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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, February 24, 2000

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, February 24, 2000

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

POINTS OF ORDER

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Faced with the insensitivity and arrogance of this government, which is preparing to table a third gag order on the infamous Bill C-20 that will deny Quebecers their fundamental democratic rights, I have no choice but to appeal to the openmindedness of this House and ask it to permit me to table a document that will surely enlighten it in this dark period of Canadian history.

It is an article from the paper the *Le Nouvelliste* dated February 22, 2000 and entitled “The FTQ and the CSN Oppose Bill C-20”.

With your permission, I will read a short passage, just to show our colleagues how closed-minded they are, at present.

• (1010)

The article reads:

The powerful in Quebec society rose up against the federal bill on the referendum conditions as the Liberals tried once again to limit debate on the matter.

The Liberals had already obliged the committee examining the bill to sit from morning to night several days a week. Yesterday, in a marathon session, they tried to pass a motion to put an end to the deliberations of the committee as of midnight Thursday, after seven days of hearings, denying—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent for the tabling of this document?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*English*]

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member indicated that he had no choice but to ask for consent to table. I suggest to him that he does have other options.

I want to refer Your Honour to Standing Order 47 which states clearly that points of order should be raised in this instance following the daily routine of business. I know of no reasons which would allow a member to rise on a point of order and pre-empt the daily routine of business when the standing orders clearly state that points of order are to be raised at the conclusion of routine proceedings.

I invite Your Honour to look at this now and determine the question.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Madam Speaker, I am surprised by what the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons had to say.

He himself rises on a point of order to say that we cannot rise on a point of order at this point in the proceedings. There is something of a paradox in what he is doing.

Also, based on my understanding of the rules, members are authorized to rise on a point of order at any time during the proceedings, except during oral question period.

Madam Speaker, you will enlighten me on this issue, but I believe that those who have sat in the Chair since December have authorized Bloc Quebecois members, and any other member interested, to rise on such points of order before routine proceedings.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The point of order from the parliamentary secretary is indeed an interesting point.

[*Translation*]

That being said, it is true that, for some time now, the Chair has entertained requests for unanimous consent for the tabling of such documents. For this morning, we will therefore carry on in the same fashion.

Points of Order

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic, BQ): Madam Speaker, you understood correctly that this is not a point of order, but a request for the tabling of a document.

I hope to get the unanimous consent of all the members of this House, primarily Liberal members, to properly enlighten them on Bill C-20, which seeks to infringe upon the fundamental rights of the people of Quebec.

The document I want to table is a study published by the Library of Parliament, here in Ottawa, which deals with the fundamental rights of Canadians and, of course, of Quebecers. This study, done in 1992, is entitled “Human Rights Legislation and the Charter: a Comparative Guide”.

I see in this House the former president of my union, the member for Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, with whom I had the pleasure of working—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I must remind the hon. member that we do not comment on the presence or absence of a member in the House.

Is there is unanimous consent of the House to allow the hon. member to table this document?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

• (1015)

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am asking for unanimous consent to table a document.

It is an article from the Quebec City newspaper *Le Soleil* on Claude Ryan’s evidence before the legislative committee. It says:

Claude Ryan condemned the bill introduced by the Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs...and soundly criticized the bill on referendum conditions, becoming the first well-known federalist to openly express his dissent. In particular, Mr. Ryan said that by judging the clarity of any referendum question, parliament and the federal government “were directly interfering with the wording of the question”, an attitude that the former politician described as “not real federalism, but rather as a system whereby a government was being put under trusteeship”.

It is obvious that this bill denies the fundamental rights of the people of Quebec and I ask for the unanimous consent of the House—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonnette, BQ): Madam Speaker, following the introduction by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, a sorry fellow as everyone knows, of a bill denying

Quebecers their fundamental rights, I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to table a document that will enlighten it. It is an article published in the February 18, 2000 issue of *Le Soleil* entitled “Bill C-20”.

If I may, Madam Speaker, I would like to read a few excerpts from it—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I hope you will let me finish my remarks before asking what you think you will ask.

