are not even aware of it. We have approximately 60,000 new cases every year. It is the leading cause of blindness. In fact, Barbara, with whom I met this morning, is very, shall I say, sight challenged. I cannot tell by looking at her. She copes very well but has great difficulty seeing.

One of my friends at university, a wonderful man, was stricken with diabetes. He was a very active, a helpful and kind person, who unfortunately lost his eyesight due to his diabetes. He died at a very young age as a direct result of it.

Do I wish that we had more funding and more research for diabetes so that my friend and millions of others like him could have their symptoms relieved and we could continue searching for a cure and for a way of preventing the disease? Absolutely. If there is anything Canadians can address themselves to as a country it is in this area.

I think of the area of cancer. I do not think there is a family or a person who has not had a close friend or a member of the family affected by this disease. We have seen it in our family. Very frankly, we need to do all that we can to find the cause, to search for a cure and to find a way to prevent the disease.

I think of Alzheimer's disease. My goodness, think of the people we know today who are totally able to communicate, to engage in discussions and debates and who several years down the road find their brain suddenly ceases to function and are stricken with a disease that causes lack of recognition of even their closest family members. How dreadful. How great it would be if, as a result of this bill, we could increase the research into Alzheimer's and look for and find something that would prevent the disease from occurring or to arrest it when it comes.

I think of Parkinson's disease. I have several friends who have Parkinson's. One of my friends who had this disease passed away not long ago. I have another friend younger than I, who I have mentioned in the House before, who had an early onslaught of

Parkinson's disease. Today he sits in his wheelchair day after day. When people ask me if I would want to see a cure, a way of preventing Parkinson's, a way of curing it, I say "absolutely". We in this country need to do all that we can.

I think of strokes and heart disease. One of my closest friends, younger than I, had a serious stroke. He will probably have to live with the marginal ability to get around and communicate for the rest of his life. Yes, let us find a cure. Let us find a prevention.

• (1350)

I think of multiple sclerosis, MS as it is called. I also have a number of friends with MS. I think what I am saying is true for all of us. Every one of us can think of someone in our families or a close friend who has been stricken with these different diseases.

I am not saying that Bill C-13 and the new organization of health care research is the final answer and will solve all of these problems, but I am encouraging all of us to work together to provide research so that these diseases can be tackled and solutions, cures and preventative measures can be identified, found and implemented. It would do Canada a great service and all Canadians would benefit. It would give us a mark in the world as being on the leading edge of needed health care research.

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to stand in the House to speak on Bill C-13, an act to establish Canadian Institutes of Health Research and an act to repeal the Medical Research Council Act.

It was very interesting to hear my colleague from Elk Island talk about his friends who were afflicted with various diseases, in particular diabetes and how widespread that can be. Not only does it affect the way one's body metabolizes sugar but, as my colleague pointed out, it also affects one's eyesight, circulation and even the heart.

Many of the people I have known who have had severe diabetes have had their feet or another limb amputated just simply because their circulation was so bad. Because they were not able to maintain the circulation to keep those limbs alive, the limbs had to be amputated to save the person's life. That is a very traumatic thing.

We need to think back to the discoverers of insulin, the people who isolated and reproduced insulin and got it to the place where we could replace the insulin which was not produced in our bodies in order to break down the sugar.

Research in Canada has always been in the forefront. There are very significant contributions that have been made by Canadians, contributions that we should be extremely proud of.

In the medical area, I have already mentioned Doctors Banting and Best for their isolation and production of insulin. There are other areas that we should also be very proud of, and that is the production of the Avro Arrow for instance when we were able to develop a supersonic aircraft that was significantly ahead of its time and the sort of thing that would have been the envy of all the world. Even today, technology is just catching up to where the Avro Arrow was.

Whenever I think about research, whether it is medical, technological or in other areas, I think about the problem that we have in the country of maintaining our most inquisitive and best trained minds. There has been a great deal written and said with regard to the brain drain. It was not very long ago that the Prime Minister said that there was no problem, that there was no brain drain. Perhaps he might think that but there are all kinds of evidence to the contrary. We do have a problem with young people taking their skills south of the border in particular.

Some of the reasons they would do that is because there is more opportunity for them there. There is a less oppressive tax regime. They can keep more of the money they earn. They are also working for one hundred cent dollars. I know that is a rather novel approach but a dollar in the United States is still worth one hundred cents.

• (1355)

As a result of the tax regime in this country, we find that our tax freedom day comes around July 1. I do not know if it is particularly significant that we celebrate Canada Day on July 1. Maybe we could get a little funding for that so we could celebrate tax freedom and Canada Day all in one. Maybe we could save some costs on the celebration. Ideally, I would like to see the tax freedom day moved backwards to June or May or, heaven forbid, maybe even April.

One of the main reasons we have such tremendous difficulty keeping active, young, inquisitive minds here is that they are having a very difficult time making a go of it. I will give an example of what I am talking about.

Adam is the father of three boys. His wife chooses to stay home and look after the children because they think they can do a better job of raising their children than the state. Adam earns almost \$53,000 a year, which amounts to about \$4,412 a month. That is not a bad salary, but we must consider that five people have to live on that after \$1,130 is taken out for income tax, \$110 per month for unemployment insurance and \$140 per month for the Canada pension plan. After that he has to pay his mortgage, his insurance and all of those other things.

The reason I particularly mentioned the Canada pension plan is because Adam has said that he has given up on the idea of ever

having the Canada pension plan. Part of the reason, he says, is that so many of our—

The Speaker: The hon. member still has four minutes remaining, but in view of the fact that we will be welcoming new colleagues today I thought we might begin our Statements by Members a little sooner.

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STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

NATURAL DISASTERS

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one month ago, on October 29, a cyclone believed to be the century's worst to hit India killed tens of thousands, left millions homeless and virtually wiped away the eastern Indian state of Orissa's infrastructure.

The Canadian Red Cross, Care Canada and the Canadian Lutheran World Relief Fund are leading the efforts in assisting CIDA in bringing aid to the victims of this disaster. I am happy to provide Canadians with the telephone number of the Red Cross cyclone relief effort that have been organized in Canada. Donations can be made by phoning 1-800-418-1111.

I encourage all Canadians to once again show their solidarity, generosity and to contribute to the relief efforts for the victims of this tragic natural disaster.

* * *

NISGA'A TREATY

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, British Columbians have been demeaned again.

The Prime Minister said here in this place "There is a legislative assembly in British Columbia which voted on the Nisga'a agreement expressing the view of the people of British Columbia. This parliament will vote on this issue. This is the way we do democracy in Canada".

What arrogance. What contempt for British Columbians. What utter disregard for the democratic process.

This government killed second reading debate on Nisga'a, shutting out dozens of speakers. It then sent a committee out to B.C. on a wild goose chase to see, hear and do nothing for British Columbians.

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Democracy? British Columbians are actively ignored by this government. Strong opposition to the Nisga'a agreement by the people of B.C. has done nothing to make this government care about them. What should British Columbians do to express their discontent with the Nisga'a agreement, and also about trade policies, immigration policies and fisheries policies that are not in the interest of British Columbia?

These are questions that are being seriously considered by British Columbians.

* * *

ROYAL CANADIAN ARMY CADETS

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday marked the 120th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Army Cadets.

Over the last 120 years, the Canadian cadet movement has helped youth understand the values of active citizenship, leadership and physical fitness.

• (1400)

Through the Royal Canadian Army Cadets we are investing in Canadian youth and meeting our mandate to develop leaders for the next century.

By contributing to their communities and by acting as ambassadors for their country in the eyes of the world, cadets live up to the expectations of Canadians.

Ex-army cadets have contributed greatly to our war efforts. By 1918 there were 64,000 cadets enrolled. Of these, upward of 40,000 ex-army cadets voluntarily enlisted to serve in World War I.

It is to be noted also that of the 64 Victoria Crosses awarded during World War I, 25 were won by ex-cadets.

On the 120th anniversary I extend my thanks to the young men and women and the numerous volunteers who continue to make the Royal Canadian Army Cadets a success.

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Susan Whelan (Essex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on December 6, Canada's national day of remembrance and action on violence against women will mark the 10th anniversary of the tragic death of 14 young women at the École Polytechnique in Montreal. At this time Canadians will not only remember the loss of these women, but will also remember women who are killed as a result of deliberate acts of violence and those women who live with violence every day.

Violence against women touches every Canadian community. Statistics Canada research reveals that at least 51% of all Canadian women have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16 and that sexual assault accounts for almost one in ten violent crimes.

Ending violence against women requires the efforts of all members of society. Together we can eliminate systemic violence against women and children in the home, workplace and the streets.

* * *

[Translation]

LAVAL UNIVERSITY ROUGE ET OR

Mr. Claude Drouin (Beauce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I pay tribute today to the Laval University football team, the Rouge et Or, winners of the Vanier Cup, the symbol of dominance in Canadian intercollegiate football.

Remarkably, this victory was won by a team that has been in existence a mere four years over a traditional gridiron power, St. Mary's University of Halifax. I would like to commend the other team as well for their performance in the finals.

There was heavy fan support for the entire team led by star quarterback Mathieu Bertrand and receiver Stéphane Lefebvre, who was named most valued player, as well as ball carrier Jessé Gagné from Beauce.

I am sure that all hon. members will join with me in congratulating head coach Jacques Chapdelaine and all of the team on this great victory.

* * *

[English]

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. Garry Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last Monday 27 farmers were found guilty of illegally exporting grain by a Regina court. These farmers received thousands of dollars in fines.

In September an aboriginal farmer from Lethbridge, Alberta was found guilty of illegally exporting grain, but instead of receiving fines he was given an absolute discharge because the justice presiding over the case said that he only did it to challenge the Canadian Wheat Board's marketing authority.

We have two different standards in this country. This group of 27 farmers was also challenging the Canadian Wheat Board's marketing authority, yet it received huge fines. Even Provincial Court Judge Bruce Henning said the farmers were only testing the law. He said "I accept that they were sincere in believing they were not breaking the law because they believed it was invalid".

The courts are playing favourites. In the meantime our government does nothing. It is time the government ended this unfair treatment of the people who feed this country.

When will the government end its autocratic rule over western Canadian farmers?

* * *

ONTARIO LEGISLATIVE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk—Brant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I welcome eight members of the Ontario Legislative Internship Program to Ottawa, a program in which I participated during the early 1980s. Similar in nature to our own program, the Ontario interns, who are recruited in a competitive process, provide valuable assistance to members of the Ontario legislature.

An integral part of their program is the unique opportunity to visit Canada's federal and provincial legislatures to strengthen their understanding of the parliamentary system at both levels of government.

During their stay in Ottawa they will attend several conferences on the parliamentary system and meet with many members of different political parties.

I encourage all members of parliament to join with me in recognizing the importance of such internship programs in shaping our political future and our community leaders. Please, if members see them wandering the halls, stop and say hello.

* * *

[Translation]

LAVAL UNIVERSITY ROUGE ET OR

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last Saturday, the Laval University Rouge et Or clinched the Canadian university championship with a hard-won victory, 14-10, over the St. Mary's Huskies of Halifax.

• (1405)

This is the first time a team from a francophone university has won the prestigious Vanier Cup, and the Rouge et Or did so with a valiant team effort right until the final seconds of a tough game.

This past Saturday, there were many fans watching who had dreamed of this very thing back in the days they attended that same university and watched their team's rapid ascent in the league.

The Bloc Québécois wishes to congratulate all of the players, coaches and others who contributed to this great victory.

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CONSTITUTIONAL DEBATE

Mr. André Harvey (Chicoutimi, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's provocative approach to Quebec serves simply to muddle English Canada and to slow the advances in the polls of the Right Honourable Joe Clark.

Yes, people are tired of the constitutional debate, but they certainly need a break from the provocation carried on for the past 30 years by the leaders of the Liberal Party of Canada, who must see that their strategy has increased the sovereigntist vote from 20% to 49% in 20 years. Does the Prime Minister of Canada want to carry on into the next century?

Fed up with inflated taxes, the sabotage of our health care system, the departure of our young people and the increase in poverty, Canadians want a practical political agenda from their Prime Minister.

Enough of the constitutional bear trap for our English-speaking fellow citizens.

* * *

[English]

TEAM LIBERAL

Mr. Hec Clouthier (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as player-coach of team Liberal, I want to say how proud I am of our hockey players.

Last Thursday night we played in the second annual parliamentary hockey championships. I must point out that the only reason the opposition finally found winning conditions was because of outside help. Just as its members rely on the media to provide ammunition for question period, they relied on two reporters who made a big impact, although little Jimmy Munson needed a booster seat to see the game. Their goalie, also not an MP, was the real ringer. He was more acrobatic than Patrick Roy.

Team Liberal, made up entirely of MPs, showcased two impressive rookies. The member for Pickering-Ajax—Uxbridge shared goal tending duties with the Secretary of State for Amateur Sport, and the member for Vaughan—King—Aurora scored a goal.

It was a great game for a great cause, the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. I extend special thanks to the Corel Centre for donating the ice.

Mr. Speaker, the puck stops here. In the millennium rubber match we will fill the opposition net with these pucks.

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

S. O. 31

FISHERIES

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the lobster fishery opens today in Nova Scotia. A cloud hangs over the usual excitement and expectations of opening day, a cloud largely created by the Liberal government's fishery policy, a policy which seeks to displace currently licensed fishermen with aboriginal fishermen.

It appears that the fisheries minister has proposed a plan to his cabinet colleagues which would allow for the purchase of three-quarters of the commercial licences in some areas, at a cost of \$300 million to \$500 million. The impact on coastal communities is something this minister seems to have forgotten with his hare-brained scheme.

Taking three-quarters of the licences will cut the heart out of these vibrant communities. Without the income from lobster, the need for many businesses would vanish. The communities would lose their reason for being. Welfare would replace wages. Out migration would be the order of the day. Killing one community in a misguided effort to inject life into another is not good policy.

* * *

THE GREY CUP

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with regret that I report that Canadians yesterday witnessed the last Grey Cup game of the 20th century, and the Hamilton Tiger Cats were the champions, having soundly defeated the Calgary Stampeders 32 to 21 in Vancouver.

Following the game, 12,000 emotional fans crowded on to King Street in downtown Hamilton to celebrate. To their credit, there was not a single problem. Police laid no charges.

Hamiltonians have much to be proud of. In fact, Canadians have much to be proud of. The Grey Cup and the Canadian football league help to define us as a nation. They are a big part of who we are.

It is the eighth Grey Cup victory for Hamilton since the old Ticats and Wildcats merged just before the start of the 1950 season.

On behalf of my constituents and Ticat fans nationwide, I say "Oskee Wee Wee, Oskee Wah Wah, Holy Macinaw, the Ticats ate them raw".

* * *

• (1410)

TRADE

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the federal government continues the sellout of Canada in the millennium round of the WTO in Seattle, thousands of Canadians are

hitting the streets to say no: no to a market ideology and trade liberalization that would give more power to corporate elites; no to the commodification of health care, education, culture and human services; no to the multinational corporations which want to trade, exploit and profit from public services; and no to the Liberal government's secretive agenda that undermines democracy.

The auto pact, farm income support, magazines and the fisheries have already fallen at the WTO altar. Canadians are not going to stand by and see more of their precious resources—now, for the first time, education and health care—thrown to the WTO to control.

The NDP opposed the creation of the WTO in 1994 because, like the NAFTA, it elevates the rights of multinational corporations at the expense of public needs. We say to the Liberal government today "Stand for Canadians, stand for our public services and defeat the WTO agenda".

* * *

[Translation]

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last weekend, at the biennial Liberal Party of Canada convention in Hull, members representing all regions of Quebec rejected all the proposals calling on the federal government to take a hard line against Quebec.

Despite these calls for moderation from his own membership, the Prime Minister continued his barely veiled threats against democracy in Quebec. The province has never given in to this sort of blackmail. Once again, Quebec will not bow to the undemocratic threats of the federal government.

Rather than pushing ahead plan B every way they can, the Prime Minister and his professor minister should come up with a true constitutional vision. In fact, according to a survey commissioned by the Privy Council, 52% of respondents consider that, since the 1995 referendum, the Government of Canada has shown no clear indication of goodwill.

* * *

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the last convention of the Quebec wing of the Liberal Party of Canada, the Prime Minister offered a truce to the Premier of Quebec, proposing to stop talking about a referendum if the premier was prepared to give up his plans to separate Quebec from the rest of Canada.

The Prime Minister truly reached out to the sovereignists.

Oral Questions

We are asking the sovereignists to take this proposal seriously, in the interest of Quebec's stability and political future, and to ensure a better economic and social future to all Quebecers.

The reason for this invitation is simple: Quebecers no longer want to hear about referendums and independence.

* * *

[English]

CULTURALISM

Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the past several months Canada's heritage minister has been building an international alliance to strengthen national cultures.

Under her leadership, Canada was entrusted with housing a permanent liaison office for the contact group of the International Network on Cultural Policy.

Canada will also host the first world summit on arts and cultural institutions in December 2000.

Recently the minister presided over a round table on culture and creativity in the face of globalization. These efforts are increasing international awareness of the need to protect and enhance Canadian and other world cultures.

I urge the minister to keep this momentum going and to continue to defend cultural diversity in this era of globalization.

* * *

[Translation]

LAVAL UNIVERSITY ROUGE ET OR

Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC): Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, November 27, Laval University's football team, the Rouge et Or, won the Canadian university football championship, the Vanier Cup.

Laval has had a football team for just four years. This success shows the tenacity and determination displayed by the team to achieve that level of excellence.

It takes an extraordinary staff to build such a team. Coach Jacques Chapdelaine gained his experience with the famous Bishop University Gaiters.

Mr. Chapdelaine is a native of the Eastern Townships and a former resident of Compton—Stanstead.

[English]

Compton—Stanstead is also home to the bag balm, a product recently made famous by the soft and satiny Shania Twain.

[Translation]

Congratulations to Jacques and his team, the Rouge et Or.

[English]

Congratulations to Eric Smith and his bag balm.

The Speaker: Colleagues, today is a special day for us in the House, as we will welcome four new colleagues into our midst.

* * *

● (1415)

NEW MEMBERS

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer certificates of the election and return of the following members:

Mr. Irwin Cotler, for the electoral district of Mount Royal

Mr. Marcel Proulx, for the electoral district of Hull—Aylmer

Mrs. Judy Sgro, for the electoral district of York West

Mr. Dennis Gruending, for the electoral district of Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar

* * *

NEW MEMBERS INTRODUCED

Irwin Cotler, member for the electoral district of Mount Royal, introduced by the Right Hon. Jean Chrétien and the Hon. Alfonso Gagliano.

Marcel Proulx, member for the electoral district of Hull—Aylmer, introduced by the Right Hon. Jean Chrétien and the Hon. Alfonso Gagliano.