Following the introduction by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs of a bill denying Quebecers their basic rights—that surely must be news to you—I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to table a document that might enlighten it. It is an article published in the February 22 edition of *Le Devoir*—therefore not an old issue of that newspaper—entitled—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Madam Speaker, three of my colleagues and I went to Sept-Îles to inform people there, who told us to table this document in the House.

There were a great many people in Sept-Îles, including the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, the hon. member of Charlevoix, the hon. member for Manicouagan and myself. We made a special trip, and were back here the following day to take part in the House proceedings. Here, nobody listens to us. We have to go to Sept-Îles.

I am asking the House very nicely for permission to table a document setting out what people in Sept-Îles and in large areas of the north and the south have to say. They asked us to table this document and I hope the House will not insult them by refusing permission to do so.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am sure you will allow me to table the draft resolution of the government majority on the legislative committee which would put a gag on the

Points of Order

committee and which we have been debating since the beginning of the week.

The Liberal majority has failed to convince a single member of the opposition parties that this gag is necessary. Now we have a motion that the House gag the committee's deliberations.

Do I have the consent of the House to table the Liberal majority's draft resolution, which reads as follows:

The committee may, if necessary, for the purpose of better accommodating the list of witnesses, continue to hear witnesses until 5.30 p.m., Thursday, February 24, 2000, provided that the Chair puts all questions necessary to dispose of Bill C-20 at the latest by Thursday, February 24, 2000 at midnight.

That is a gag order, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Madam Speaker, as you know, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs has tabled a bill that will deny the fundamental rights of Quebecers.

• (1020)

I therefore think it would be useful to suggest that an article entitled "Clarity Committee Debate Turning into Family Feud" that appeared in *La Presse* on February 17 be read in the House.

The journalist who wrote this article mentions that the legislative committee responsible for examining the clarity bill has not shed light on much of anything, except the deep antipathy between federalists and sovereignists.

I seek the House's consent to table this document.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay, BQ): Madam Speaker, following the introduction by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs of a bill denying the fundamental rights of Quebecers, in the days to come, the public will see everywhere a picture of a parking meter with the slogan "Yes, time is up" above it. A theatre tour is being organized for college students and seven mobilization meetings are planned for women.

"Our time is one of extreme federalism". During a recent press conference, former minister Yves Michaud, the one we know as the Robin des banques, said that federalism "has never been so invasive and destructive in all of its history".

"We think Ottawa does not intend to give anything to Quebec", added the president of the Mouvement national des Québécois, Louise Paquet.

"We must explain not only why we wanted independence 20 years ago, but why we want it now. Federalism has changed. The government is taking over the country by spending money. It has taken—"

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I am sure the hon. member has a precise goal in mind, and I would like to know it right away.

Mr. Maurice Godin: Madam Speaker, I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to table this document.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have here an editorial from the Thursday, January 27, 2000 issue of *Le Devoir*. I ask for unanimous consent to table it.

I believe it could be of interest for members of the government party since this article is entitled "Ontario After a Yes Vote". Since the government's majority is from Ontario, it might enlighten it on the future of the rest of Canada after a winning referendum.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Twice already, for my colleague from Laurentides as for my colleague from Châteauguay, probably because we were stunned by the forceful arguments they were making, we did not hear any noes. We did see some heads shake, but is it the same for the Chair to see heads shake as to hear an audible no?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Absolutely not. I clearly heard government members say no. Perhaps I should ask them to speak louder. They do not all have voices as strong as that of the hon. member.

Mr. André Harvey (Chicoutimi, PC): Madam Speaker, to allow the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs to come out of his constitutional obsession and see that, outside Parliament Hill, there are realities our citizens are asking us to confront, I ask for the unanimous consent to table a document that will greatly inspire him about the real problems. It is the most recent book of Michel Chartrand and Michel Bernard on the concept of guaranteed minimum wage for all citizens.

I challenge him to deal with this issue, and then we will have the opportunity to co-operate together.

Points of Order

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Is there unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Madam Speaker, this past weekend, at the young liberals seminar, the leader of the Liberal Party of Quebec had an idea.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

An hon. member: He had an idea.