Judy Sgro, member for the electoral district of York West, introduced by the Right Hon. Jean Chrétien and the Hon. Alfonso Gagliano.

Dennis Gruending, member for the electoral district of Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, introduced by Ms. Alexa McDonough and Mr. Dick Proctor.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

● (1420)

[English]

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add my congratulations to each of the new members and welcome them to the daily circus.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Preston Manning: Mr. Speaker, my friends have lost their sense of humour. The official opposition supports clarity on the

Oral Questions

question of the majority required on Quebec's separation. We have said this for five years and are glad that the Prime Minister has finally seen the light. However the Prime Minister gives clarity a bad name. He is not clear on what constitutes a majority. He is not even clear on what constitutes a clear question.

• (1425)

Our question would be: Should Quebec separate from Canada and become an independent country with no special legal ties with Canada? Yes or no. Does the Prime Minister agree with that formulation of the question?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome the four new members as well. I do not think it is a circus here. I think it is the most serious place in the land.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien: I can understand the Leader of the Opposition feeling like that when he has done such a flip-flop over three days. That is part of the circus he is developing himself.

The question will not be asked by this parliament. The question has to be asked by the legislative assembly in Quebec, but if they want negotiation after the vote the question has to respect all the conditions of the judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada.

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister did not answer the question and he is equally unclear on his view of democracy. He says he wants a clear majority but he is unable to tell Canadians precisely what that is.

The federal government accepted 50% plus one in two previous Quebec referenda and 50% plus one was the rule in the Charlottetown referendum. Why will the Prime Minister not clarify his definition of what constitutes a clear majority?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition had been listening before the last referendum, I said at least a dozen times in the House that 50% plus one was not a sufficient majority to break up the nation. I know that the leader of the Reform Party said that was enough. For me, it is not enough.

I would just like to say today, as I said on Sunday, that I hope I will not have to proceed. I made a very serious offer to Mr. Bouchard, and if he tells the nation that there will be no referendum I will not proceed at all.

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has said, he does not like 50% plus one but you will notice he did not say what he does like. That is not clarifying the situation. That is muddying it up.

We are democrats and we believe that Canadians are democrats too. We believe that a democratic majority on a clear question

would have to be acknowledged and accepted in good faith by the federal government as grounds for negotiation however undesirable that outcome might be.

The Prime Minister says he wants to bring clarity to this situation. In the interest of clarity would the Prime Minister tell the House in what possible way he could enforce any other outcome?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court of Canada was very clear when it used the word clarity 25 times in its judgment. In the summary of its judgment it used it another 10 times, all the time referring to the nature of the question and to the majority.

I said that all the judgments would be respected. We will take the means to make sure that they will be respected. Otherwise there will be no negotiation.

I do not want to proceed with that. As I said very seriously on Sunday, the people do not want to hear about it. They want us to deal with other problems, and I am delighted Mr. Bouchard is taking the time to reflect on the very serious offer I made to him on Sunday morning.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister did not think it should be discussed right now, why in the world did he bring it up? That would be a question he should think about.

The finance minister is responsible for the federal government's fiscal policy. He knows that a yes vote in Quebec would send the economy into a period of serious uncertainty, but the rejection of the will of a democratic majority on a clear question would create even more chaos.

• (1430)

Has the finance minister developed a contingency plan to support the Prime Minister's rejection of the will of a democratic majority of Quebecers?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hope that the hon. member will read the judgment of the supreme court. The supreme court said that a simple majority was not enough, that the will of the people had to be very clearly expressed, that there had to be a large consensus to bring about such a very important statement.

As I said in my speech on Sunday, the leader of the Conservative Party felt that 66% was not enough for him to hold on to his leadership. Mr. Bouchard felt that 76% was needed for him to reflect before deciding to stay. In 1980 when the no side had 60% of the votes, it was not enough for the Parti Québécois to respect democracy.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, here we go waxing on about clarity, but if that was clarity, it is

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pathetic. This is getting thicker and foggier every time the Prime Minister opens his mouth.

Whether the finance minister likes it or not, the rejection of the democratic will of Quebecers would create even more confusion and uncertainty, especially in the international financial markets.

Does the Prime Minister believe that the international markets would support the Prime Minister's rejection of the democratic outcome of a democratic question? Yes or no?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is not undemocratic at all. Most of the big countries in the world do not even permit a vote on separation. Let us look at other markets. In the United States they do not have permission to separate a state from the United States. In France the constitution is very clear that no part of France can quit France. We are more democratic in Canada than most of the countries of the world.

It is why I say that the Minister of Finance does not have to work on the plan. The Minister of Finance, like this Prime Minister and this party will do everything to make sure that we succeed in keeping all of the provinces in a united Canada.

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[Translation]

REFERENDUMS

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on the weekend, the Prime Minister told the Liberal rank and file that he was tired of talking about the constitution and that, if we were to quit talking about it, the problem would go away.

Are we to understand that the Prime Minister is now resorting to magical thinking and that all we have to do is stop talking about the constitution for a solution to be found?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I said was that people were tired of hearing about the referendum and winning conditions. People know that, every week, the Parti Québécois talks about laying the groundwork for winning conditions. Every month, Mr. Bouchard says he is going to hold a referendum, when 72% of Quebecers do not want one.

If they want to talk about democracy, let them respect the will of 72% of Quebecers, who do not want a referendum. Then everyone will be happy and we can deal with real problems.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, people also know that the Prime Minister is the one responsible for the unilateral patriation of the constitution, the failure of the Meech Lake agreement, a social union agreement that does not have Quebec's signature, and unprecedented interference

in Quebec's jurisdiction. The Prime Minister's name is associated with all these attacks on Quebec.

After 35 years in political life, is the Prime Minister not afraid of going down in history as the man who painted us into a corner?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in December 1995, for the first time in the history of parliament, we introduced a resolution to recognize Quebec as a distinct society, and the Bloc Québécois voted against.

• (1435)

In this House, we voted for a bill giving Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia a veto. Once again, the Bloc Québécois voted against.

We made another promise. We said that we would transfer responsibility for manpower training to the Province of Quebec, and what a mess Mr. Bouchard's government made of that.

Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, over the weekend, the Prime Minister added to his government's anti-democratic intentions by reaffirming before the party faithful that he had to intervene to set the rules for the next referendum in Quebec.

Can the Prime Minister tell us how he intends to question the most sacred rule in democracy, the rule of 50% plus one, the only rule that ensures the equality of all votes?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will never call my hon. colleague a poor democrat.

I believe simply that they have not given sufficient thought to the problems of reconciling their project and democracy. We would need to have a high level debate among democrats without pointless insults.

Second, if the rule of 50% plus one is sacred in all circumstances, why does the Government of Quebec not honour it in the case of its municipal referendums?

Democracy is expressed in different ways. There is a rule in democracy, which I did not invent, that the more serious and irreversible a decision, the higher the approval threshold must be.

Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the minister and the Prime Minister that, in 1980 and 1995, the federal government accepted the rule of 50% plus one, since it was clear then that no one intended to question this universally recognized rule.

In trying to change the rule today, does the Prime Minister realize that he will go down in history as the man who wanted to derail democracy in Canada and Quebec?

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Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have said dozens of times in this House that we would never agree to the rule of 50% plus one. I said so before the referendum, during the referendum and after the referendum.

If it takes two thirds of the National Assembly to appoint the auditor general, the director general of elections and the ombudsman, and if it takes a two thirds majority to expel a union from the CSN, there is no question of breaking up a country after a judicial recount because there is one vote in favour of breaking up the country, because that person may have left their glasses at home.

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[English]

TRADE

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to welcome the newest members of parliament and wish them well as they assume their solemn duties and responsibilities to make this parliament work better, to make Canada work better, to make democracy work better for all Canadians. That includes matters of trade. Trade is good.

As the WTO huddles in Seattle, a growing worldwide movement of citizens is calling for fundamental change in our approach to trade. They are calling for trade to be about improving the human condition and improving human lives. On Friday in Toronto the Chinese trade representative stated "This is the WTO. This is a trade agreement. It will have nothing to do with human rights".

Does Canada stand with China, or does Canada stand with citizens who insist that trade agreements must be about human rights?

• (1440)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, they are very serious negotiations. All the countries of the world are there.

It is very important that we defend the interests of Canadian products and Canadian programs and make sure that there is more trade around the world. If there is more trade around the world, there is more wealth around the world which will help more people to have a decent way of living. It is the objective of the WTO to stop protectionism and make sure that the industrialized countries for example buy goods and services from the poorest countries of the world.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we agree that trade agreements can be beneficial, but it depends on what we put in them. For example, on Friday Canada signed a new deal with China. It gives Canadian banks access to Chinese markets but it ignores child labour. The government had an opportunity to put a human face, a child's face on trade, but it chose not to.

Why will the government not stand up to those who would put profits ahead of the interests of people?

Mr. Bob Speller (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our agenda for the world trade talks is to get access to those markets and at the same time to make sure that our social programs are protected.

At the same time, the hon. member knows there are other avenues in which Canada takes a leading role in making sure that human rights are protected. In fact, the Prime Minister, the Minister for International Trade, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs on many occasions have stood up internationally to make sure that child labour and human rights issues are at the forefront of the agenda.

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[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Jean Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche, PC): Mr. Speaker, Saturday night at midnight, InterCanadian, the only carrier servicing Charlo, New Brunswick and a number of other Canadian airports, shut down its operations with neither notice or explanation.

Can the Minister of Transport tell us whether he was aware of this situation and if he has any immediate plans for restoring air service to Charlo and other affected Canadian airports?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is regrettable that InterCanadian shut down its operations Saturday night without notifying the Canadian government or other airlines, or its passengers.

I am told that InterCanadian will be releasing a statement at 5 p.m. today to explain the situation. In the meantime, Air Canada, Canadian Airlines International, Air Nova, Air Alliance and even VIA Rail will honour the tickets of InterCanadian passengers.

[English]

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, contrary to the minister's answer, the president of InterCanadian Airlines wrote the minister two days ago and said, "This is to inform you that InterCanadian has now reached the final desperate condition that we have been openly warning you about for many months". He went on to say "InterCanadian considers that its current condition and its anticipated closure are direct and predicted consequences of the actions and omissions of the federal government ministry's agency".

It is very clear that the government's lack of policy and direction is part of the problem. Will the minister take responsibility, act as a facilitator, bring all the parties together and get InterCanadian flying again?

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Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to blame this unfortunate incident on the government's restructuring process using section 47 is like blaming the doctor for the illness.

We have never contested that there is a serious problem with the airline industry in Canada. That is why we took the actions we did. These matters are under discussion. There are talks between parties. Air Canada is involved with Canadian Airlines. American Airlines is involved in discussions.

We hope that in the next few weeks there will be a resolution of this issue. In the meantime, ticket holders on InterCanadien are being respected by the other carriers and that will minimize any disruption. In the meantime, all efforts are being made to bring air services back to normal.

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CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, court documents show that in the last election the Minister for International Trade received a donation of \$10,000 in cash plus other services that he failed to claim as required under the Canada Elections Act. In return, the donor's wife received an appointment to the National Parole Board worth \$90,000 a year.

Will the government immediately launch an investigation into these very serious matters?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is an officer of the House. He knows as well as I do that if there is an accusation that he or anyone else is making regarding electoral contributions, the proper way to make it is through the commissioner of elections. The commissioner is then free to investigate it as he so wishes. He is an independent officer and is free to refer it to the police if he deems that to be appropriate.

• (1445)

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the court document I am referring to is an affidavit that was placed before the court detailing the \$10,000 donation and the other donations that were not claimed in the elections act. Surely that is enough evidence for the minister to at least start an investigation. The RCMP have tapes that apparently detail the conversations between this parole board appointee and the government minister.

I think the minister should immediately launch an investigation to clear this cloud that now hangs over the head of the Minister for International Trade.

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to repeat what I said previously—and the hon. member across knows better—these investiga-

tions are not launched by the government, nor are they not launched by the leader of the government responsible for the elections act. They are launched by the commissioner of Elections Canada.

If he feels he has a legitimate complaint, and obviously he must since he has now asked two questions about it, let him report it to the commissioner and the commissioner will do his investigation as he does in a normal course under the law passed by this parliament.

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[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, close to one thousand people have lost their jobs or are on the verge of losing their jobs.

Thousands are stranded in airports. Some regions of Quebec find themselves isolated. These are the immediate consequences of the situation in which InterCanadian airlines finds itself.

Since this situation is the outcome of the Minister of Transport's inability to come up with a true airline policy for Canada, what does he intend to do now, in light of the urgency of this situation? We do not want platitudes, but concrete action.

[English]

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the hon. member has been since August 13. The reason we introduced section 47 was because we realized there was a very serious problem. On August 13 we laid out a plan of action that we have followed throughout this fall.

Admittedly, this has caused some consternation to many. However, as I said earlier, this matter is being dealt with by the air carriers. It was very unfortunate what happened to Inter-Canadien's passengers but we have insisted that their tickets be honoured. We look forward to getting further details this afternoon so we can clarify the situation.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, can the minister make a commitment not to issue any new licences to regional carriers, such as the new one Air Canada wants to set up in Hamilton, before the unfortunate situation with InterCanadian is settled?

[English]

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, since he is a member of the

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transport committee, the entire matter of transportation policy and air policy is being worked on by the committee and by the government. Discussions are going on between the airlines to resolve the situation.

In the meantime, there is a particular problem involving Inter-Canadien. It is a serious problem and hopefully in the next few days there will be a resolution to that issue.

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CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister for International Trade denies having received an unreported \$10,000 in cash along with transportation services for his election campaign in return for appointing a supporter to the parole board. However, his official agent has already admitted that transportation services were received from a company in Montreal and not reported.

The House leader for the government knows that a complaint cannot be launched with the commissioner 18 months after the election. So who is going to take the fall for contravening the elections act, the minister or his official agent?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no question of taking a fall or any such nonsense. This is far more serious than to say something like that, and the hon. member knows it. The information given to me as late as an hour ago is that the official agent had no such information as the hon. member across alleges.

In any case, as I said previously, if the hon. member feels that he has a legitimate complaint, and he probably feels that he does because this is the third question that has been asked—and if the hon. member from Edmonton would listen, perhaps she too would want to inform herself—they should inform the commissioner of elections if they feel they have a complaint.

• (1450)

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, any minister found guilty of improperly reporting campaign expenses automatically loses his seat in the House and cannot accept any patronage appointment from the Prime Minister for seven years. That is a tough situation for a Liberal.

Will the government do the right thing and arrange for the release of the taped telephone conversations between the minister and his Parole Board appointee so that the air can be cleared and we can find out the minister's involvement in this case?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no person is appointed to the Parole Board unless they are qualified, have related experience and go through a screening process. That is exactly what took place.

[Translation]

MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is alleged that, during the 1997 election campaign, the Minister for International Trade, through his chief organizer, Jacques Lamoureux, accepted \$10,000 in cash and the use of a chauffeur driven car, which do not appear on his election report, as prescribed by the Canada Elections Act.

Members may remember that Marcel Masse had to leave cabinet in 1985 under similar circumstances.

Does the Prime Minister not consider that the Minister for International Trade is now finding himself in a similar situation and should therefore resign?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is referring to an allegation made elsewhere. He knows the context in which it was made.

If the hon. member feels that the allegation is founded, I would urge him to file a complaint with the Commissioner of Canada Elections, who will take whatever measures are required. This includes, of course, if he deems it appropriate, calling on the police.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we should be concerned that the government does not seem to think that these are serious allegations.

Under the circumstances, would it not be proper for the minister to temporarily leave cabinet, while an investigation is conducted into this matter?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, no investigation has been initiated. Second, the allegation may not be founded.

The hon. member, who is a practising lawyer, is well aware that, when an allegation is made, it definitely does not mean that the person is guilty.

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[English]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the government has stated that reductions in agriculture subsidies will be a priority in the WTO millennium round of trade negotiations. However, these talks will take up to five years to complete. Farmers cannot wait for five years for these talks to be successful. Foreign subsidies are driving them into bankruptcy today.

Oral Questions

Why is the Prime Minister refusing to launch a team Canada mission to Europe and Washington aimed at reducing agriculture subsidies immediately?

Mr. Joe McGuire (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is on record as saying that one of our first priorities is to reduce international trade subsidies and domestic subsidies. That is what we are doing in Seattle today and what we will continue to do.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals seem to think that the millennium round means that they have a thousand years to negotiate. Farmers will not survive on Liberal promises.

The Prime Minister has had since 1993 to negotiate reductions in foreign farm subsidies. He has not even tried. Why is the Prime Minister willing to sacrifice thousands of farmers by waiting another five to ten years hoping for subsidy reductions?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, what the hon. gentleman should know is that the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Minister for International Trade, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and myself have raised this issue with the Europeans repeatedly, including commissioner Fischler, and with the United States, including the trade representative Charlene Barshefsky and secretary Glickman. We have also raised it with the Argentinians, the Brazilians and the Australians at the OECD.

If the hon. gentleman wants an all out assault by Canada on the subsidies of foreign countries, that began a long time ago and we will continue until we win.

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[Translation]

MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on September 25, 1985, upon learning that he was being investigated for services rendered by Lavallin but not declared in his election expenses return, former minister Marcel Masse resigned, stating as follows "The possibility that I might be charged casts doubt on my honesty, which would reflect on the government".

• (1455)

My question is for the Prime Minister. How can the Prime Minister tolerate standards of honesty that are not just as high for his Minister for International Trade as they were back then for Marcel Masse?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the

standard of honesty is much higher among Liberals than among Progressive Conservatives. I am sure the member opposite knows this, given the caucus to which she once belonged.

Now, on a much more serious note, with respect to the allegation made by the member in the House, if she believes it to be well founded, she can of course inform the Commissioner of Canada Elections. That gentlemen may, if he wishes, conduct an investigation and, should he feel the matter to be a serious one, request the assistance of the authorities, if he deems it necessary.

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[English]

IMMIGRATION

Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence.

This past summer, four ships packed with illegal migrants landed in B.C. What measure is the minister taking to ensure that the B.C. coast is properly patrolled in an effort to deter future human smuggling?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the men and women of the Canadian forces are patrolling the shores and waters around our country daily. In fact, our country has more water around it than any other country in the world. We do have a very effective patrolling system using naval vessels and Aurora surveillance aircraft. All of these were used to assist the department of immigration with respect to this matter of the smuggling of immigrants.

Furthermore, we used our facilities in Esquimalt to house these people when they arrived in Canada.

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TAXATION

Mr. Richard M. Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the \$95 billion projected tax surplus clearly shows just how far the finance minister is prepared to go with his insatiable tax appetite.

It clearly shows just how much financial harm he is prepared to inflict on Canadian workers and their families in his insatiable tax grab as he continues his six year pillage of their paycheques. The Vikings had nothing on the finance minister.