• (1025)

Mr. Ghislain Lebel: It was the only one he had and it got lonely. So he decided to write it up in *Le Nouvelliste*, where he discussed a co-managed federalism.

I am sure that this article from *Le Nouvelliste* would inspire my friends across the way if they allowed me to table it. As the hon. member for Chicoutimi said, they would realize that their constitutional obsession prevents them from seeing what it is like in the field and, most of all, from realizing that for once the provincial Liberal leader had an idea.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have here an article entitled “Referendum Clarity”, published in *Le Soleil* on February 20, 2000.

The article reads:

The Minister for Canadian Intergovernmental Affairs, Joseph Facal, announced on Friday that he would be appearing as a witness, this Thursday morning, before federal members who have begun the study of Bill C-20 this week.

In fact, it states further:

The Bloc Québécois has denounced this legislative committee, one of its reasons for doing so being that the member for Saint-Maurice refused to allow the committee to travel across Quebec. The other opposition parties have also denounced the fact that the Liberal government is putting a limit on the length of the debate in the House.

I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to table this document, which will enlighten my friends across the way.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Paul Mercier (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, the great Corneille wrote “This obscure clarity falling

from the stars”. This has now become “This obscure clarity falling from Bill C-20”.

I wish to enlighten the members opposite who intend to support Bill C-20, thus displaying a blatant lack of information.

So I wish to help them by seeking unanimous consent to table an article written by a Liberal, on another Liberal’s statement, which reads as follows:

Claude Ryan did not beat around the bush yesterday when he criticized the bill on the referendum conditions, thus becoming one of the first well-known federalists to overtly voice dissent.

Mr. Ryan noted in particular that Parliament and the federal government, by expressing an opinion on the clarity of a future referendum question, would at the very least directly interfere in the drafting of the question, an attitude that the previous—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ): Madam Speaker, the bill denying the fundamental rights of Quebecers to decide their own future has recently been tabled by the much unloved Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

On February 19, 2000, *La Presse* newspaper carried Mr. Larose’s testimony before the legislative committee, saying:

The bill is a straitjacket, an exercise in obstruction, a lack of democracy; as a matter of fact, this bill is a lie. It is a new trick the federal government came up with to avoid compliance with the supreme court opinion.

Bill C-20 being an attempt by the federal government to take control, it subjugates the Quebec people, who form a perfectly autonomous entity in these matters.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, as we know, we are in the midst of debating Bill C-20, a very antidemocratic bill. I think the government should not persist in its antidemocratic ways for too long; after all, there is a process governing the consideration of bills.

As I have already said, in considering a bill, one has to consult all sources. I have here a study by Jacques Frémont concerning social union.

• (1030)

About the signatories, Mr. Frémont wrote the following:

It was decided instead to adopt a clause imposing obligations and serious constraints on the signatory government. However, the study reminds us that these obligations affect the provincial governments much more than they do the federal government, which are essentially the ones exercising jurisdiction over the fields of government activity in relation to mobility.

Points of Order

I urge my colleagues to show open-mindedness, ask them to accept this study and seek unanimous consent to—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, during this debate on Bill C-20 introduced by the conceited Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, I would like to table a document on an article from the February 21, 2000 edition of *La Presse*, which is entitled “Yes, Time Has Run Out”.

This article summarizes the press conference called by the Mouvement national des Québécois where its president, Louise Paquet, said:

We think that Ottawa has no intention of giving anything to Quebec. We must explain not only what our reasons were for wanting to achieve independence 20 years ago, but also what they are now. Federalism has changed. The government is giving money to buy the support of Canadians. We find ourselves caught in a stranglehold that is tightening.

Yves Michaud, the bank basher, added this:

We must cope with extreme federalism. Throughout its history, it has never been so invading and destructive.

I hope this document will enlighten the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg, BQ): Madam Speaker, following the introduction in this House of this terrible Bill C-20, in an attempt to deny the Quebec people the right to decide their future, I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to table an article from the February 21, 2000 edition of *Le Devoir*, entitled “Mouvement National des Québécois Launches Campaign to Promote Sovereignty”.

As everyone knows, the MNQ is a neutral association of patriots looking to advance the collective well-being of Quebecers.