Considering that the finance minister has more money than he needs right now, when will he give a tax break to Canadians? When will he give it?

Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have cut taxes consistently. Reform has called for \$52 billion tax and debt reduction measures in the third year out. Eleven of Canada's top economists

Oral Questions

on the other hand have said that surplus will only be \$13 billion. Reform is 400% off target. It does not take political opponents to marginalize the members of the Reform Party, they do it to themselves.

Mr. Richard M. Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, \$13 billion? Well there must be some new spending programs we have not found out about yet, but we thank the minister for his little warning.

Gerald's recent paycheque of \$4,300 was deducted by \$2,100, 48% by the finance minister as he continues building his tax surplus on the backs of Canadian workers.

How can the finance minister stand in the House and talk about tax cuts when his record of six years of tax increases stares everybody in the country in the face?

Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, why does the hon. member not go out and talk to Raymond, Elise, Mary, William, Wayne and the 1.7 million other Canadians who did not, but do today thanks to our sound economic policies, have pay stubs.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Dennis Gruending (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government's efforts to get the European and American governments to reduce their agricultural subsidies so far have failed.

On the eve of the Seattle meeting of the WTO, it has become clear that European governments are in no mood to take any action on subsidies.

• (1500)

My question is for the Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board. Will the government let farmers pay the price by themselves during a waiting game on European subsidies, or will the government provide the real support Canadian farmers need now to get through the winter?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy first of all to welcome the hon. gentleman to the House and congratulate him on his election victory in Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar.

Second, let me confirm that the government has a multifaceted approach to this problem. It is a serious problem that all of us should treat seriously. In part the answer lies in the aggressive fight that we are fighting and have fought previously in the world trade circles to ensure that the trade-distorting subsidies of other countries are brought down as rapidly as possible.

In the meantime we need to keep working on strengthening our farm income safety nets. We have put in a long term way, \$1 billion into those safety nets. Another \$1 billion—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar.

Mr. Dennis Gruending (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his kind words.

The facts remain that the government has slashed agriculture supports more deeply than required under past trade agreements. In fact it cut 40% more deeply than it had to.

Now we see that the Europeans will not budge from their position of keeping subsidies in place. The government has a clear responsibility to give our farmers a level of support that is perfectly legal under trade rules and absolutely necessary to save thousands of Canadian family farms.

Will the government take up its responsibilities to Canadian farming communities with a meaningful package of emergency assistance, or will it continue to let farmers hang out to dry in the chill wind of the trade fight over agricultural subsidies?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I was beginning to say at the end of the previous answer, first, we have put together a safety net package with the provinces that totals \$1 billion a year ongoing. On top of that, in 1998 and 1999 we have added more than \$1 billion more to strengthen that safety net program.

In addition, in provinces like Saskatchewan we have topped up the NISA program by \$75 million. We have triggered available payments of about \$435 million. If the emergency program is fully participated in by the provincial government, \$585 million more will be made available to Saskatchewan farmers.

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FISHERIES

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, first, on behalf of the Conservative Party I would also like to welcome the new members to the House.

My question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. The southwest Nova Scotia lobster fishery is under way and with it further recognition of the government's continuing incompetence to deal with the fallout from the Marshall decision. The minister has been saying for months that consultations are under way, yet his chief negotiator is a bust. Today the Acadia band has called off its self-imposed agreement for a six boat limit because of the DFO agreement.

This is a clear question for the minister. Will the minister ensure that his DFO officers will enforce the regulations, seasons and conservation measures for all commercial fishermen?

Oral Questions

Hon. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as usual the hon. member does not have his facts right.

I was encouraged by the community based solution where the commercial fishermen and the Acadia band had agreed to the fishing limits and the six units. Unfortunately, I understand now that the Acadia band felt there was a misunderstanding and they want more access to the fishery. I will certainly be looking into the situation. We have a federal representative who is out talking. It is unfortunate, but the fact is the courts have confirmed that as Minister of Fisheries and Oceans I can and will regulate the fishery to make sure we have an orderly fishery.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, the confusion arises out of the minister's own department. It is clear that those parties involved have no faith whatsoever in the federal negotiator.

There is a simmering crisis on the east coast. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans muses publicly about spending as much as \$500 million over the next five years to buy out licences, yet there is no faith in the federal negotiator or in the minister who ignored earlier efforts by natives to try to settle this matter.

How many months will the fishermen be expected to wait while the government embarks on token consultations and stall tactics?

Hon. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quite wrong. There is tremendous support for the federal representative, Mr. MacKenzie. He is doing a tremendous job. He is out talking and the talks are going very well.

The Conservative Party's only solution to this whole problem was to use the notwithstanding clause. That is the only solution it has come up with. That shows it is bankrupt of ideas. That party will go back to two seats if it does not come up with constructive solutions.

* * *

● (1505)

TRADE

Mr. Larry McCormick (Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week in Seattle, Washington ministers of the 135 member nations of the World Trade Organization will launch the next round of trade talks on agriculture.

WTO critics complain that the WTO favours big business interests and undermines the survival of the family farm which is very important to all of us. What are these talks going to do for the Canadian family farm?

Mr. Joe McGuire (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's agricultural industry, especially western Canada's agricultural industry,

depends on international trade rules that all countries abide by. Canada is in Seattle to put those agreements in place so our farmers will be competing against farmers, not against foreign treasuries.

* * *

PRISONS

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Corrections Canada has no prisons in Price Edward Island. The government and Corrections Canada have over 100 facilities in the country in which to research drugs. The commissioner of corrections a few weeks ago told me personally that drugs in prisons were not as big a problem as I make it out to be.

Why is the solicitor general going to build a \$2.5 million facility in his riding to research drugs in prisons?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated from the time I was appointed solicitor general, I intend to fight drugs and alcohol in penal institutions across the country. With today's technology, institutions can be created anywhere in the country. When the director of Correctional Service Canada indicated he would like to build it in Price Edward Island, I certainly agreed.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN HEALTH NETWORK

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health has announced the creation of the Canadian Health Network.

This is an Internet-based information service focussed on prevention. We are told that it will have three operations centres: Vancouver for the west, Toronto for central Canada, and Halifax for the maritime provinces.

Can the Minister of Health confirm that the Canadian Health Network will not have any operations centre in Quebec and that, incredible as it may seem, the web server for Quebec will be in Toronto?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Health Canada has a number of partners in Quebec. We are providing reliable information to Quebecers and to all Canadians.

We have a complete network of reliable information that is available every day. The services are available in English and in French everywhere in Canada.

* * *

[English]

FISHERIES

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government assault on

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commercial lobster fishermen continues and continues and continues. First it introduced a carapace size. Nobody in the area wanted a carapace size increase. They have been V-notching the lobsters for the last two years and the lobster catches have been increasing so there is no agreement at all to the extra carapace size.

Now DFO refuses to negotiate the agreement or implement the agreement on district 34 and district 33 of the lobster fishing areas as well as the Acadia band.

My question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Instead of sending in the B team to Nova Scotia, why does he himself not go down there and negotiate these agreements and bring some money to settle these—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Hon. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we do not have a B team. We are all A team on this side.

As the hon. member knows, at the Acadia first nation this was a community based agreement that was agreed to by the local community. We were supportive of that. We certainly are supportive of it now as well. We expect the parties to come together on the original agreement that was agreed upon by both parties.

Certainly I want to make it perfectly clear that on how we regulate the fisheries, the courts have confirmed once again our position and reaffirmed what the government is doing. The federal representative is out talking to all the groups.

* * *

[Translation]

REFERENDUMS

Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Has he read the 1998 supreme court decision? That is my first question.

Second, if so, could he tell the House the paragraph he is referring to when he talks of the role of the federal government?

• (1510)

What legal and political support is there in the supreme court decision for the federal government's power to act before the Quebec referendum process has begun?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the supreme court referred to the country's political actors. I imagine that the Prime Minister of Canada is one of this country's political actors.

[English]

TOBACCO

Mrs. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently 17 young Canadians representing all regions of our country were selected to form a youth advisory committee on tobacco issues. They met over the weekend to discuss the government's tobacco strategy as it relates to youth.

Would the Secretary of State for Children and Youth tell the House what the youth advisory committee can contribute to address the serious risk of smoking among young Canadians?

Hon. Ethel Blondin-Andrew (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was proud to meet and speak with these young people over the weekend. They are most impressive with their knowledge regarding tobacco reduction in general, but specifically how to deal with commitment and dedication regarding the youth, their tobacco use and their desire to educate their peers on the harm of tobacco products.

The committee reported to me that they had established a mission statement and were in the process of producing four preliminary reports concerning high risk groups, communications strategies, cessation programs and reduction of youth access to tobacco products. I look forward to accepting their work in the near future.

This initiative promotes a youth to youth approach whereby the government interacts with young people and does not just tell them what it thinks.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

TREATIES RATIFIED IN 1989 AND 1990

Mr. Denis Paradis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I am pleased to table in the House, in both official languages, 44 treaties that came into force in 1989 and 43 treaties that came into force in 1990, a list of which is also tabled.

[English]

As was done previously, I am also providing the Library of Parliament CD-ROMs that contain electronic versions of these treaties in order to provide wide accessibility to the texts.

* * *

ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am

pleased to table in both official languages a number of order in council appointments made recently by the government. Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(1), these are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committees.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Derek Lee (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 responses to two petitions.

* * *

• (1515)

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-387, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (elimination of the waiting period in a natural disaster).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill deals with the elimination of the waiting period in a natural disaster.

I am of course referring here to the ice storm that severely hit my region as well as Granby and Saint-Hyacinthe. When people are left on their own and without a job because of a natural disaster, it is important that we ensure that they are not doubly penalized because of a waiting period. This is the purpose of this bill.

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

* * *

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the House leaders and I believe you would find support for the following motion:

That the House, pursuant to Standing Order 119.1(1), authorize the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities to televise its meetings November 30 and December 2, 1999, in accordance with the guidelines pertaining to televising committee proceedings.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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The Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

THE FAMILY

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present a petition from a number of Canadians in my riding of Mississauga South.

The petitioners 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 value to our society. The petitioners also suggest that the Income Tax Act discriminates against families who provide direct parental care to preschool children. The petitioners therefore call upon parliament to examine and to pursue initiatives which would eliminate discrimination against families who choose to provide direct parental care to preschool children.

EQUALITY

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I take great pride in presenting a petition put forth by 1,799 concerned Canadians, mostly from the province of Quebec.

The petitioners ask the government to affirm that all Canadians are equal under all circumstances and without exception in the province of Quebec and throughout Canada. They wish to remind the government only to enact legislation that affirms the equality of each and every individual under the laws of Canada.

THE CONSTITUTION

Ms. Susan Whelan (Essex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present several petitions signed by hundreds of constituents of Windsor West.

The petitioners call upon parliament to uphold the present wording of the constitution and the principle of recognizing the supremacy of God and the rule of law.

[Translation]

GLOBALIZATION

Mr. Stéphan Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present to the House several hundreds of petitions from people asking the House to strike a committee to look into the impact of globalization.

A debate has to take place. A debate will in fact take place even if the House rejected the idea this morning, because I will set up a

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consultation process with the civil society, with or without the parliamentarians., I encourage all the parliamentarians who want to participate to do so.

Members will see that people from Lac-Saint-Jean do not give up that easily.

[English]

THE SENATE

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege to present a petition, pursuant to Standing Order 36, from a number of constituents who are once again calling for the abolition of the undemocratic Senate. I will not take the time of the House of Commons to go through all of their reasons, as there are many.

• (1520)

The petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to take whatever steps are necessary in the House of Commons to abolish the Senate of Canada once and for all.

RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition on behalf of my constituents who request parliament to reassure Canadian families that concerns that the convention on the rights of the child undermines the role of parents are unwarranted and that concerns that the government intends to remove section 43 from the criminal code are unwarranted.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition, pursuant to Standing Order 36, from 45 people in my constituency.

The petitioners draw the attention of the House to the fact that they are horrified by pornography which depicts children. They pray that parliament take all the necessary steps to ensure that possession of child pornography remains a serious criminal offence and that federal police forces be directed to give priority to enforcing this law for the protection of children.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADIAN INSTITUTES OF HEALTH RESEARCH ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, to repeal the Medical Research Council Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, at the time we broke for question period I was explaining why the gentleman with a family of five was having such a difficult time. This man has to put some money aside for his retirement. He is required to pay \$140 a month to the Canada pension plan. However, he has no faith that he will be able to collect enough from the Canada pension plan to make ends meet in his old age. Therefore, he puts away an extra \$175 a month into a registered retirement savings plan.

I bring this up under a bill dealing with health research because I want to demonstrate to the House that there is a problem with the brain drain in this country. It is evidenced by the fact that this gentleman is not confident that the Canada pension plan will sustain itself. Many young people are leaving the country, resulting in a reduced number of people paying into the Canada pension plan. The burden, therefore, falls harder and harder on the people who are trying to pay their taxes and still put a little away for their retirement. This is one of the major reasons people are leaving Canada. They simply feel that it is too difficult to get ahead. Things are getting worse and worse.

As I pointed out, Canada Day and tax freedom day fall at about the same time, July 1. By the time we have paid all of our taxes, we have worked half of the year for the taxman and half of the year to sustain ourselves. This includes building up some kind of retirement package, paying for our homes, educating our children, feeding ourselves and transporting ourselves on a day to day basis.

Is it any wonder that people look for greener pastures. When greener pastures are only across the 49th parallel, where tax freedom day comes in May instead of July, I do not think we can blame people for leaving.

I am pleased that the government is going to put more money into medical research. One of the things my friend from Elk Island stated was that he did not believe it was entirely up to the taxpayer to fund research. I know that he, as do many members of the House, including myself, make regular contributions to medical research of various types. I do not think there is anything wrong with that. I

do not think that all medical research money should come directly from the taxpayer.

• (1525)

I have covered all of the points which I intended to make and I look forward to further debate on this subject.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to Bill C-13, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research Act. We cannot oppose the principle of creating health research institutes in various target areas of public health.

Therefore, today my remarks will focus on Bill C-13 as introduced by the government, but I will also talk about the problems in the bill.

I would first like to remind the House of a few facts. Last February, the government announced in its budget new money to establish virtual institutes of health research. Following this announcement, the Minister of Health, Allan Rock, set up a transitional council to give advise on the establishment of these institutes.

For the most part, the bill before us today is based on the recommendations made by this council. The council, which was made up of 34 members representing the scientific and academic communities, spend several weeks looking into the definition and operation of health research institutes in Canada.

Simply put for the benefit of our listeners, CHIRs will replace the Medical Research Council, commonly known as MRC, and will have a broad research mandate. According to the federal government, they will allow development of new ways of doing research on biomedical issues, but also on issues more directly affecting social sciences.

These institutes will not be centralized basic facilities; they will be virtual, since they will first and foremost serve to communicate information and to link, through electronic data processing, researchers in universities, hospitals and other research centres in Canada.

Decisions have not yet been made concerning the institutes that will be created, but the task force has given some examples of themes around which the institutes could be established, for instance, aging, cancer, children and mothers' health, heart disease, etc.

The Minister of Finance's budget of February 1999 provided for investments of \$65 million for the fiscal year 2000-01 and an extra amount of \$175 million for the following year, for the purpose of creating 10 to 15 Canadian institutes of health research. With the basic budgets already provided to the MRC, the government now

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expects more specifically that it will double its funding over three years and that funds for the CIHR will reach \$500 million in 2001-02.

To summarize, Bill C-13 is essentially aimed at creating Canadian institutes of health research to organize, co-ordinate and fund health research at the federal level. It repeals the Medical Research Council Act and establishes the structure, the role and the mandate of the institutes.

Let me touch on some problem areas in Bill C-13. In the preamble, unfortunately, instead of recognizing the provinces' exclusive jurisdiction over health care services, the government recognizes only that they have some sort of a role to play.

The second whereas reads as follows, and I quote:

Whereas Parliament recognizes the role of the provinces in health care and that the Government of Canada collaborates with provincial governments to support the health care system and health research;

It should have provided, however, that the provinces are responsible for managing the health services within their borders and that their agreement is necessary in the event of encroachment on their jurisdiction.

Instead, clause 14 provides that the governing council is responsible for managing the CIHRs as a whole. The provinces do not even have the power to select the CIHRs.

In actual fact, therefore, nothing permits the Government of Quebec to ensure that the CIHRs meet its health care priorities. In addition, it is important to point out that throughout the bill, there is no reference to health research but to the more general expression health related issues.

• (1530)

So the creation of the institutes themselves is not the problem, but rather the fact that once again there is the possibility of direct encroachment on provincial jurisdiction in the area of public health care without any solid consultation of the provinces first. The government is setting up parallel structures rather than support the work done by the provinces.

The Bloc Québécois supports increased investment in research, and in health in particular. This is why we support the principle of creating these institutes. Nonetheless, it is important that Quebec receive its fair share of federal R&D funding, all the more so because Quebec has historically received only 14% of such funding, as we know.

I would also like to remind the federal government that it must not designate any CIHRs in Quebec without the agreement of the provincial government. While the multidisciplinary vision of Bill C-13 is to be commended, it is unacceptable that the provinces have not been given a key role.

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In closing, I wish to point out that, through its Canada health and social transfer introduced in 1993, the government has unilaterally and irresponsibly pulled out of the health sector.

It is to be commended for now investing more in research, but it must not lose sight of the need to restore provincial transfer payments. The CIHRs, as they are called, must not be a way for the federal government to interfere in provincial jurisdiction, while overlooking the fact that it is itself largely responsible for the massive cuts and difficult situations the provinces are facing with respect to health care.

The wonderful achievements of the Liberals opposite in recent years can be summed up as follows. Transfer payments have been cut by \$6.3 billion since 1994. Quebec has absorbed almost 30% of these cuts, or \$1.8 billion of the \$6.3 billion shortfall. Over half of federal cuts affected the health sector.

And finally, I repeat that the Bloc Québécois supports the bill in principle. However, I am certain that we will continually have to remind the government opposite to keep Quebec's jurisdiction clearly in mind. Amendments will definitely be in order.

[English]

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-13. It is a very interesting bill in the light of the government's position on health care in Canada. There are some very positive aspects to the bill that I find quite supportable, but we have to take a look at it within the context of the government's attitude toward health care spending.

I note that the creation of the CIHR is a direct response by the federal government to the views of health research leaders in Canada who took part in the 1998 national task force on health research. The health minister introduced Bill C-13 and it was given first reading on November 4 of this year. It is to create this institution by April 1 of next year.

As I mentioned there are some good parts to the bill, but I do want to put it into the context of where the government is coming from as far as its commitment to health care spending in Canada. I note that the federal government has allocated a \$374 million budget for the first year of operation, that is the year 2000-01. By the end of the second year federal funding will increase to \$500 million. I also note a good part is that the estimated administrative cost for the CIHR will consume approximately 4% to 5% of the total budget. The remaining budget will be used directly toward scientific and health research, which is all very commendable within the bill.

However taking a look at it within the context of what the government has done with respect to health care funding, as commendable as the bill is, certainly the government cannot be

commended for its actions with respect to supporting health care in Canada.

• (1535)

It loves to throw down the gauntlet for the provinces. The provinces have responsibility under the British North American Act to deliver health care services. They look for ways to get around the billions and billions of dollars in funding cuts that have been imposed on them by the federal government. It throws down the gauntlet in challenge, saying can you not do better than that when in fact it has reduced the amount it contributes to the delivery of health care services in Canada to only 11% of all health care costs. The rest of the costs are borne by the provinces and, to an ever increasing amount, by Canadian citizens.

The fact that the government has reduced its funding of health care in Canada to only 11% of the total health care costs does not seem to stop it from taking a holier than thou approach to the provinces when they are scrambling to try to get around the terrible cuts that have been imposed on them by the federal government.

Going back quite a few years, there was an agreement between the federal government and the provinces under the Canada Health Act that called for a 50:50 split and a sharing of jurisdiction and decision making. It is very interesting, as has been said many times, that the 50:50 split which has reduced down to 11% should by rights reduce the amount of say the government has in it but, no, it continues to carry on as if it were a legitimate funding partner, or at least one prepared to follow through on the commitment to the 50:50 split it made many years ago.

The 1999 budget promised to restore \$11.5 billion over the next five years. That was rather interesting. We have talked about \$11.5 billion, which is a lot of money, but when we take a look at the fact that it is over the next five years and when we look at the number of Canadians who will be served by the approximate \$2.5 billion a year, we see that the numbers the government is now putting back is small peanuts after having gouged and cut \$21.5 billion out of that spending envelope since 1993. The \$11.5 billion is still \$10 billion short of what it has already ripped out of health care.

There are 187,000 Canadians awaiting surgery. The average waiting time is 12 weeks. I think of a close personal friend of mine who suffered two successive industrial accidents at his workplace. He ended up badly tearing the cartilage in both of his knees. First, he tore the cartilage in one knee. Then, being a very conscientious worker, he went back to work perhaps before he should have. He ended up slipping again in a second accident and he could not recover because of the injury to his first knee and darned if he did not rip out his second knee.

My friend has to get around on canes. After six months he is still waiting for proper diagnosis. MRI diagnosis is available to him but

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he has had to wait six months. My friend is in constant pain when he tries to get up from his chair to come to the door to let me in. It is a major effort for him. The government has a direct responsibility over the fact that he, along with many other people, is having to wait that length of time for simple diagnoses.

The next thing that will happen is that following the diagnosis he will have to wait for whatever procedure is recommended by his physician. It is wait and wait as a result of draconian cuts by the federal government to the transfers that should have by rights gone to the provinces.

• (1540)

Coming back to Bill C-13, while it appears on the surface to be another bureaucratic creation it does have some very strong redeeming values. One of the strongest redeeming values is that it gives an opportunity for young, bright, Canadian researchers to continue to be employed in Canada. Perhaps even more of them can be employed in Canada. This speaks to the issue of what our party has consistently been referring to as the brain drain from Canada.

The bill goes in its own positive direction relative to slowing down the flow of the brain drain, but because of the overbloated bureaucracy in Canada and a lack of spending on the part of the government relative to health care these people have been squeezed. It also has an awful lot to do with the taxes young, bright researchers will have to pay.

As I was flying in this morning I was interested in chatting with a Canadian citizen formerly living in the Niagara area. She is an engineer who is now working in Detroit. She wants to be as close to Canada as she can be because her family still resides here. She had to go to Detroit not only to get a job but once she got there she found the difference in her after tax income to be so profound she did not feel there was any way she could now come back to Canada in spite of the fact that she wanted to come back.

The Liberals are sending a kind of mixed message. Whether we are talking about the amount of money they have ripped out of health care spending, about the amount of money they are continuing to spend on bureaucracies, or about the tax issue, people feel they have to end up leaving Canada.

There are some very redeeming parts to Bill C-13. There are some concerns such as the fact they have budgeted only 4% to 5% of the total budget to be spent on administrative costs. However, given the wide scope of the mandate, will they be able to stay within that 4% to 5% range?

This is one time when I suppose we need to have some faith in the government that the arm's length relationship which will be set up within this new function will work. In the long term, rather than working within this good envelope it has to take a far broader perspective and a far broader look at the way it is killing health care in Canada.

[Translation]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to speak to Bill C-13. We know that this legislation will have an impact on every community and that it is about our quality of life.

Bill C-13 defines what the research institutes are and how they work, and states that they will replace the Medical Research Council. Some say that these institutes will have a broad research mandate and that it will reposition research in general. It will promote a new way of conducting research on biomedical projects, new ways of conducting research in social sciences. I believe it is an interesting opportunity for social sciences and health.

Some say that these institutes will not be centralized basic institutions. We know full well that the government tends to centralize a lot, but these institutes will not be centralized. Rather, they will be virtual, so that researchers, scholars, hospitals and research centres will be able to communicate with each other and to share information by computer. In other words, a centre in a particular region conducting research on a specific subject will be able to communicate the progress made in its research to all the other centres across Canada and even internationally.

• (1545)

We can only be glad that the data will be made available to all researchers in Canada and around the world. People's health should be one of our major concerns.

It is also important to know what is going on in the various fields of research. Let us take research on multiple sclerosis as an example. We know that various fields of research are involved with this disease, including neurology and psychology. It is good to have different perspectives on this awful illness.

No decision has yet been taken about the institutes to be created. Several themes have been mentioned. Those include ageing, arthritis, musculoskeletal development, cancer, molecular biology, the health of children and their mothers, clinical assessments, technology assessments, heart disease and strokes, peripheral vascular diseases and respiratory illnesses.

Funding proposals have been submitted for 150 research projects. We can only be pleased by the variety of projects that could get financial support from the government. These projects could start as early as the year 2000 and budgets could be tripled by the year 2001.

The institutes of health research could be set up, co-ordinated and funded by the federal government, in order to provide some

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help to the provinces. Provinces have sustained cuts of \$7 billion in health care. It is important that we support each and every element of health care.

We have one criticism to make of the federal government. We know that the federal government has been dragging its feet for years with regard to funding for research. Quebec was always neglected when the time came to choose places for the establishment of research infrastructures. We know where the government chose to set up such institutions. Ontario was greatly favoured in the past and Quebec was often neglected in that regard.

The new bill will repeal the Medical Research Council Act and will set out the structure, mandate and operation of the institutes. The objective of these institutes may raise some ethical issues.

This is interesting, since we know that there could be a lot of debate in our society on the application of certain medical practices.

There are no institutes at the present time. The permanent governing council will be free to choose which type of institutes will be established. We, in the Bloc Québécois, deplore the fact that a permanent governing council will have the freedom to make these kinds of decisions with regard to the type of institutes that will be established in various provinces and various regions of Canada and Quebec.

We know all about the centralizing vision of the federal government. The fact that the responsibility for establishing the various research networks will be given to the permanent governing council is cause for concern. The provinces have exclusive jurisdiction over health care and the federal government took or, should I say, stole \$7 billion from them to build up its much talked about surplus, which the Prime Minister is so proud of.

I hope the provinces' different priorities with regard to health care and research will be taken into account.

• (1550)

I hope it is not another example of the federal government's bad habit of steamrolling the provinces. One need only think of the millennium scholarship fund. There are two opposite ways of seeing things, the federal government's way and the Government of Quebec's way.

We are happy to see that the research institutes will probably lead to an increased life expectancy. As we know, a man who does not smoke and lives a relatively healthy life will live to the age of 73, and a woman can expect to live to the age of 83. The new technologies are complex. The stakes are high. This bill deals with people's lives.

The Bloc Québécois has always asked for more investment in research. This is why we are happy with the increased funds that will be made available in the area of research.

We know that Canada has often lagged behind relative to the financing of research. The OECD has often criticised the federal government for its lack of support to research. It can also be said that the fact that the federal government has slashed \$7 billion in the health system has also contributed to a budget shortfall, which plays a major role in the provinces' ability to support the whole health care system.

The provinces were not involved in appointing the members of the governing council, which is said to be temporary and will become permanent. This council will take very important decisions. It will choose the fields of research for which health institutes will be created. Apparently, four fields of research will be favoured, four fields that are of special interest to Quebec. There is a lot at stake.

For example, 60% of the biomedical research is done in Quebec through research firms. Research on patent drugs is very specific to Quebec. The second field would be clinical research. The third would be research on health services and the fourth, research on a health and culture society.

As we know, we are not all born equal. This last field is of particular interest. There is also early childhood, from age zero to age six years, in terms of the impact of stimuli on personal growth.

I would make one cautionary note on all those aspects, since we know, for example, that we are unable to fund them within the health network in any of the provinces and in Quebec. It is certainly a step in the right direction to support researchers in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada so that there can be exchange of ideas.

However, we hope that the Canadian government will be able to reinvest in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada the billions of dollars it has cut since the Liberals came to power in 1993. This is of paramount importance. We must fund not only research but also direct patient care so to apply the results of research. If the health network is insufficiently funded, things will really go badly.

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand in the House today to speak to Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and to repeal the Medical Research Council Act.

I will begin by congratulating our member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca who has done so much work on the health portfolio of recent, doing battle against the Liberal government which contin-

ues to cut funding to the provinces. It is a difficult job to actually look for other alternatives within not only provincial initiatives but here federally to help fix the medicare problems that the government has put on the country. I would like to just take a moment to congratulate our member for all his hard work.

• (1555)

As was mentioned, the CIHR will replace the Medical Research Council and will provide a more direct and systematic approach to research in Canada. The CIHR will provide an annual report detailing the workplan and budgetary expenses of its scientific grants.

If the goal of this particular bill and the new Canadian institutes of health research will be to help direct funding more equally and more effectively to various medical research endeavours across the country, that is obviously a good thing.

I would also point out that the establishment of the Canadian institutes of health research will be a vast improvement on the current system of non-accountability administered by the Medical Research Council. This will in fact create a quasi-independent council that will be able to operate independent of the government and make its first priority research funding.

When looking at this particular effort by the government, even though it is headed in the direction that we in the opposition would say is the right direction, there are some red flags that are thrown up, especially when it comes to the issue of budget.

When I look at the CIHR, I see that it will strive to ensure that only 4% to 5% of its total budget will be spent on administrative costs. A new institute will require a bureaucratic infrastructure to perform the necessary functions. Can the CIHR avoid the trend of having a huge part of its budget administered for bureaucracy and not have sufficient funds to administer the actual research which is dictated under its mandate? That is the question we have to focus on here today. Even though the official opposition will give its support to the bill, will the budget, which is outlined at 4% or 5% toward the administrative costs, remain within that fraction?

I have had the pleasure in the past of talking to various people involved in medical research around the country, mainly in my riding of Edmonton—Strathcona at the University of Alberta. I know you, Mr. Speaker, have travelled across the country and have been to the University of Alberta Hospital. I know you are aware of the wonderful research it does, especially the wonderful research it does with the limited resources it is given.

This is where that red flag has to be thrown up. We have to consider the fact that we know the track record of this government. We know that when it can, it spends, spends, spends and continues to raise taxes to exorbitant levels. Unfortunately, it does not

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prioritize its spending effectively as we here in the opposition have outlined time and time again in the House, where we would like the government to focus its resources more effectively but that does not happen.

As I mentioned, if there is a total budget of 4% or 5% strictly toward administrative costs, we in the opposition hope that the government will continue to live within that means of spending for bureaucracy and that the spending put toward medical research will go toward medical research.

I mentioned the experience of talking with people involved in medical research at the University of Alberta. I think they would generally agree that the government is heading in the right direction because they would like to see funds more effectively used within medical research. However, in my past discussions with people at the University of Alberta, it was brought to my attention—and I do not have the figures off-hand—that Canada does lag quite far behind when compared with some of the other industrialized countries, especially in medical research funding. This makes it very difficult for many of these institutions, such as the University of Alberta, to meet their requirements of really excelling in research and continuing to be leaders across the country.

One of the issues they continue to bring up with this lack of funding are the problems that do arise. For instance, one issue the advisory board will hopefully address and something the official opposition continues to raise in the House, is the issue of the brain drain that currently exists in Canada regardless of what the government does or does not want to say on the topic.

Many of the people I have spoken with at the University of Alberta and other research facilities have told me that it is difficult to retain the proper talent, attract professionals and continue to build solid research foundations within the country because of the lack of funding in research and the lack of funding that comes from the federal government because of its inability to prioritize.

• (1600)

One of our biggest problems in actually keeping people here is that funding is not available in many cases. Institutions are trying to make ends meet with whatever little funding they have. Some of the biggest research organizations south of the border continue to recruit the talent that exists in this country. They bring them down to the U.S. to work there, pay them well, and obviously give them the research budgets they require to do their research.

That provides an enormous amount of burden with regard to current research budgets within the University of Alberta, for example, that are difficult to meet. As well we have to factor in the

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element of competition. Nowadays people tell me all the time, especially as I said with respect to the University of Alberta, that they have to deal with bigger institutions, bigger research budgets and the biggest competitors to the south of us. It is very difficult to retain people in this country.

I met with the dean of science at the University of Alberta. I remember specifically his telling me that with the increased research funding outlined in the new advisory board there needs to be a level of tax relief. That was very interesting, coming from the academic community. The official opposition continues to try to convince the government that there has to be a balance in tax relief in the equation of increased spending.

It was fascinating that even the academic community, along with increasing areas of research funding, identified the fact that keeping taxes at a competitive level or keeping taxes lower would actually help to retain many of the talented people leaving to go south of the border. When identifying the issue of brain drain, especially in medical research, the dean mentioned that on occasion he had recruited potential students in his office when dealing with budget issues.

One student had been at the University of Alberta for only two years. The issue of research funding was not the only issue, but when the student came into the office to talk to Dean Peter he produced two forms of budgets and two forms of balance sheets. One dealt with what he would end up at the end of the day in Canada and the other with what he would end up if he went to the U.S. He balanced the issue of how much money the particular institution had to do its research, but because of high taxes, because of the exchange rate and because of many other factors which unfortunately make us less competitive in this country, it was much more enticing for him, as much as he wanted to stay in this country, to go elsewhere, and unfortunately south of the border was where he was looking.

Even a member of the academic community called me to say we in the House have a responsibility not only to look at increasing funding research in this country but at balancing it with tax relief.

There are potential benefits to the particular legislation and establishing the CIHR. There are many good parts to the bill. It appears to be an excellent model of an institute which will remain at arm's length of the federal government and conduct research independent of the government. I think that is very important.

The consultation process for appointments will draw leading experts from conceivable fields of expertise. This should reduce the influence of high ranking government officials and people who are actually suited to do the job. However, these and all the details I mentioned can be addressed before committee when the bill reaches that stage. There is a strong need to consult the scientific and health communities for input on the direction of the CIHR.

Even though we are supporting the legislation we hope that it will be given the right attention in committee where we can make further suggestions on how to make it a useful institution.

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to this very important bill. We are talking today about medical research. We would all agree there is very little that is more important in the country than medical research and other things that lead to better health and good health care.

• (1605)

Every one of us could probably draw on personal experience to point to examples of families that have needed good health care. Every one of us could probably point to a family member who has died because the research had not been done which could make progress, make changes and advance medical capability to a point where it could save lives.

This is a very serious subject. It touches every one of us. It touches our families. For that reason the Reform Party takes it as a very serious issue. We do generally support the bill although we do have some proposals for change.

I will talk a bit on what the bill is about. Many past speakers have spoken to very important aspects of the bill but have not really explained what the bill is about. The bill will establish the Canadian institutes of health research. Its purpose is to put in place a medical research body which will excel according to internationally accepted standards of scientific excellence. This is an important point.

We have some concern about whether it will work in the way it is intended to work, but funds will be targeted based on standards of scientific excellence. That is a very important factor. Let us look at legislation passed in the House. We can point to several different pieces of legislation. Too often the government puts forth legislation which does not consider sound science as a basis.

I could certainly point to the gun bill. In spite of the sound science presented when the bill was being debated, the government pushed ahead, ignored the science and put in place a bill which was flawed right from the fundamental concept. No one would argue that the process of registering guns is in a state of disaster right now. Part of the reason is that the bill ignored the sound science presented from the start. At least the government is presenting a bill which will consider sound standards of science in allocating funds. The importance of this cannot be overstated.

The second purpose of the bill as stated by the government is to provide more effective health services and products in a strengthened Canadian health care system. I will speak a bit more about that in a couple of minutes.

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The third stated objective of the bill is important as well. It will provide a more direct and systematic approach to research in Canada. I have heard calls for this approach, particularly by people in the area of research.

There is something that I am not convinced is in the bill and I have heard criticism in this regard. I want people in research fields to be assured, if they are doing research in a very important area which has been targeted for funds, that their funds will be allocated in the long term rather than just year to year. Researchers spend more of their time trying to justify getting the funds for next year than actually ensuring that they will do highly successful research which will lead to better health care.

This stated objective or reason for the bill is honourable. I am looking for it to be put in practice. I am not convinced it will be the case, but I am certainly hoping from the bottom of my heart that it will be the case.

I also want to talk briefly about the financial cost allocated to the bill: for the first year, \$374 million and for the second year, \$500 million. That is a lot of money. When I think of other ways the government spends \$500 million I cannot help but think that it sounds like an awful paltry sum. When we look at the heritage department and the way it blows hundreds of millions of dollars every year, the \$500 million allocated to research sounds like a small amount of money.

• (1610)

When we look at the amount of money being allocated to the CBC as a partially publicly funded network, we realize it is a billion dollars a year, or twice the amount that will be allocated to medical research under the bill in the second year and almost three times the amount that will be allocated in the first year.

Then we wonder about priorities, especially when I believe the CBC could be a very profitable TV network if it were to become a network which operated in the business world without public funding. Many would argue that is long overdue. When we look at the billion dollars of public funds put into the CBC and the \$374 million to be allocated to research under this bill, the amount of funding is questionable. It is a matter of government priorities.

The priorities do not seem to be well thought out. There is a lot of wasted spending. The government proposed new programs which I believe will not benefit families in a significant way. In fact they will be harmful in some cases and will cost billions of dollars a year. Yet \$374 million have been allocated to research. Where is the balance? Where are the priorities? Who is setting these priorities? It can be demonstrated very clearly that the government is not doing a very good job of that at all.

Government members did speak to the bill, but I note they are not speaking to it any more. Many of them talked about the high

priority of health care for the government. They pointed to the fact that they would increase spending between the first year and the second year under this program from \$374 million to \$500 million.