The article reads “The Mouvement national des Québécoises et des Québécois is launching a campaign to promote sovereignty. This campaign, which—”

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I think that the hon. member has made his point. Is there unanimous consent of the House to table this document?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Réal Ménard: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

You are aware of our willingness to co-operate and ensure that the proceedings of the House are conducted with a certain decorum. You are the Speaker. You can decide for yourself when it is time to intervene and we believe that there should not be any interference by the government House leader.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I have been very patient up until now. I have allowed members to speak maybe longer than I should have. If the hon. member is asking to table a document, in my opinion, he should read the title and name the author.

Mr. Odina Desrochers (Lotbinière, BQ): Madam Speaker, following the introduction of Bill C-20 by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, since you are yourself a Quebecer and, therefore, have an open mind, I hope you will listen carefully to what I have to say and hopefully grant my request.

I wish to draw your attention to the fact that the debate we are trying to have is made impossible by the totalitarian tactics conceived and planned by the accomplice from the riding of Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, a lackey of—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The hon. member rose to seek unanimous consent to table a document. I would ask him to do so now.

• (1035)

Mr. Odina Desrochers: Madam Speaker, I had not finished. May I table my document, since I read it slowly and calmly, so that they could clearly understand? Is there unanimous consent?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I appreciate your impartiality and your patience.

This morning, I read an article on Bill C-20 from the Canadian Press, dated February 21, 2000 and entitled “Ottawa to Neutralize Quebec on International Scene”. It is a summary of a speech made by anthropologist Claude Baribeau, of Laval University. The document will certainly enlighten the members opposite.

I ask for unanimous consent to table the document.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Madam Speaker, further to the introduction by the Minister of Intergovernmental

Points of Order

Affairs of a bill denying fundamental rights of Quebecers, I ask for unanimous consent to table a document which, I hope, will enlighten this House.

It is an article published in *La Presse* on February 22, 2000, and entitled "A Damage Control Motion".

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec East, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have here an article from the Canadian Press in which we read that "Mr. Ryan felt that, by making a decision on the clarity of a referendum question, the federal government would, to say the least, interfere directly with the drafting of the question. He added that this attitude was not real federalism but a trusteeship system. Such a system, he said, if not contrary to the federal government's responsibility should—"

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have here an article published in the February 20, 2000 issue of *Le Soleil*. Its title is "Referendum Clarity".

It says that Joseph Facal, the minister for Canadian intergovernmental affairs, will testify Thursday morning before the members of parliament who have been examining Bill C-20 this week. Incidentally, I want to point out that Mr. Facal is testifying at this very moment before the legislative committee—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): This is not the time to debate the issue, but to ask for the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Ghislain Fournier (Manicouagan, BQ): Madam Speaker, following the introduction by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs of Bill C-20, which denies the Quebec people their fundamental rights, I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to table a document that will enlighten it.

I would like to table—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. We heard the leader of the government in the House yelling from his seat that the Chair did not need to know the details of everything we want to table with the unanimous consent of the House. Let me refer him to the book of Montpetit and Marleau, on page 501:

The mechanics of requesting and granting unanimous consent must be carefully observed. A Member wishing to waive the usual notice requirement before moving a substantive motion would ask the unanimous consent of the House "for the following motion", which is then read *in extenso*.

The member should be authorized by the Chair to read out what he has to say before asking for unanimous consent. This is what is said on page 501 of Montpetit and Marleau.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I do not see this type of intervention as a motion. I repeat that I would like to hear the title of the articles, the author and then the request for unanimous consent.

• (1040)

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Madam Speaker, I always said that the Chair had a gift as far as guessing is concerned, but there is a limit.

Obviously, you cannot consider right away what will be asked as a substantive motion, but you must at least listen to what the hon. member has to say in order to be able to establish whether or not it is a substantive motion.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I think that if an hon. member wants to introduce a motion, it would be a good thing if he said so right away. Then, I would be prepared to listen through to the end.

Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Madam Speaker, following the introduction by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs of a bill denying Quebecers their fundamental rights, I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to table a document published in the February 17 issue of *Le Devoir*, which says "Appearing before the committee studying the federal bill—"

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, following the introduction by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs of Bill C-20, I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to table a document.