I remind Canadians that this is the same government that reduced spending for health care by about \$5 billion a year when it reduced transfers to the provinces for health care. Then it put \$374 million, a small portion of that amount, into the proposed program. We have to ask what kind of commitment the government has made to health care. The answer is obvious that it has not made a reasonable commitment at all, Mr. Speaker. I see you agreeing with me on these points. I really appreciate that.

We can take it back another step, back 30 years to when the health care act was signed or medicare was put in place. At that time the federal government was absolutely committed to funding half of the public health care program. Is the federal government still funding half as it did in that first year? No. In fact its portion of funding is now down to about 11% rather than the 50% it committed to, and it has been a Liberal government over most of this time. That is the kind of commitment it has to health care.

It giveth a bit of taxpayer money with one hand and then it taketh away from us on the other hand. It spends the money that should be designated to health care on what many Canadians and I would consider to be wasted spending. Clearly the government is not doing a good job of setting spending priorities. Clearly it is not committed to health care funding.

I will touch on the brain drain. I acknowledge up front that most of the brain drain is happening because of high taxes. Most of us could look to our families and see a family member who has left the country. I am referring to doctors or other professionals, for example. My brother is a doctor, an emergency specialist. He and three other doctors set up the emergency services at the Red Deer hospital about 15 years ago. He had to leave this year because he had a certain retirement expectation. Because of high tax levels, because the government was taking 70% of what he earned, he felt that in order to retire at the level he expected he would have to work in another country. We are supposed to have a maximum rate of 50%, but the government was taking 70% from him.

• (1615)

He and many of his friends are now working in Saudi Arabia where they are taxed at the level of 5%. He is no longer a resident of Canada. He is not proud of that. He is not happy with that. He is committed to Canada. He wants to be a Canadian citizen, and he is, but he cannot live in Canada because of the high tax levels.

As well as taxes, the poor funding of research has led to the brain drain. That has to be acknowledged. This will help in a small way, and I want to acknowledge that.

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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: Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, Agriculture.

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am particularly keen to participate in the debate on Bill C-13.

I have listened carefully to the debate as it has unfolded today. It has been a thoughtful debate. There are some clear differences being stated among the political parties.

I will begin my few remarks today by reminding members of parliament that between 1994 and 1997 the government continuously cut its investment in health research. I remember at the time that the health care sector was appalled that the government would cut research funding.

Once a research program is stopped, we cannot simply add a few dollars and start it again. There are professional researchers and scientists who often invest their entire lives in projects. It is not simply a matter of turning on the taps and returning to the research project. Long term preparation is carried out by the people who do this research.

The cuts that came between 1994 and 1997 dealt a death blow to much of the scientific research in the health care sector. My doctor friend from Winnipeg would be only too sensitive to this issue, but I think he would agree that those cuts were lamentable. Today, with Bill C-13, we are admitting that there were some really serious cuts, that those cuts were not just minor skin wounds, that they amounted to major surgery in the health care research system.

During these years per capita funding of health research fell from \$9.14 to \$7.92. Canada, as a result, became less competitive in its funding levels compared to most other industrialized nations, including the United States, the United Kingdom, France and others.

These cuts had several effects. They drove researchers, including established professors, recent research graduates and post-graduate students, across the border in search of sustainable funding. My colleagues in the Reform Party, whose views I always respect—I do not agree with them, but I respect that they have a right to hold whatever view they want—are concerned that it was the salaries provided to the researchers, doctors and professors which drove them to leave Canada.

I would not deny that is a factor, but the scientists I have met, the medical researchers I have spent time with, say that one of the reasons they were leaving Canada, were contemplating leaving Canada or had actually left Canada was not so much because of the

taxation system, but more because the facilities available to them in these other jurisdictions would enable them to do what they were professionally motivated to do. In other words, if they were serious scientists and there were no decent research labs, facilities and programs in Canada, they would almost be forced to go elsewhere to carry out the research to which they had dedicated their lives.

• (1620)

Coupled with the large scale withdrawal of federal funding from core social programs, the cuts in health research diminished the capacity of our health care system to care for patients and stifled the application of new research findings.

We can imagine the frustration that must have been felt and that is still being felt by serious professionals in the health care field who know that their patients should be receiving these kinds of treatments, who know that their patients should be benefiting from this kind of research, but because the research is being developed in other jurisdictions it is often not available to them because of the cuts which have been made to our health care system.

The withdrawal of federal funding from post-secondary education and cuts to health research drove many university administrations to foster commercial research partnerships with industry. We have to acknowledge that this has a whole set of concerns which we ought to register.

These partnerships, in many cases, have decreased academic freedom due to an emphasis on applied research, a trend in self-censorship among university professors and the privatization of research findings for the purpose of profit. All of this is fine. We appreciate that there are various kinds of research, but much of the kind of research which we see as being necessary, particularly in the field of medical research, is not something on which we can easily put a price tag. The benefits may be seen many years into the future and may require pure scientific research as opposed to applied scientific medical research. Once we start with commercial research partnerships, naturally the commercial sector will want to see some likelihood of profit in the foreseeable future. These are very serious concerns.

We support the general thrust of this legislation. It is long overdue. It is a step in the right direction and it is an attempt to correct some of the past mistakes made by this and the previous government. The government has endorsed this new model of health research funding, the Canadian institutes of health research. By and large, we welcome this as a replacement to the Medical Research Council.

We support the new money that will be put into the system. By doubling the 1997-98 levels of research funding to \$500 million in the year 2001-2002, Canada will regain some of the ground that it lost to Liberal government cuts over the past six years.

Clearly this legislation, in its support for researchers and academic programs, will go a long way in alleviating the problem of the so-called brain drain in Canada, but the legislation, in our judgment, needs to go even further.

We have a certain reservation that our funding levels under this particular research program will remain disproportionate to funding in the United States and other industrialized countries which put a much higher premium on research and development. Again, while this is a step in the right direction, let us not say that it is adequate. Much more needs to be done if we are to maintain and regain our rightful role in the world of scientific research.

Let us face it, we have to accept our responsibility. We are a major industrialized nation and people look to us to work with them so that scientists and researchers from different parts of the world can complement each other's work. Canada has been letting go of its traditional leadership role that it could be playing.

We want to suggest that a more likely figure for consideration by the government would be \$750 million annually or 1% of the total annual health care expenditure. Surely there is no one in the House who would say that spending 1% of the total health care budget on research, which will improve the health of Canadians now and in future generations, is an excessive amount when we will be in a surplus situation with \$90 billion over the next five years. We would like to put that on the table for consideration.

We are also rather enthusiastic about the nature of the research which will take place in the social context. The multidisciplinary, multisectoral and cross-regional approach of the bill ideally will contextualize hard research, acknowledging social, cultural and environmental influences on our health. Our reservation is that this emphasis needs strengthening so that there will be a central focus in the causation and prevention of ill-health, in particular on social and environmental determinants.

As a bit of an aside, this is why we are concerned about some of the provisions of the NAFTA and of potential changes as a result of the World Trade Organization talks, which may hinder us as legislators in passing laws that would protect the health of Canadians in the future.

• (1625)

If we disrupt the profit flow of American research or drug companies, or companies offering various aspects of health prevention, we could possibly be liable to compensate them for their lost profits as a result of the trade deal. We see once again a mixing of the NAFTA and the WTO into something as fundamentally important as medical research.

We also support the whole issue of applied research, in that the goal of the legislation is to apply research and to connect health researchers to health providers in a significant way.

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Our reservation is that this initiative be more than an empty gesture on the part of the government. Social transfers to the provinces need to be restored. How will new research results be applied without adequate health care funding, equipment and the necessary staff?

In spite of our enthusiastic support for the major thrust of this legislation, we are concerned about the commercialization aspect. We are concerned about the governing council. My colleague from Winnipeg indicated our concerns in that regard in her last presentation.

There is the whole issue of ethics. The government has made ethics explicit in Bill C-13, saying that health research should take into consideration ethical issues. That sounds pretty wimpy to me. We have to get a lot tougher than that and say that we will either take ethical issues into consideration or not. We should not sort of consider them. It is a little weak in the wording. The words "consideration of ethics" are completely inadequate.

This bill is a major step in the right direction. Our concern is the level of funding provided for scientific health research. In order to keep the balance appropriate we need to re-establish those serious levels of transfer payments for health care to complement the good work that ought to flow from this legislation.

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to add my voice to the concerns being expressed on Bill C-13. I too, as the previous speaker suggested, welcome this as at least a step in the right direction. It is a turnaround from cutting money from medical research to at least adding funds. However, I have some concerns. It is a bit ironic because my concerns are very similar to those of the previous speaker. He has sort of stolen my thunder on some of the issues.

It is fairly safe to assume that all members from all parties only want what is in the best interests of the continued health of Canadians. We are very fortunate, particularly in my part of Canada, to have access to clean water, clean air, wide open spaces and what traditionally has been considered one of the best health care systems in the world, although that is up for debate these days. While this bill addresses one side of what constitutes the best health care system in the world, on the other side, the delivery of health care, the federal government has yet to address its responsibility in any meaningful way. We hope that somewhere down the road it will do that.

Although we have access to the healthiest environment in the world, we still have a responsibility to Canadians, as well as to the rest of the world, to ensure that we have up to date research to keep Canadians as healthy as possible.

It is in this light that the Canadian institutes of health research must be considered, as the object of the CIHR is to excel according

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to internationally accepted standards of scientific excellence in the creation of new knowledge and its translation into improved health services and products for a strengthened Canadian health care system. As I said, this is only one prong of what constitutes a strengthened health care system. Finally, the CIHR is to replace the Medical Research Council and provide a more direct and systemic approach to research in Canada.

• (1630)

Canada has a long and proud history of excellence in medical research. For example, in 1873 Sir William Osler demonstrated that unidentified bodies in human blood were in fact a third kind of blood corpuscles which were later named blood platelets. This discovery was invaluable to future studies in areas such as leukemia, cancer treatment, anemia and the treatment of virtually any medical problem.

Another Canadian physician of note was Sir Frederick Banting, who in 1921, along with Charles Best, was the first to extract insulin from the pancreas. Injections of insulin proved to be the first effective treatment for diabetes. For his discovery, Banting was awarded a share of the 1923 Nobel prize for physiology or medicine.

I bring up those two examples for a good reason. They were enormous breakthroughs in medical research made by Canadians and shared with the rest of the world at no cost to the rest of the world's medical research community.

Knowing that I was going to address this subject today, while flying back from my riding this morning I noted an article in the *National Post*. Medical researchers in Britain announced that they have completely decoded chromosome number 22. Certainly that is a major, major breakthrough in medical research. The decoding of not only chromosome 22 but of all the 23 chromosomes that make up the human cell is the key to answering the dilemmas we have had in reaching cures for cancer and particularly regarding chromosome 22, many of the hereditary diseases that we face today. It has amazing possibilities.

The concern I had with the article was that both British and U.S. medical researchers have been working on this project for a long time in a race to be successful in mapping these genes and chromosomes, not necessarily on a humane basis but rather on a commercial basis. The intent at least of the U.S. organization that is doing this research is to achieve success before the rest of the world in order to patent the process and sell it on a commercial basis.

It should be a real concern to everyone around the world if that is the direction medical research is going in. With tremendous breakthroughs like Banting or others in Canada have made, if that knowledge, that ability to cure diseases becomes a commercial entity to be sold around the world for the most money to the highest

bidder, that is probably quite a change in the traditional direction in medical research. It certainly concerns me.

As a cancer survivor myself, I very much look forward to the day when research allows us to cure diseases like cancer at a reasonable cost to those who suffer from these diseases. The concern is that if we are going in the direction of commercialization, the cost of treatment and cures will be out of reach to ordinary Canadians. I wandered off my topic a little bit, but that article caught my eye and was of concern to me.

• (1635)

We support the concept behind the bill. The idea that we are turning the direction, putting more money in to increasing facilities and funding for health care and, as others before me have suggested, addressing the brain drain issue and the need to attract and retain Canada's youngest and brightest researchers is certainly a worthwhile effort.

The CIHR would initiate a clear and concise strategic yearly plan with the sole intention of promoting research in the fields of health and science. The CIHR would make researchers accountable for all budgetary expenditures and report on a yearly basis to an overseeing committee of their peers to assess their progress. That certainly is a laudable goal considering what the history of funding for medical research has been in the country.

The creation of the CIHR would account for only a 4% to 5% total administrative cost. The estimated yearly administrative costs for the CIHR would also only account for 4% or 5% of the yearly budget.

As far as accountability to parliament is concerned, an annual review would be issued and the agency would be subject to an independent audit through the auditor general's office. It is encouraging to see that the government takes accountability and reporting measures seriously for a change, particularly when we compare these measures to the current system of non-accountability administered by the Medical Research Council.

I do have some concerns however with this bill that I would like to mention. With the time being short I will try to rush through them.

One of the concerns is the intent of the CIHR to foster scientific research and promote Canadian initiatives without taking the time to consult various scientific communities to receive input as to the scope and area of research. As any good scientist knows, when conducting a scientific experiment one must accumulate all related information and research before actually beginning the experiment. To not investigate all aspects of a hypothesis makes for foolhardy science. That would certainly be a shame.

Because of the shortness of time, I will move on to my conclusion. There are many good parts to the bill. It appears to be

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an excellent model of an institute that will remain at arm's length from the federal government and conduct research independent from the government. The consultation process for appointments will draw on leading experts from every conceivable field of expertise. This should reduce the influence of high ranking government officials. That can only happen and be successful if those appointments actually follow the process that is spelled out in the bill which may not happen.

Before the bill passes, I would ask that the government consult the scientific and health communities for input as to the direction of the Canadian institutes of health research.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to address Bill C-13 as well. I am sure you cannot remember back 100 years ago. My memory is quite limited when it comes to that as well, but it is very interesting to read about what happened back in 1899. One hundred years ago there were all kinds of predictions that would—

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville but I understand he has already spoken on this bill and he is unable to speak again. The bill has only been at one stage. I believe we are on second reading of the bill and the hon. member is precluded from having the floor.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Because of the subject matter, and I think you will find it of great interest, could I get unanimous consent to have about seven or eight minutes?

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to allow the hon. member to speak a second time on the bill for seven or eight minutes?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

• (1640)

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, thank you for recognizing me and providing me with the opportunity to make a few comments.

Bill C-13 provides much of a positive nature for parliament to consider. I listened to the debate and thought about what this bill means and there are some serious concerns in my mind which I would like to express to the House.

The intent of the CIHR is to foster scientific research and promote Canadian initiatives. However, there has been little time to consult various scientific communities and receive input as to the scope and area of research. For this reason I would like to ask

where is this research centre going to be established? I am concerned when I hear that it is to be in Prince Edward Island. It is not because Prince Edward Island is not a wonderful destination or that the people of Prince Edward Island would not benefit from this.

I think of the difficulties that research facilities in Canada have had. In major hospitals there is an accumulation of highly practised medical researchers. By and large they have the needed equipment, the vital mass of library facilities, the patients and the technical requirements.

The flight of Canadian personnel, doctors and nurses, to other jurisdictions, primarily to the United States, is because of economic difficulties they have had and the lack of technology. Many places do not have the money for the cutting edge technology. People are leaving research centres in Canada to go where the technology is available.

It is not only the technology, it is also the critical mass, the mass of learning. There is the core of expertise and opportunity. There are patients who have diseases and maladies that doctors and scientists would look to. I cannot see these being readily available by simply creating a research facility, an institution, in Prince Edward Island and then expecting people who have the expertise to leave where they are to go there.

It also does not make sense to build a facility from the ground up in relative isolation from major medical centres across the country. It would not be that attractive. Researchers not only want jobs, they want to have an opportunity to study their areas of interest. They want to add to the growth of knowledge and benefit humankind by their work. They are dedicated and committed individuals.

As I think about this bill, I wonder why the centre would be established in Prince Edward Island and not in a major medical facility or in a centre where so many advantages already exist. It makes me question the seriousness of this initiative.

Goodness knows that this initiative is needed. Reform Party members, including myself, have been on record for many years about the need for technical and medical research across our country. Our economy and our people depend on this research. We have a grand tradition in Canada of being at the forefront of invention and research and adding to the great knowledge of humankind. We have the people who can do that but we have been short of money for so long that programs have been stripped.

• (1645)

I remember speaking to a high ranking medical researcher in Vancouver who said that the opportunities for him in that city were

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limited because of crowded space, lack of money and lack of equipment. His ability to teach, to do research and add to the knowledge of his speciality was so diminished that even though he was at the peak of his own professional career, he was questioning whether it was wise for him to stay in Canada when the opportunities south of the Canadian border were so rich for pressing his career forward.

These are some of the questions that arise in my mind as we discuss the issue here today. I would like the government to seriously consider whether the best use of this money is to have a research facility such as this located where it is intended to be located. Why do we not have broader consultation with the scientists and the researchers to see where this critical mass might be gathered and made best use of?

It is of great sadness to many of us, including myself, to hear of the men and women in Regina, Saskatoon, Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton who have found that their opportunities over the past years have become so limited that they have not only contemplated but have taken steps to move. I think those who have persevered and continued looking after their patients, and continued their research under such enormous obstacles and financial cutbacks, deserve congratulations.

I add these comments and these questions to the debate with the understanding that I and my party will be supporting the bill.

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North—St. Paul, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to participate in the debate because I wholly support the bill and I thought I would allow as many members of the opposition to speak as possible.

However, after listening to the debate, I noted a few things and thought, for greater clarification, I could contribute to the debate. My thoughts will be more of a random nature on the comments I heard and on which I would like to amplify.

When mention was made of the potential benefits, a step in the right direction and the absence of consultation, I thought we should have great confidence in the value of the Canadian institutes for health research. There is no doubt whatsoever in my mind that this is the thing to do as we enter the new millennium. Scientists in all disciplines, whether medical, biological or social, have been consulted. We see a consensus on what would be best for Canada and for the world as we realize that this institute will co-operate and be an integrated approach to research and will encompass all aspects of research.

I heard someone say that this was about medical research. I would like to emphasize that the bill is not only about medical research. It is medical research and more. It is about all disciplines, including the discipline of ethics. We have an opportunity here to have a very comprehensive look at health research.

Unique in the bill is that it contains a long preamble. One of the provisions in the preamble speaks to the flexibility in the mechanism. This will give us the opportunity to adjust to the changing times and needs of the day.

• (1650)

Let me just state for the record again that the ultimate objective of the institute will be to develop excellence according to internationally accepted standards. This excellence will be applied both in the creation of new knowledge and its application. Its application will encompass the delivery of health services as well as the strengthening of the Canadian health care system.

I was surprised when I heard it would be located in Prince Edward Island. There is nothing in the bill that says it will be located in Prince Edward Island. In fact, the head office is about the only one that may be located in a place designated by the governor in council, and even that has not been defined.

This is an excellent bill that reflects the commitment of the government not only to excel but equally to budget for such excellence in health research. The bill is worthy of the support of every single member of the House because this is the type of research, the scope of which is definitely very encompassing, including such things as biomedical research, clinical research, research respecting health systems, health services, as well as studying all the other determinants of health, such as the environment, cultural aspects and so on. It will engage all types of researchers not only in the medical field but in other fields of health as well.

I certainly urge all members of the House to support the bill.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Health.

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

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[Translation]

CANADIAN TOURISM COMMISSION ACT

The House resumed from November 26 consideration of the motion that Bill C-5, an act to establish the Canadian Tourism Commission, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are now debating Bill C-5, an act to establish the Canadian Tourism Commission. In fact, the Canadian tourism commission already exists and it has a number of employees, some of whom even work outside the country, but Bill C-5 seeks to turn the existing commission into a crown corporation.

Indeed, the basic objective of the bill is to make this administrative but substantial change by taking the Canadian tourism commission as it currently exists and turning it into a crown corporation with all the changes that this involves.

Let me read the very short summary in which the objects of the Canadian tourism commission are defined:

This enactment establishes a Crown corporation to be known as the Canadian Tourism Commission. The Commission's objects are to

- (a) sustain a vibrant and profitable Canadian tourism industry;
- (b) market Canada as a desirable tourist destination;
- (c) support a cooperative relationship between the private sector and the governments of Canada, the provinces and the territories with respect to Canadian tourism; and
- (d) provide information about Canadian tourism to the private sector and to the governments of Canada, the provinces and the territories.

Later on in my speech I will get back to the last two objectives and to some issues regarding tourism and the roles of other players, including provincial governments.

● (1655)

In Quebec there is major activity by the Quebec government in market niches that could be different from those chosen by the Canadian tourism commission.

We should not forget that the Canadian tourism commission as we know it is relatively recent. It is a bit surprising that, in such a short time span, it should become a crown corporation. I have a hard time believing that this two step process was not planned from the outset. The first step was to give the commission its existing administrative structure, and the second one is to say that the obvious choice is to turn it into a crown corporation.

Right now, the commission's funding comes from the federal government, but also from various players in the tourist industry under special partnerships or in specific niches. We have no intention of condemning the work being done by the Canadian

tourism commission. Our opposition to this bill stems from the fact that the federal government could very well use the commission, as it has other departments, to invade the tourism jurisdiction.

The commission now reports to the Minister of Industry, but its new status as a crown corporation will not stop the department from having programs and taking action in the tourist industry.

I am thinking of the Economic Development Agency, which is accountable to the Minister of Industry, in the final analysis. Particularly as it applies to us in Quebec, the Canada Economic Development Agency for the Regions in Quebec, formerly known as Federal Office of Regional Development for Quebec, has become involved in the past—and still is—in certain niches, to support tourism.

Nobody is against helping tourism, on the contrary. There is a lot of money to be made in tourism, which is very useful for economic development. We all want more visitors to come to Canada, as opposed to Canadians going to other countries. We want to reduce the tourism deficit in certain parts of the country. We all want to improve that.

Let us recall the plans and objectives the government set not that long ago, on February 27, 1996. We have to put things back in their context. At that time, we were at the beginning of the session following the referendum, which took place in October 1995.

In the throne speech, the government addressed the issue of tourism. I will read a few quotes from the throne speech describing the federal government's position concerning its approach to tourism development.

The speech included the following:

The Government is prepared to withdraw from its functions in such areas as labour market training, forestry, mining, and recreation, that are more appropriately the responsibility of others, including provincial governments, local authorities or the private sector.

In the following paragraph, we read:

The federal government will propose to the provinces a much strengthened process to work in partnership, focussing on such priorities as food inspection, environmental management, social housing, tourism and freshwater fish habitat.

I will not talk about the failures in areas mentioned in that paragraph, other than tourism. I am thinking of social housing, in particular. No later than last weekend, we saw many people demonstrating in front of the building where the Liberal Party was holding its convention to protest against the attitude and the role of the federal government in social housing.

Let us go back to tourism. The same government that said that it wanted to give the provinces the greater role they wanted did not do

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much to reach that goal. Instead, it became less and less of a partner.

By creating a crown corporation which, we expect, will receive more and more money and will be supported by other departments like the one I mentioned, Canada Economic Development, especially as Quebec is concerned, the federal government is clearly showing that it wants to decide for itself how it will be involved in tourism.

This brings to mind another motion adopted by parliament. The Prime Minister alluded to it today. It was supposed to be a major motion to recognize the distinct character of Quebec.

• (1700)

It is strange to see how little of this motion is reflected in the bills we pass, or even in the interpretation of existing legislation.

To me, it is obvious that Quebec, with its distinct culture and particular characteristics, is in the best position to sell its tourism product. The cultural niche is a very interesting aspect to develop in order to promote Quebec throughout the world and to attract tourists.

As members know, several regions organize numerous festivals and events that are the signs of great dynamism. With all great international events that occur throughout the summer, Montreal is in a very good position. I know that my colleague, the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, will be speaking later. These events occur in his own neighbourhood; he will mention them.

All summer long, Montreal is alive with a wide range of activities that attract many tourists from all over the world. The Quebec City summer festival is also growing in scale. The tourism season is growing longer. The occupancy rate in the hotels is constantly increasing.

So, things are going pretty well. However, I think that Quebec is in the best position to do its own marketing, to sell what it has to offer and to let its organisers enhance the great talents that we have everywhere in our province to promote these events, instead of relying more and more on a Canadian tourism commission that will play an increasingly significant role and that will decide which are the best products to promote, from a Canadian perspective or under a Canadian strategy to sell tourism.

Obviously, partnerships will have to be developed. There are many partnerships that can be struck in the tourism field between Quebec and Canada, Quebec and some of the other provinces. It would, in my opinion, be wiser to let them define their strategies and forge their own partnerships for joint campaigns aimed at other countries, instead of having to fall in line with an orientation in which the federal government will, as always, be seeking to enhance its role and, ultimately, to gain a higher profile.

I have enormous concerns about what the federal government might be tempted to do in future, even if this is a crown corporation. It might say "Well yes, it is, but it has considerable independence". It must be kept in mind, however, just how its membership will be made up, the control the minister will continue to have, if only through the appointments he will be able to make.

The government does have a considerable amount of control. Looking at existing crown corporations, and I am thinking of Canada Post among others, and at the person it has at its head, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs here, Mr. Ouellet, how could one not conclude that there is considerable collusion with government in certain directions Canada Post has taken, although taken in an independent manner. When the friends of the regime are put into such positions, there are reasons, rewards are due and in certain cases political patronage. As well, in certain cases, there is the desire to retain a degree of control, and certain affinities, so the position goes to a member of the "old boys' network".

This allows de facto control to be retained while hiding behind the theoretical independence of these corporations, so as not have to answer to us here. They do, of course, have to report to parliament. Their officers will appear before the committee, but this is a relatively simple exercise compared to a minister being accountable to the House on a daily basis.

There is still a link, but I can already predict that, if any problem occurs, in response to questions, the Minister of Industry will say that the commission is operating at arm's length, that it is a crown corporation and that the government cannot get involved. But in real life, when it suits its purpose, the government can get involved through indirect channels. In this case, it will have every reason to say "Listen, we cannot do that because of the commission's arm's length relationship with the government".

The Minister of Industry tends to take this position with respect to CRTC rulings, a commission that makes fundamental decisions regarding the future of several key sectors, such as culture and telecommunications. The Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Minister of Industry can hide behind the independence of such organizations.

As for the commission per se, things are going relatively well right now, but I am very concerned about the future. It is difficult to trust the government, because it has been so obsessed with visibility in taking any action.

• (1705)

I am convinced that no department makes a decision now without worrying about the federal government's visibility. It is very clear that the Canadian Tourism Commission will meet the same fate, with this sort of additional autonomy they will get along

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with additional funding eventually, as is currently the case to some extent anyway.

The bill also provides that the location of the head office may be designated by cabinet through an order in council. The commission will remain in the same premises, but since the bill allows cabinet to choose the place, to group them where it will, it is a safe bet that the day is not far off when the government will say they have to be brought together in a single building, separate from the department, because it is not healthy for a Crown corporation to be located in premises belonging to the Department of Industry.

The day is not far off when, as the government did patiently in creating the commission and in making it a Crown corporation, the next step will be to give it its own facilities and to reward a riding or a specific region by sending this group of people there.

There is nothing explicit in this sense, but mark my words. I am convinced that one day there will be people wanting to take this Crown corporation and arrange it in some other way or take it some other place.

I come back to certain descriptions of the bill's contents. I am thinking, among other things, of the powers of the commission. The Canadian Tourism Commission is to be established as a corporation with all the accompanying rights, powers and privileges. It could therefore acquire property, such as facilities for its head office. However, the bill prevents the Canadian Tourism Commission from financing or owning real property or facilities related to tourism.

I would like to make an aside here. The mandate of the commission is to promote tourism products. It is not its role to finance infrastructure or to own it. But the government is making other interventions to this end rather than collect fewer taxes and leave the provinces that have to manage that a little more tax room.

In most cases, there are tourism offices in the regions. There are various players in the tourism sector. Regional development boards can have a back-up role and provide funding support, but government players can co-ordinate their efforts and support a whole industry.

Nothing prevents the commission from broadening its mandate, if it were tempted to do so in the future, but for the time being it is not doing so. Rather, it leaves it to other branches of the federal government, such as economic development agencies.

With regard to authority, it is obvious that, if the government is providing for the ability to set up facilities elsewhere, the day is not far off when it will happen.

With regard to the board of directors, it is supposed to have increased decision making powers over administrative matters on

top of matters relating to activities and programs. The board will have greater autonomy than it currently does.

With regard to agreements, the Canadian Tourism Commission will have to authority to enter into agreements with one or several provincial or territorial governments to carry out its objects. With the approval of the governor in council, the corporation may, either by itself or jointly with any person or the government of a province or a territory, acquire shares in or assets of a corporation.

With regard to human resources management, it will be responsible for negotiating its employees working conditions.

So far, there does not seem to be any problem with unionized employees who are going to join the crown corporation. It seems to have been well negotiated; when the bill comes to the committee, we will have the opportunity to look into the matter closely to make sure the transition will go smoothly as far as working conditions are concerned.

With regard to reporting, it is said that the president of the Canadian Tourism Commission will present to the board of directors an annual business plan, an annual report, and performance reports whenever necessary. The annual activity plan of the Canadian tourism commission will be approved by the minister and Treasury Board. Each year, the board of directors will report on the results obtained to the minister, who will table them in the House. The chairperson will no longer report on administrative issues and other matters to the deputy minister".

● (1710)

Therefore, a lot of reports and other documents will be submitted to the minister. But as I said earlier, chances are that the minister will choose not to be so accountable to parliament and hide behind the fact that we are dealing with a crown corporation.

In theory, however, the minister is still responsible, and I hope he or someone from his department will confirm it in committee. I hope he will reassert his role and his responsibilities towards the Canadian tourism commission, because if there are problems, he will be held accountable. But I do have a lot of concerns about this.

A number of things are also mentioned in the mandate. When this bill goes to committee, I do hope that the Minister of Industry will be among the witnesses heard and that the development agencies will get the chance to explain their vision of what they do for tourism and how it is in line with the strategies mentioned in the 1996 throne speech. That speech was supposed to highlight the main strategies of the government and deal, among other things, with tourism. That happened after the referendum, when the federal government wanted to show that it could be a little more flexible.

However, they were quick to change their tune, especially last week, when they showed how inflexible they are and unwilling to

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accommodate Quebec within their system. They prefer to threaten to change the rules and define the conditions if Quebec wants to leave. They will set the rules, they say. They are getting tougher than ever.

They no longer talk about accommodating our needs. Even if the minister is saying that he is reaching out to the Premier of Quebec and he is willing to co-operate and talk, in reality, all the speeches and motions on the distinct society do not contain anything substantial, and what they do contain are not necessarily the most basic things.

In the tourism sector, it would not be complicated to leave the money to the Quebec government and tell it to increase its support for tourism or to improve its tourism infrastructure since it has a distinct culture, even though the Prime Minister himself does not recognize that fact. He said before that there was no distinct culture in Quebec, but there are people around him who must realize there is one. We should sell our cultural products, sell what we are and what we do.

Unfortunately, this does not seem to be part of the spirit in which the commission was established and in which it will be refocused. For these reasons, we cannot support this bill. However, we will raise questions and give the government one more chance. We will try to convince it to change its mind when we study this bill at the committee stage and then at the report stage.

We want to know if the government will be able to accommodate us and recognize the role of the Quebec government, among others, in the promotion of the tourism industry, particularly from a cultural point of view. We do not want empty promises, we do not want idle talk about discussing and co-operating, and so on; we want to see how the government will formally recognize this role.

I will conclude by stressing the great concern we have because, with all the money the federal government now has at its disposal, it is very likely that, once again, it will totally ignore the jurisdictions and priorities of the Quebec government and set its own policies.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I wish to ask the Bloc member if those involved in trade and tourism in Quebec agree with the orientation of this bill, more specifically if they support the creation of a crown corporation.

Mr. Pierre Brien: Madam Speaker, to be perfectly frank, we will have the opportunity in committee to hear the opinions of different groups, including the boards of trade.

There are two approaches now in Quebec. Some people say “They will create the structure, and we will try to get our share of the spinoffs from its mandate”.

• (1715)

But some others are clearly worried that the federal government, with the huge surpluses it now has, will launch all kinds of initiatives, and invest a lot of money to improve a myriad of programs.

Business people in particular, and I do not mean boards of trade as such, but numerous business people—during the weekend I attended a gala hosted by a board of trade in my riding—told me “We are worried that the federal government, with the huge surpluses it has announced, over \$90 billion in the years ahead, will decide to spend this money right, left and centre in the form of all sorts of initiatives, which is what the Liberals were so good at doing in the past rather than helping us lower taxes. We will form partnerships ourselves, improve our own ability to step in, and we will have more money to develop our own projects, rather than let the government decide which project it will support”.

Clearly, there is a very strong feeling in Quebec’s business community, and elsewhere, that what the federal government should be doing right now is giving far greater attention to lowering taxes, which are out of all proportion to the role and responsibilities it assumes on a daily basis.

Many members of the business community would like to see it stop throwing money around. They are also worried that a crown corporation will want to spend a lot of money and that the government will give it more and more funding, even if it is capable of generating outside revenue. So, there are two schools of thought.

As for the official positions of the boards of trade, we will have an opportunity to ask them during committee study. But it is clear that people are worried, but also cautious, because these associations also include representatives of the tourism industry, and they are going to want to allow their members to go after as much funding as possible, once the programs are in place.

But they would like more leeway to establish their own priorities, instead of it always being the government that decides what is and is not good for the development of the tourist and other industries.

[English]

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to my friend from Témiscamingue and must say that I support much of what he said. I also acknowledge that some of the concerns he raised were legitimate ones, particularly from his perspective.

Let us look forward with some vision in the next few years to a commission where the federal government would take its responsibility for introducing Canada to the world. I think we all agree that

as a country we have an attractive tourism potential that is almost unique in the world. We are a country with pristine landscapes from coast to coast that are vast, open territories, to say nothing about a variety of enhanced cultural benefits to the landscapes.

Would my friend from Témiscamingue say that there is a place for the federal government to play a role in setting aside some large perspectives in terms of attracting people to come to Canada for a variety of purposes based primarily on tourism, that within that context provincial governments would take up the challenge to promote their provincial benefits to the tourism sector, and that within the provinces, the regions and the various boards of trade, chambers of commerce or tourism development companies would take it upon themselves to promote their own sub-regions in terms of tourist potential?

This would entail the Canadian government going out on a large, national campaign, leaving it up to the provinces and territories to do provincial and territorial campaigns and leaving it up to a whole set of sub-regions to promote the benefits of their particular areas. It would be the best parts of different levels of governments working together. Of course all of this would include the private sector in terms of the facilities for tourism they would be providing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Brien: Madam Speaker, I understand my colleague's question. It is clear that it would be good if partnerships were established, either between provinces or between various organizations and governments to promote tourism and say "Look at all we have in Canada. There are different elements, different things".

It would be good for certain people to market their products jointly under this banner. This is very true and I can also understand that some Canadians will say "We want to market our tourist attractions jointly".

That could create some problems though. For example, if Quebec were to decide for one reason or another to focus on one particular form of tourism, cultural activities, summer festivals, etc. Montreal and its international character, we would of course want to promote those aspects.

• (1720)

But if suddenly the Canadian tourism commission were to decide that it is another product from Quebec it would like to promote, we would then have two different orientations, two priorities. When we want to sell or to market a particular product, we cannot have two priorities. It is very difficult for the industry to send a joint message on its priority.

The Canadian tourism commission could have priorities that differ from the ones established by other organisations like Tou-

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risme Québec, which reports to the Quebec government. That could create tension.

I would prefer it if the various organizations and the provinces had a bigger budget and decided together which particular projects they will pursue and how they will promote their industry.

One must be realistic. When people come to see different things, whether in Quebec or Canada, they come to see some specific area. It is rare that anyone would visit a whole country. And in this case, it is two countries in one.

The west is known for the Rockies and skiing. British Columbia is a beautiful region. Quebec City is one of the most beautiful cities in Quebec, even in North America. Montreal is a very vibrant city where several cultures rub shoulders. Montreal is a city with a French atmosphere, even if we would like it to be more pronounced. There are many things to see in the various regions of Quebec.

In my region, Abitibi—Témiscamingue, there is so much to see. We like people to come to see our various attractions, our wide open spaces, our well organized events. These include the trucking rodeo, the international regattas. We also offer interesting cultural events and adventure tourism.

I would prefer to see our regional organizations with a bit more power, to see the Government of Quebec with a bit more, and then we will look at what we can do together, rather than the other way around always, saying "since we want to sell other countries on Canada, we will define it up at this level. Then later we will see what the lower levels can do to get some of it back". I prefer initiatives to come from the bottom up, via natural and obvious groupings. That is the base from which we will market our tourist attractions.

I agree that there is a lot that exists. We can still do more than in the past to sell all the sights and activities available to tourists in Quebec and in the rest of Canada, and to improve the financial share we have of tourism, one that is not always to our advantage.

One thing has always been seen as a hindrance to tourism: our winters. Many people like to go south in the winter. There is a lot that can be done to sell the idea of winter tourism. A number of things must be developed further, in this regard. As well, investment must be made in the related infrastructures. We are still relatively new to this on the regional level.

Thinking of my own region, the oldest cities are barely 100 years old. Clearly there is still much to be done to develop more structured infrastructures to welcome tourists, to give more prominence to all the potential tourist attractions we have. This is not just true in summer; there is much to do in winter as well.