It is the brief submitted by the Regroupement des gens résoluement souverainistes to the parliamentary committee of the Quebec National Assembly on Bill 99.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent?

Routine Proceedings

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, complying with your suggestion, I would like to inform you how that I wish to make a motion.

The Prime Minister finds it normal, and in keeping with Canada political custom, for Liberal MPs—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mrs. Pierrette Venne: Madam Speaker, the members across the way are interrupting me. They should wait until I have introduced my motion.

An hon. member: Let her speak.

Mrs. Pierrette Venne: The Prime Minister finds it normal, and in keeping with Canada political custom, for Liberal MPs to take the credit, for partisan political purposes, for billions of dollars worth of grants being paid—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to table such a document?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 11 petitions, and I move:

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

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am trying to understand the logic by which the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader could present a motion, whereas he himself—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): This is not a point of order but a point of debate.

I am in the process of reading the motion presented to the House. We are therefore going to proceed with that motion.

• (1045)

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Call in the members.

• (1125)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 747*)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Anderson
Assadourian	Augustine
Axworthy	Baker
Bakopanos	Beaumier
Bélair	Bélanger
Bellemare	Bennett
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Blondin-Andrew	Boudria
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Caccia
Calder	Caplan
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Chan	Charbonneau
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	Clouthier
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Comuzzi	Copps
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Jackson	Jennings
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Keyes	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
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 Grewal
 Guay
 Herron
 Hoepfner
 Keddy (South Shore)
 Laliberté
 Laurin
 Lill
 Lunn
 Mancini
 Marchand
 Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
 Ménard
 Muise
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Alarie
 Asselin
 Benoit
 Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—
 Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
 Cadman
 Cardin
 Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)
 de Savoye
 Desjarlais
 Dockrill
 Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)
 Dumas
 Elley
 Fournier
 Girard-Bujold
 Godin (Châteauguay)
 Gouk
 Grey (Edmonton North)
 Harvey
 Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
 Johnston
 Konrad
 Lalonde
 Lebel
 Lowther
 MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
 Marceau
 Mark
 McNally
 Mercier
 Nystrom
 Penson
 Picard (Drummond)
 Reynolds
 Rocheleau
 Schmidt
 Solomon
 Stinson
 Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
 Vautour
 Wasylcia-Leis
 White (North Vancouver)

PAIRED MEMBERS

*Nil/aucun

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

**AN ACT TO GIVE EFFECT TO THE REQUIREMENT
 FOR CLARITY AS SET OUT IN THE OPINION OF THE
 SUPREME COURT OF CANADA IN THE QUEBEC
 SECESSION REFERENCE**

BILL C-20—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That in relation to Bill C-20, an act to give effect to the requirement for clarity as set out in the opinion of the Supreme Court of Canada in the Quebec Secession Reference, not more than ten further hours shall be allotted to the consideration of the committee stage of the bill and, at the expiry of the time provided for in this order, any proceedings before the legislative committee on the said bill shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the said bill shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

Some hon. members: Shame, shame.

• (1130)

[English]

The Speaker: The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**Some hon. members:** No.**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.**Some hon. members:** Yea.**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.**Some hon. members:** Nay.**The Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.*And more than five members having risen:***The Speaker:** Call in the members.

• (1210)

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

(Division No. 748)