I do not in any way share the vision of my colleague. I understand his concerns, his desire to see a Canadian label on

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things. What I would like to see is for the Quebec label to be in the international eye, for people to be told that we exist, that Quebec exists. I want to see our own Quebec label, our own emblem, on Quebec tourism products.

[English]

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I would like to say that it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C-5, the Canadian tourism commission act, but I would be telling an untruth if I did.

Given the grand scheme of the problems in the nation today such as child poverty which my colleagues from the NDP have been mentioning, homelessness that has come to the forefront today, high tax rates, the problems of our businesses, the fact that families are trying to make ends meet but cannot, and the collapse of our health care system, what is the government dealing with? What is on the agenda? It is an act to deal with the Canadian tourism commission.

What else was on the agenda today? It was an act dealing with the Canadian institutes for health research, an important issue in the aspect of medicine, but it pales in comparison when we consider how we could try to improve our health care system so that people can obtain the health care they need. Rather than dealing with the substantive problems in our nation today we are dealing with fluff.

● (1725)

Before I get to the substance of Bill C-5, I want to put into perspective what we should be dealing with rather than what we are dealing with today. I want to read a small vignette which I got from a colleague of mine, an emergency room physician, very recently. It shows what the House should be dealing with and what the government should be dealing with rather than what we are dealing with today.

He went to work yesterday at 7 o'clock in the morning to find the overnight guy looking shattered. He had been on his own from 5 o'clock until seven o'clock in the morning, and 21 admitted patients were in the department. There were no beds in the city.

The emergency medical services were on divert to other equally overcrowded emergency rooms. The very good and kind charge nurse, who desperately tried to keep her head above water and not let anybody die in the waiting room because there was no bed in the department, expressed her disgust at production line medicine. She said there was little time for compassion. The trauma room was full. The cardiac area was full. My friend was worrying about the complaint letter that was sure to follow.

He remembered a good friend in a rare moment of insight saying that we should never let the system take the compassion out of us.

The sick deserve better. That is exactly what is happening today. We should do something before it becomes irreversible like is already happening to many of his colleagues who are retired, burnt out, angry and frustrated.

Australia wanted him. It made that clear and did everything it could to get him. He said that it was nice to be wanted, even if meant leaving his home. At least it meant that he would spend more time with his wife and family whom he loves dearly. They also deserve better.

That is a poignant, heart wrenching letter from an emergency room colleague of mine who is leaving for Australia because he cannot provide the care that Canadians deserve in the health care system.

Rather than dealing with the important issue that Canadians are suffering, we are dealing with Bill C-5, an act to establish the Canadian tourism commission. I would only hope that one day the government would wake up and decide to deal with something substantive, something life threatening, so that people like this gentleman and his wife, who is also a doctor, do not have to leave to go to a far away land because they cannot provide the care for patients that Canadians well deserve.

Our observations indicate that Bill C-5 moves in the right direction. It moves toward having a more private involvement in the way in which tourism is sold and, as my colleague from the NDP mentioned very eloquently, how we can sell Canada abroad.

We will oppose the bill because it will make the commission a crown corporation. We do not believe that crown corporations can do a good job. We believe that the facility selling Canada should be a private arm's length organization which can do a better job and be more nimble, rather than have the long arm of the government meddling in the affairs of the commission.

The particular commission will have a 26 member decision making board, predominantly comprised of private sector companies that direct an interest in establishing Canada as a preferred tourism destination. Essentially it is paid for half by public and half by private funds. We think that is moving in the right direction but it is not going far enough.

That is why we will oppose it. We can only hope that the government sees the wisdom in what the Reform Party is saying and that we move toward privatizing this institution.

If we want to really sell Canada let us look at some ways in which we could do that. Let us look at using our embassies as a tool for selling Canada much more than what they do today. There is a great capacity in our embassies all over the world. We could use the fine people who work there as great ambassadors in terms of selling Canada as a tourist destination.

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We could also be more aggressive in how we develop private partnerships such as with Canadian Airlines or Air Canada so they too could be our representatives abroad in selling Canada. More people would be able to choose Canada as a destination in which to spend their foreign dollars.

• (1730)

The chamber of commerce could also be used. It has spoken eloquently on how we can improve our economy. It is an effective body with great ideas. It can be a tremendous help to various organizations around the country. It could tie them together to be an aggressive, proactive force for tourism within Canada.

Those are things the government could do rather than tinkering around the edges. It is taking little baby steps in moving the commission to a crown corporation.

The government has not been very friendly to tourism. There are things it should be doing but which it is not doing. In my riding of Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, the government's actions last year were devastating. For a purely political decision that ultimately would have saved some fish, the government made decisions on banning sports fishing that cost \$20 million and up to 200 jobs in my area. The ban was not done in the interests of saving the fish. It was done on purely political grounds. It had devastating effects in my riding and in all of south Vancouver Island.

If the minister were truly interested in building a strong sports fishing industry and a strong commercial fishing industry, then the government would have taken a multifactorial approach in dealing with overfishing and habitat control and renewal. It would have determined ways in which we could have a sustainable fishery by dividing up the pie responsibly and determining how large the pie should be, rather than being very narrow minded and taking a short term solution that eventually cost sports fishing people in my area a lot of money and jobs. People are falling so far behind the eight ball that they are not sure they will get back on their feet in the future.

This has had a devastating effect on tourism in south Vancouver Island. If the government were truly interested in doing the right thing, it would look at how those decisions affect people in the tourism industry. It would reverse them where they are compatible with having a sustainable fishery that is congruent with a strong environmental concern, as in this case.

The government could also do some constructive things to build our economy. The reason people come to this country for tourism is largely because of our low dollar. That is nothing to be proud of. The low dollar is a double-edged sword. People come to Canada to spend their money because our dollar is low. On the other hand the low dollar has a devastating effect on our exporters and companies that rely on importing goods from abroad and which have to pay in a foreign currency. Furthermore it affects Canadians when they buy products that are from abroad.

There are various things the government can and should do in order to strengthen our economy. We have a strong tourism potential but we must also ensure that we have high paying jobs that are sustainable in the future.

Many ideas come from the Business Council on National Issues. It has put forward some very constructive ideas on how to improve our economy.

One deals with the level of public debt. The federal debt is about \$570 billion. When that is combined with the provincial debt and other debts of crown corporations such as would be created with Bill C-5, the debt level approaches \$1 trillion which every man, woman and child in the country has to pay back.

We are also losing a lot of skilled workers. This is not a figment of our imagination as the Prime Minister alluded to in one of his speeches. We only need to look at some of our educational institutions. The University of Waterloo is the backbone of our high tech industry with engineering, mathematics and computer science graduates. Almost 100% of the people graduating from co-op programs at Waterloo left the country. This is the backbone of our country's future ability to be internationally competitive. We are losing our best and brightest people as a direct result of the poor economic performance and poor tax structure in this country.

• (1735)

For years Reform has been articulating strong, constructive solutions to deal with the tax situation. Our finance critic and other of my colleagues have put forth constructive solutions. We have given the government a step by step plan on how to reduce taxes pragmatically and effectively. It would strengthen our social programs rather than compromise them. It would not compromise the poor. It would create jobs, not remove them. It would be a net benefit to Canadians.

We have given the government that plan yet a lot of games are being played. There has been a lot of obfuscation and inaction. That is not what Canadians want. Canadians want action now. We need only ask any of the small business people who are trying to make ends meet, and those who are making ends meet are just making it.

There are some solutions in order to decrease taxes. We could increase the basic spousal allowance amount. Reform has put this forward many times. By increasing it, we would get the poorest of the poor completely off the list. Reform's tax solutions would take 200,000 of the poorest of the poor off the tax lists.

That would dramatically improve the situation for the homeless and the poor. It would give them money to improve their standard of living. It would also increase the money in the public coffers. We know that by reducing taxes somewhat people will spend more

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money and more money will go into the public coffers. There would be more investment in Canada from abroad. That would stimulate the economy. The more money that goes into the public coffers, the more money there will be for the homeless, health care and to strengthen our social programs.

High taxes are the enemy of the poor. High taxes are the enemy of our social programs. To be fiscally irresponsible is also to be socially irresponsible. Overspending kills jobs and social programs and hurts the poor.

We could complete the elimination of the 3% general surtax that began in the 1988 budget. That would stimulate companies particularly those in the tourism industry. It would enable them to be more effective sellers of Canada and Canadian goods.

We could decrease the EI premiums. Again, Reform spoke at length about decreasing the EI premiums. It is a tax. It is a tax on business and a tax on the people. It prevents businesses from being competitive and it takes away their ability to provide jobs.

We also dealt with decreasing the tax bracket. Increasing the 26% tax bracket threshold by \$2,000 would eliminate or prevent bracket creep at the lowest level. We could increase the 29% tax bracket threshold by \$4,000 which would reverse the bracket creep. We could further reduce the rate from 26% to 21%.

A lot could be done to decrease the taxes. By decreasing taxes our companies would be competitive nationally and internationally.

As I mentioned before, it would reverse that trend of people who are leaving. My colleague is leaving Canada because he cannot provide the medical and health care for his patients because the resources are not there. Nurses are following suit. It is very interesting to note that in the next 11 years we will have a deficit of 112,000 nurses.

Who is going to take care of us when we get old? Who will treat us in the hospitals? There will not be enough people. If we think it is bad now, wait until the future. Our population will be older. Baby boomers will be retiring. Technology will be more expensive. There will be fewer workers and less money in the public purse. That money is essential in order to deal with the challenges ahead in our health care system.

• (1740)

We also have to deal with global and domestic risks. The issues of Quebec separatism and treaty rights negotiations are causing incredible uncertainty within our country. The Prime Minister has opened a Pandora's box on separation. If the Prime Minister truly wants to deal with the issue of secession, he needs to afford all Canadians, including the people of Quebec, a plan on federalism.

We need to get the resources to the people more effectively and ensure that the provinces do what the provinces do best and that the feds do what the feds do best. He needs to delineate the responsibilities of both more clearly in order to reduce the overlap and make sure there is a more efficient and wise use of our dollars. It is not enough to merely throw money at a problem. There has to be accountability and an effective plan of action. One has to check up to make sure the plan is effective.

There is the issue of treaty negotiations in my province. The government and the House are dealing with the issue of the Nisga'a treaty. The Nisga'a treaty is the template for 50 other treaties which will be looked at in B.C. and in combination with the Delgamuukw decision will ensure that treaties signed in other parts of the country east of the Rockies are opened up. That is going to cause tremendous uncertainty. It is going to cost Canadians money and jobs. It is going to cost dollars. It is going to reduce our tax revenues. It is going to make it less effective for companies to sell our country abroad, to say "Come to Canada. We are a great country".

We have to manage global risks too. In the last few years there has been great uncertainty in the international financial markets. The WTO is meeting in Seattle. It is hoped some element of certainty will come out of that, an element of fairness and rules for international trade.

We also have to look at international money markets. The rapid transit of large amounts of capital has an incredibly destabilizing effect on international currencies. We saw what it did in southeast Asia. We saw the impact on the Canadian dollar. We saw the impact on international markets. They plunged downward because of the rapid movement of large amounts of capital to various parts of the world. There has to be some method, some rules based system of ensuring that rapid movement cannot destabilize the system we have today.

As I said before, there is a need for the reduction of the debt. The reduction of the debt remains a top priority for us. Every \$10 billion reduction in debt will reduce by \$700 million the amount of Canadians' money the government spends on interest rates alone. That roughly \$37 billion spent every single year by the government using the taxpayers' money, money people work for, is sent to the people who lent Canada the \$570 billion that the feds owe. We need to deal with that.

In closing, Bill C-5 in the grand scheme of things should be low in the priorities of what the government is dealing with. The government should be dealing with homelessness. It should be dealing with taxes. It should be dealing with social program renewal. It should be dealing with saving our health care system. It should be dealing with the issues that are germane and important to the lives of Canadians.

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We in the Reform Party are going to continue to push the government to deal with those important issues that can save Canadian lives. If we cannot deal with that in the House, the nation's prime legislating body, then where can we deal with it? Our party will continue to put forward constructive solutions.

• (1745)

Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have a question and comment for my colleague. The comment concerns a remark he made about the views of the hon. member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys with respect to selling Canada. I heard that member this morning make an almost hysterical speech with regard to what he views as the undesirability of selling Canada. I would love to correct that point.

I wonder if my colleague has given any consideration to the problems for tourism that are being created in this country through the collapse of our infrastructure, particularly our highway system which is an absolute national disgrace.

We have what is called a national highway system that is more like the national goat path. People who want to drive from Etobicoke to Banff jump in the car, hook the trailer on and away they go. But where do they go? They certainly do not follow the Trans-Canada highway. They go down through Michigan, cross through the northern tier prairie states and then swing back up as close to Banff as they can get without actually touching Canadian soil. This is costing us millions of dollars in taxes. It is not just tourists who are doing this. Even the commercial truckers are doing it. They are abandoning Canada because the roads are so bad. I wonder if the member would like to comment on that problem.

Mr. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague has spent a great deal of time as the former transport critic articulating solutions to deal with the important issue of improving our infrastructure. He was absolutely correct in articulating the problems that we have in our infrastructure.

What exactly is that? It is a sign of the ultimate decrepitness and decay taking place amongst things that the government ought to be interested in. The government ought to be interested in working with the provinces to ensure that we have a strong, safe highway system. The government should also be interested in having a competent railway system. It should also be interested in ensuring that we have competent social programs. All of these are things that the government should be interested in and should be determining ways in which it can most effectively spend the money available today.

My colleague mentioned that our highway system is falling apart. It is falling apart because the government is unwise with where it spends taxpayers' money. This is the central problem. The

government tends to go on about spending money. It thinks the solution to a problem is defined by the amount of money it puts toward a problem and the more zeros behind that one, the more effective it must be in solving the problem. Wrong. That is not what it is.

We need a plan and we need to determine how to spend the money and how to spend it wisely. We must use existing experiences and the best ideas we have to build the best plan possible. If we do that we will have effective infrastructure. And some day my colleague, I hope, will be the Minister of Transport and he can enact his solutions.

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my friend from Esquimalt make his presentation. The Gods will strike me down, but I actually agreed with a good part of it. There were some parts I did not agree with but I do agree with his sentiment.

My hon. friend for Cypress Hills—Grasslands makes the case for the need for highway infrastructure. Anybody with a brain would acknowledge that we are the second largest country geographically in the world. The cost of transportation is factored into everything we purchase. Having a national highway grid system ought to be a national priority. The federal government ought to take some pride in building, establishing and maintaining a major national grid system.

The reality is that although the federal government collects volumes of money from gasoline and other fuel taxes, it puts virtually no money into the highway system. The minister of highways is not a stupid person. The government is not made up of stupid people. It is made up of people with intelligence, many with university degrees and sometimes many degrees.

Could my hon. friend explain to me why it is that intelligent thoughtful people make such an obvious mistake?

• (1750)

Mr. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from the NDP, the member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, for his very eloquent and pointed question. The real answer is to get opposition members into government. We could then solve these problems.

He is quite right. The problem is that the government right now is in a state of inaction. All it feels it really needs to do is keep the opposition fractured. What a sorry state of affairs we are in. What a sad reflection on the House when all the government has to do is behave like it is made of Teflon and try to keep the opposition fractured. This actually keeps our country far below what it can be. We should be doing much more and Canadians deserve much more.

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The member brings up a couple of very interesting points. I know he has been working very hard for the people in his riding and is very interested in infrastructure. I have a couple of points to make on the issue of rail travel.

We should be doing more to encourage rail travel, which would take the pressure off the roads and lessen the damaging effects to the highways. We should also discuss the issue of subsidies to VIA Rail. VIA Rail is a mess and needs to be cleaned from the top down. It is a bureaucratic morass and needs desperately to be restructured to make it more effective.

On the issue of gas and taxes, essentially the gas prices that we see today are in large part a tax grab. The majority of the money we pay at the pump is actually taxes that go to the provinces and the feds. The feds are taking the bulk of that money, putting it into their pocket and spending it on issues that have nothing to do with the highways. Quite frankly, one wonders where that money goes.

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have one very quick question for the member.

We know that 14 cents is taken out of the gasoline price for the provinces and about 14 cents for the federal government. That is 28 cents. The price of gas is about 60 cents. How is that the majority? How does the member do his addition to get that into a majority of the gasoline price being tax?

Mr. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, I thought the hon. member and I would disagree with our figures and with the absolute numbers that exist. The member should actually look at the taxes his government is taking away. The bulk of the money that we spend at the pump is a tax grab by the government and we do not know where that money goes. That is what the public should be complaining about.

We also have the issues of collusion and monopoly that exist between gas companies. There is no way that the price at every gas pump in the entire city should go up simultaneously, within minutes of each other, if there was no collusion.

What the Minister of Finance should be doing with his colleagues is immediately putting forth an effective task force—and I underline the word “effective” because most are not—to determine the collusion that is going on today and enact legislation as soon as possible. Members from all sides would like to support legislation that prevents the collusion that is occurring today so that the people at the pump are not paying the price and gas companies will have a level playing field where there will be fair competition.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed specifically to the area of jurisdiction. Maybe my hon. colleague has a particular comment to make on whether the province should be playing a larger role specifically in

the area of tourism. Obviously there needs to be a combined effort. Our colleagues from the Bloc mentioned earlier this idea of having a stronger role for the provinces.

Where does my hon. colleague feel that debate should go in trying to strengthen tourism as well at the provincial level? What jurisdiction should that play?

Mr. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, I know my hon. colleague has spent a great deal of time in interprovincial relations and has worked very hard on this issue for a long time.

The member speaks of greater co-operation between the provinces and the feds. What we have not seen enough of, in my personal view, on a wide variety of issues including tourism, is more co-operation.

• (1755)

The feds have an enormous leadership opportunity to bring together their provincial counterparts to a round table and say “Let us us work together. Let us find the best solutions, looking at the international experience, to making Canada the number one tourist destination in the world and to more effectively sell Canada internationally”. By working co-operatively, rather than in isolation, Canada and Canadians will receive greater justice on the international stage.

[*Translation*]

Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to speak to this bill, and I want to comment on the remarks made by the member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

Last Friday, the member said that the bill establishing the Canadian Tourism Commission was some kind of government plot to enhance federalism. The member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques said that, in fact, the bill had nothing to do with tourism but everything to do with promoting federalism. It may be.

I am only a backbencher and I do not know if the government has an non-avowed goal. On this matter, however, I think he might be right, but he may be wrong too, for there are more forests, more lakes and more pristine locations in the beautiful province of Quebec than in Ontario. In fact, I think that Canada as a whole is the most tolerant country in the world, and another non-avowed goal of this bill is to promote the Canadian spirit around the world, not only to collect money from the tourism industry but also to selling the Canadian spirit all around the world.

In the summertime there are always many tourists on Parliament Hill, taking pictures and making videos. They come from Japan,

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France, Spain, and all over the world. I believe they visit Canada to see not only to see the scenic beauty of the countryside, but also a country that has achieved, in all its regions, the greatest spirit of tolerant in the world.

I say this is what being Canadian is all about, and it goes for people in British Columbia as well as for those in Ontario and Quebec. I will give an example. This afternoon, during question period, the Prime Minister answered questions from the Bloc.

• (1800)

He said that Canada was unique as a country because its Constitution contains no provision prohibiting separation. He mentioned that the Constitution of the United States makes it absolutely impossible to break up the country and that the same is true of France. Under the French Constitution, the country cannot be tampered with, but here in Canada it possible to have a debate in the House of Commons on sovereignty, separatism, nationalism—

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to know what bill the member is speaking to. I think he is making a speech on the Constitution, but that is not the point of the exercise at the moment. With respect to the rule of relevancy, he has been giving us a speech for seven minutes now on the Constitution.

The Deputy Speaker: I am sure the hon. member for Wentworth—Burlington, who has a lot of experience, would like to debate the bill before the House. Perhaps his speech was fairly long on another point, but he will come back to the bill before us, I am sure.

Mr. John Bryden: I am speaking about a very important point.

I would like to say that many people around the world want to visit Canada to see this country, which is an example of extraordinary tolerance. Take the situation here in the House of Commons, where there are sovereignists, good Canadians in my view, separatists, also good Canadians in my view, and supporters of independence, good Canadians as well, because here in this country we can debate the most delicate of political topics.

This sets an example for everyone, and I think that the Canadian Tourism Commission is a good one, because, in my opinion, Canada has a duty to promote a spirit of tolerance around the world. I think that many people in the world want to visit Canada to see not only the countryside, but also this parliament.

During the last referendum campaign, I saw the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition debate the separation of Quebec. I think this was a very important episode in our history. It was also a

good example of the spirit of tolerance of our country. The debate that took place in this House reflected the true Canadian spirit of tolerance.

It is important to have a federal tourism commission, not just to promote Canada's beauty around the world, but also its spirit.

• (1805)

It is true that there is Tourisme Québec and also a tourist office in Ontario. But it is not the same when the idea is to promote the best country in the world.

An hon. member: It is propaganda.

Mr. John Bryden: That is not true. The member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques says it is propaganda. To tell the world that our country is the best one is not propaganda.

What is going on in Quebec, the debate in this House on nationalism and sovereignty is a good thing. But I want to explain something to hon. members opposite. The best view of Parliament Hill is from the other side of the Ottawa River. This symbolizes the Canadian reality. I am saying that because of this country's political tolerance the best view of Canada is from Quebec.

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while I have great respect for our colleague, I almost asked the page to take him a cold compress to restore his spirits and bring him around to the matter he should have been addressing, the Canadian tourism commission.

Although the member's outbursts have obviously left him incoherent, they make him no less endearing. I have three questions for him.

When he speaks of Canada and Canadian unity, when he speaks of democracy, does he have in mind the actions of the Prime Minister and his government at the APEC conference, the offhand, repressive and practically fascist manner in which they dealt with students who were within their rights to demonstrate against a dictator who was on Canadian soil?

When he speaks of Canada's tradition of democracy, where does the APEC affair and the Prime Minister's authoritarian attitude fit in?

Second, with respect to Canadian democracy, does he have in mind an incident the likes of which has never been seen in any other industrialized nation, and I am thinking of a head of government, such as the Prime Minister, behaving like a common thug and grabbing the throat of an unemployed worker, who had come to take part in a democratic protest, as we are permitted to do under the charter—

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The Deputy Speaker: I have considerable difficulty understanding the relation between this question and the hon. member's speech.

Perhaps the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve would ask the member for Wentworth—Burlington a question concerning his speech, or the bill before the House.

Mr. Réal Ménard: Mr. Speaker, I have the utmost respect for your authority. You allowed the member to talk about these issues, and I would have a hard time understanding partiality on your part since you have always served the House so well.

For 20 minutes, you allowed the member to talk about these issues and I think I should have the right to do the same. You should have risen earlier or not have risen at all during my speech.

The member showed bad faith. He talked about Canada's democratic tradition, without referring to certain essential elements of such democratic tradition.

• (1810)

Yes, Canada has a democratic tradition, but there have been a few blunders. I would have liked the member to recognize that, if he wants to talk about Canada's democratic tradition, he must talk about APEC and about the action taken by the Prime Minister when he himself assaulted a protester here, on Parliament Hill.

I want to remind him that, if he wants to talk about democracy, his government is poised to trample one of the most legitimate rights of the National Assembly, which is to decide when it, as the only real representative of francophones with regard to their right to self-determination, will decide how Quebecers will be consulted.

So I ask the member, where is democracy in the case of APEC, where is democracy in the case of the action taken by the Prime Minister, and will he distance himself from the government when it gets ready to trample one of the National Assembly's most legitimate rights? And, Mr. Speaker, I ask you to be impartial because that is what is expected of the Chair.

Mr. John Bryden: Mr. Speaker, this is how separatists and federalists speak to each other.

I was there when the Prime Minister ran into that demonstrator in Hull. It was quite dreadful, because the Prime Minister and the demonstrators exchanged words in front of school children. For a brief moment, in an amusement park with ice sculptures, a demonstrator shouted dreadful things. Then, the Prime Minister left the stage and the demonstrator stepped in his way. Any normal human being would have reacted the same way, and I saw how the Prime Minister reacted.

In British Columbia, RCMP officers had to deal with students in a very difficult situation. I once was a reporter and I can tell the House that the media have exploited the situation and ignored the facts.

Lastly, I think Reformers have created quite a stir with the questions they chose to ask in the House of Commons about this event, because I believed that Canadians for the most part understand what happened when the students decided to confront the RCMP in order to grab the headlines.

[English]

Mr. Philip Mayfield: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This intervention began at five minutes to the hour. It is now 20 minutes later. In the speech, the questions and the comments I have not heard anything about the Canadian tourism commission or Bill C-5. This is totally irrelevant to the topic at hand, which is an important topic that deserves to be debated and discussed.

I object to this harangue between the government member and the Bloc member on a matter that is totally irrelevant.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair has already expressed its concern twice. I know that hon. members have a wide latitude and I assume that they were suggesting that perhaps something to do with the constitutional status of various provinces in Canada might have something to do with the attractiveness of the country as it concerns tourism. I do not know.

• (1815)

However, I, like the hon. member, have been waiting and hoping that we might get closer to the bill before the House. I know the hon. member for Wentworth—Burlington, as he moves to conclude his remarks, will want to do that.

[Translation]

Mr. John Bryden: Mr. Speaker, I have said all I wanted to say.

[English]

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I too was intrigued, in fact mesmerized, to see how the member for Wentworth—Burlington could work the Prime Minister's Shawinigan handshake into tourism.

If the member could do that, I think it is well worth the House allowing him a little latitude in his speech because, as my friend from Grasslands pointed out, this is an intriguing subject. If somehow the Prime Minister choking some protester could be worked into Canada's tourism, I would be intrigued to know how the hon. member would suggest we do that.

Mr. John Bryden: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question because it gives me an opportunity to conclude by

observing that what I was trying to say, and I do not know whether I was successful or not, was that Canada is bigger than just tourism. We are admired worldwide because of our spirit of tolerance. There is no better example of it than the fact that we can have a dialogue here, a real dialogue among Canadians who do not share the same views of national unity.

I think that is something to celebrate. I think that when we speak of tourism I want to brag about not just my lakes, forests and mountains, but I want to brag about this parliament that permits the kind of debate that we have here.

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I must say that I have mixed feelings about this debate. We are debating at second reading Bill C-5, an act to establish the Canadian tourism commission.

The bill states that the enactment will establish a crown corporation to be known as the Canadian tourism commission. Clause 5 states:

The objects of the commission are to

- (a) sustain a vibrant and profitable Canadian tourism industry;
- (b) market Canada as a desirable tourist destination;
- (c) support a cooperative relationship between the private sector and the governments of Canada, the provinces and the territories with respect to Canadian tourism; and
- (d) provide information about Canadian tourism to the private sector and to the governments of Canada, the provinces and the territories.

It is difficult for anyone who has an interest in the future of tourism in our country to oppose this legislation. I appreciate that there are other priorities that we should probably be dealing with. I want to say that tourism is a significant economic priority that ought to be pursued.

We know what is swirling around the countryside. We know that this week delegates from more than 100 nations will meet in Seattle to discuss the World Trade Organization's new round of negotiations. Reports tell us that there are tens of thousands of people in the streets opposing that initiative. I hear from my friend from Esquimalt that he is concerned about other social issues, like homelessness, the lack of affordable housing, the aging population and the implications that that has for housing, health care and other social programs. There are one and a half million children living in poverty. We could look at the pulverizing the Canadian cultural sector is taking, to say nothing about agriculture, fisheries, forestry and the fact that our water is being threatened in terms of exports. There are huge national issues before us and today the government is saying that it wants to discuss Bill C-5 to set up the Canadian tourism commission.

It has to be seen in that context. I would just as soon be talking about a lot of other things, but if this is all we have to do for the rest

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of the day, then so be it, this is what I will talk about and I will talk about it with some relish.

• (1820)

My colleague from Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre gave a very eloquent presentation the other day. I would encourage anyone who was not here to see it, listen to it or watch that very creative and thoughtful performance to read *Hansard*. I would think it is probably the kind of speech in *Hansard* that one would want to clip out and place on a placard in one's bedroom.

Some of the details of Bill C-5 do not have to be covered. I want to say that there are other aspects of tourism that we should consider. At the top of the list, in my judgment, would be to complement the work done by the commission. We should be using more staff from our embassies, consulates and high commissions. These Canadian men and women, and nationals from the respective countries, represent Canada on extremely limited budgets. They do the best they can to represent the Canadian tourism sector and to encourage people to visit Canada.

I have visited half a dozen embassies and high commissions in the last few years. I was always impressed with what individuals have been able to accomplish on such small budgets. I cannot help but think that for an extra few dollars and an extra few staff persons to promote Canada, this would be an obvious thing for us to be doing. I want to flag that as the number one priority, that somebody, somewhere, perhaps even the commission itself, should give consideration to using our overseas representatives in a more creative and productive way when it comes to tourism.

The other thing to recognize is that Canada is a vast country. We are the second largest country in the world. When tourists come, they visit all parts of the country. In many parts of the country the attractions, the tourism infrastructure, are provided by very small operators. Often these small operators have a very difficult time accessing capital for tourism ventures because of high risk, seasonality or because they are located in remote areas.

Banks and other lending institutions like to lend money to very secure investments in the big urban centres. When we start talking about a ski hill in a remote location, a tourism development in Cypress Hills, or tourism facilities in all parts of the country, accessing capital is a major problem.

I suggest that we find some mechanism to assist those entrepreneurs, those business representatives who are prepared to risk their capital to build the necessary tourism infrastructure in the rural parts of Canada, to access capital at a reasonable rate and under reasonable terms.

When I say reasonable terms, I mean when an entrepreneur establishes a tourism facility in a remote location in the high Arctic, for example, or in the northern part of Saskatchewan, British Columbia or elsewhere, often the return will take two or

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three years before it really starts to make any significant inroads in terms of being a profitable operation. That does not make the banks and other lending institutions very happy. We have to find more progressive ways to get capital into the hands of those entrepreneurs.

I have a proposal that I would like to put on the table, and that is that we consider the establishment of what I like to call tourist bonds. They could be in the form of Canada savings bonds. People could invest in the tourism sector, knowing that the moneys generated by those particular bonds would be earmarked and dedicated to developing tourism infrastructure in the more remote parts of the country where people have difficulty accessing capital.

I see my friend from Cariboo here. I think he would support such a notion. If we could find some way to establish a source of capital for entrepreneurs in the rural and distant parts of the country, we would be doing people a real service. It is something they would appreciate and make maximum use of.

The other area we have to consider is the whole issue of transportation infrastructure. Let us face it, at the moment Canada's two major international airlines do a lot of promotion for Canada. Obviously they are promoting their services as well as Canada, but Canadian Airlines and Air Canada, as well as VIA Rail, attract visitors worldwide. Once they are here then other agencies can take over and provide the necessary promotion and information.

• (1825)

If we are serious about the tourism sector, it is important to enhance the tourism travelling infrastructure of the country: the highway systems, the regional airlines and in particular the rail systems.

Mr. John Solomon: The national agricultural policy.

Mr. Nelson Riis: My friend says "the national agricultural policy". He is always promoting agriculture, but I suppose people want to come here to see agriculture, certain kinds of exotic animals and new strains of wheat and barley. We could get kind of carried away here. Watching wheat grow can be quite an attraction, particularly for my friend from Regina.

In closing, we look forward to enhancing the tourism sector of the country as a way of providing employment opportunities to Canadians who are currently unemployed or underemployed and would like to do something in an exciting field.

To do that I will simply propose that we as the national parliament do whatever is necessary through this legislation and through other initiatives to ensure that we go out and market abroad the natural and cultural features of our great country to attract people from around the world to visit Canada.

They are coming anyway, but we could enhance those numbers significantly with a real marketing campaign at the national level, to be complemented by campaigns at the provincial and territorial levels. They would also invest in creative initiatives to attract people once they arrive in Canada to spend time, whether it is in Quebec, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Yukon or British Columbia. For sure they could come and spend time there.

Once they get into the provinces then it is up to the regional boards, the regional organizations, the chambers of commerce, the boards of trade and the tourism boards to attract people into those areas to visit their points of interest.

Common to all this are the tourist operators themselves. Mainly we are talking about small businesses. They are the main providers of entertainment to visitors to our great country. With those kinds of partnerships I can only imagine how successful we could be. We are already reasonably successful, but we could be really successful with that kind of co-operation.

I think Bill C-5 is a step in the right direction. When we have a board of up to 26 people representing the industry from the private sector, some bureaucrats and so on, we have to wonder if it is the way to approach the situation. However, let us give it the benefit of the doubt. Also, as the legislation goes through committee, let us include an opportunity to evaluate the legislation three years hence. Is the legislation effective? Is the legislation doing what we set out to accomplish? Is it doing what the government has said it could do?

Whatever legislation passes in the House costs taxpayers money. It is important that a review is built into it so that it is evaluated on a regular basis. With that protection I can speak for my colleague for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre and the New Democratic caucus and say that we will be supporting the legislation with enthusiasm as a major step in the right direction, but only a step.

Mr. Ken Epp: May I ask a question?

The Deputy Speaker: We are about to call it 6.30, but there will be time for 10 minutes worth of questions and comments for the hon. member from Kamloops the next time the bill comes before the House and, as the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre says, there is also that opportunity in the lobby.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on November 3 last I asked the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to admit that there was a real farm income crisis in western Canada and to announce some real farm aid. All he could talk about was that the Liberal government had done a great job and that farmers should not be worried.

• (1830)

Farmers are very worried. There are four major reasons the farm income crisis is in its current position. The first one is a 60% reduction in farm subsidies or supports for farm products.

In 1995 I attended the Council of Europe where members of parliament from all European countries gather together on a regular basis to discuss issues of importance. I attended a meeting of the agriculture committee of the Council of Europe and asked what they would do with their agriculture subsidies.

At that time European subsidies for farmers were about triple what Canadian subsidies were before the Liberals eliminated the transportation benefit for western grain farmers in 1995. We were told by the Liberal government at that time that the transportation subsidies had to be eliminated because of the World Trade Organization.

We were told by the Liberal government that the subsidy was being eliminated because of WTO regulations. I asked members of that committee what they would do because the European subsidies were greater than ours. They kind of laughed and said that I was gravely mistaken if I believed for one moment that they would eliminate agriculture subsidies because of the U.S.A. As well, they had five years under the WTO to address the issue of agricultural products and transportation subsidies. I was told that I was gravely mistaken if I thought that after five years they would sacrifice their farmers.

Here we are almost five years later and western grain farmers, particularly in Saskatchewan, have sacrificed \$340 million a year in lost subsidies, which is a loss of about \$1.5 billion in terms of income. As well we have seen increases in costs for transportation subsidies rise. In some cases they are triple of what they were at that time. This is one of the major reasons farmers are in trouble.

The second reason is that there was a 60% drop in commodity prices as a result of European and American farmers continuing to receive massive subsidies from their governments. This is really costing our farmers a lot of grief and a lot of money.

The third reason there is a major tragedy in the farm income of western grain farmers is the fact that input costs have risen

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unfettered. The Liberal government refuses to watch how the prices of fertilizers, fuel, and all kinds of chemical costs and pesticides increase. Farmers have to pay those increased prices. The taxes that are levied, the GST and other federal taxes, are crippling these farmers. Farmers need a tax break from the Liberal government, which they have not received in many years.

The fourth and major reason why farmers are in this huge income crisis is the Liberal government itself. It has lost touch. I guess the best example of that is the byelection in Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar that was held on November 15.

The Liberals who were touting one of their heavy duty candidates for election failed to address the issues of farm communities in the Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar district. As a result they went from a lead in the polls prior to the election call to finishing a dismal third and almost losing their deposit. They got 15.4% of the vote. That is all they got because they have lost touch with western grain farmers.

This is why we now need emergency assistance for our farmers who are very much up against it. Right now we are looking at about 40% of our farmers not being able to farm next spring and summer if an emergency aid program is not provided as soon as possible.

Mr. Joe McGuire (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to the question posed by the member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre I want to say that while overall the agriculture and agri-food sector is strong and makes a significant contribution to the Canadian economy, the government knows that the past year has not been an easy one for many producers.

The updated projections released on November 2 were produced jointly with the provinces. The Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food does not produce incorrect or misleading information. The same people who predicted the minus \$48 million were the same people who revised the projections to \$325 million.

The \$325 million upward revision between the July and November projections for 1999 is mainly the result of an increase in NISA payments and cattle and durum wheat receipts, combined with the decrease in operating costs, in particular pesticide and fertilizer. Statistics Canada estimates of farm cash receipts for January to September 1999 are in line with the October forecast for the prairies of the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

• (1835)

However, the farm income forecasts are not the most important numbers. The numbers are fluid and changing. Whatever the numbers turn out to be they are just that, numbers. The real subject here is people, not income forecasts.

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The government has introduced changes to the AIDA program that will benefit many producers across the country. We will now be covering a portion of negative margins, which occur when a farm has a particularly bad year and the operation has insufficient revenues to cover variable costs for fuel, machinery repair and chemicals.

Farmers now have the option to make a one time choice in 1999 of the reference period on which the claimant calculation for AIDA is based. They will be able to choose either the previous three years or three of the previous five when the high and low income years are not counted.

In provinces where the federal government delivers the program we are committed to having the processing of AIDA claims completed by Christmas.

[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 6.36 p.m.)

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