YEAS

Members

Adams
 Anderson
 AugustineAlcock
 Assadourian
 Axworthy

Government Orders

Baker	Bakopanos
Beaumier	Bélair
Bélangier	Bellemare
Bennett	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick	Boudria
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Caccia
Calder	Caplan
Carroll	Catterall
Cauchon	Chan
Charbonneau	Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Clouthier	Coderre
Collenette	Comuzzi
Copps	Cotler
Cullen	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Dromisky	Drouin
Duhamel	Easter
Eggleton	Finlay
Folco	Fontana
Fry	Gagliano
Gallaway	Godfrey
Goodale	Graham
Gray (Windsor West)	Grose
Guarnieri	Harb
Harvard	Hubbard
Iftody	Jackson
Jennings	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lastewka	Lavigne
Lee	Leung
Limoges	Lincoln
Longfield	MacAulay
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Mathews	McCormick
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan (Edmonton West)	McTeague
McWhinney	Mifflin
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Minna
Mitchell	Murray
Myers	Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Peric	Peterson
Pettigrew	Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pillitteri
Pratt	Proud
Proulx	Redman
Reed	Richardson
Robillard	Rock
Saada	Scott (Fredericton)
Sgro	Shepherd
Speller	St. Denis
St-Julien	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibeault	Torsney
Valeri	Vanclief
Volpe	Whelan
Wilfert	Wood—136

NAYS

Members

Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Epp
Hoepfner	Nunziata—4

PAIRED MEMBERS

*Nil/aucun

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

● (1215)

[Translation]

CANADIAN INSTITUTES OF HEALTH RESEARCH ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of 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, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now ready to give a ruling on the report stage of Bill C-13. There are 55 motions in amendment standing on the notice paper for the report stage of Bill C-13.

[English]

Motions Nos. 39, 40, 43, 44, 53 and 54 cannot be proposed to the House because they are not accompanied by the recommendation of the Governor General. Standing Order 76(3) requires that notice of such a recommendation be given no later than the sitting day before the beginning of the report stage consideration of a bill.

[Translation]

The other motions will be grouped for debate as follows:

[English]

Group No. 1: Motions Nos. 1, 5 to 7, 9, 11 to 14, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 48 to 50.

[Translation]

Group No. 2: Motions numbered 2 to 4, 8, 10, 15, 16, 17, 19, 22, 25 to 38, 41, 42, 45 to 47, 51, 52, 55 and 56.

[English]

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

[Translation]

I shall now propose motions numbered 1, 5 to 7, 9, 11 to 14, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 48 to 50 to the House.

● (1220)

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-13, in the preamble, be amended by replacing lines 12 and 13 on page 1 with the following:

“that investment in health research is part of the Canadian vision of”

Motion No. 5

Government Orders

That Bill C-13, in the preamble, be amended by replacing lines 18 and 19 on page 1 with the following:

“vincial government to support health research;”

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-13, in the preamble, be amended by replacing line 3 on page 2 with the following:

“nate health research based”

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-13, in the preamble, be amended by replacing line 19 on page 2 with the following:

“the dissemination of that knowledge for the”

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-13, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing lines 19 and 20 on page 3 with the following:

“of new knowledge and its dissemination in order to improve health for Canadian and provide more effec-”

Motion No. 11

That Bill C-13, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 27 on page 3 with the following:

“Canada that have an interest in”

Motion No. 12

That Bill C-13, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 3 on page 4 with the following:

“tunity to contribute to the development of knowledge in order to improve”

Motion No. 13

That Bill C-13, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing lines 9 and 10 on page 4 with the following:

“health system;”

Motion No. 14

That Bill C-13, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing lines 11 and 12 on page 4 with the following:

“(d) encouraging interdisciplinary health research through the creation of”

Motion No. 18

That Bill C-13, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 31 on page 4 with the following:

“health research, including bio-medical research,”

Motion No. 20

That Bill C-13, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 46 on page 4 with the following:

“edge and health research”

[*English*]

Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC) moved:

Motion No. 21

That Bill C-13, in Clause 4, be amended

(a) by replacing, in the English version, line 13 on page 5 with the following:

“partnerships in health research;”

(b) by replacing, in the English version, line 16 on page 5 with the following:

“Government of Canada in health research; and”

(c) by adding after line 16 on page 5 the following:

“(m) demonstrating a commitment and respect for the principle of public accountability by establishing and maintaining public access to research materials and reports pertaining to public health issues.”

● (1225)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 23

That Bill C-13, in Clause 5, be amended

(a) by replacing lines 4 and 5 on page 6 with the following:

“have an interest in health research;”

(b) by replacing lines 6 to 8 on page 6 with the following:

“(d) monitor and analyze health research, including ethical issues;”

(c) by replacing line 16 on page 6 with the following:

“pertaining to health research; and”

Motion No. 24

That Bill C-13, in Clause 5, be amended by replacing lines 10 and 11 on page 6 with the following:

“matter relating to health research;”

[*English*]

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP) moved:

Motion No. 48

That Bill C-13, in Clause 20, be amended by adding after line 7 on page 11 the following:

“(5) The members of the Advisory Boards shall not, directly or indirectly, as owner, shareholder, director, officer, partner or otherwise, have any pecuniary or proprietary interest in any business which operates in the pharmaceutical or medical devices industries.”

Motion No. 49

That Bill C-13, in Clause 20, be amended by adding after line 7 on page 11 the following:

“(5) The Conflict of Interest and Post-Employment Code for Public Office Holders apply with such modifications as the circumstances require to the members of the Advisory Boards. For the purposes of the Code, “Public Office Holder” includes a member of an Advisory Board.”

Motion No. 50

That Bill C-13, in Clause 20, be amended by adding after line 7 on page 11 the following:

“20.1 (1) Within three months after the coming into force of this Act, the Governing Council shall make a by-law establishing a code of ethics for the members of the Advisory Boards.

(2) The by-law referred to in subsection (1) shall apply to the members of the Advisory Boards thirty days after it is made.”

Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian institutes of health research. While I am in favour of the bill overall, I will take this opportunity to speak on a few aspects of it and the process that has been involved to date.

While it is true that the objectives of the bill should be attainable—and I have personally received numerous letters and e-mails from the medical and research community to support it—there are several aspects of the bill that I feel could have been better and stronger. I mention this because all these things were brought before the Standing Committee on Health, and in the usual Liberal manner, they were given little true consideration.

• (1230)

What we have just witnessed in the House is that when the government decides that it does not want to hear any more legitimate democratic debate on an issue, it simply decides that we have all had enough time and it brings in either time allocation or closure, to the shame of the government, to cut off legitimate debate. It is all part of the frustration that Canadians in general and opposition members in particular feel in giving any kind of real input into the decision making process of the House, especially when the opposition represents some 62% of the population of the country.

This is the same kind of thing that went on in the making of this bill and in the way in which it was brought through committee.

I am pleased that some variations of these proposals were recognized and given support by some members of the other opposition parties.

The purpose of Bill C-13 is to excel, according to internationally accepted standards of scientific excellence, in the creation of new knowledge and its translation into improved health for Canadians. It is to provide more effective health services and products of a strengthened Canadian health care system. Finally, it is to replace the Medical Research Council of Canada to provide a more direct and systematic approach to research in Canada.

These are all noble and just objectives and ones with which I agree. Who would not agree with the provision of better health care, improved research capabilities, more effective health care services and a strengthened health care system? All of us in the House would agree with those objectives today.

One of the problems lies in how we get there. How do we achieve these goals? The Liberals have clearly shown us how not to achieve them. They have shown us how to disrupt and break up the Canadian health care system. Because of the current Liberal government's inaction and reduced funding for our health care

Government Orders

system it has, in effect, already created a multi-tiered system of service in the country. It is shameful. Canadians know it and they now say that health care is their number one concern.

The process that the Standing Committee on Health worked through for this bill was no different from the process used by most other committees of the House of Commons. The subcommittee reviews what topics and subjects are pertinent. We have our discussion. We decide what we believe are the most important things to discuss. However, we find out then that the health minister has already written his letter to tell us what to do and we simply have to go along with the government majority, which is completely different from the overwhelming desire of Canadians in terms of the issue at hand.

Never mind that these issues greatly affect Canadians. The Liberal majority on the committee simply bends the knee and follows the minister's wishes. Then, of course, the committee goes through the charade of calling witnesses, reviewing pertinent research, amply supplied by the Library of Parliament, and debating parts of the issue.

I do this for the benefit of those who are watching on television and wondering how we get to this point.

After that the committee goes through its paces, whether to interview witnesses, amend the bill or report recommendations to the House of Commons.

Unfortunately, most committees again favour the party line and do not truly listen to the recommendations of opposition members of parliament. Regardless of their validity, it is rare that committee members will adopt amendments put forward by anyone other than a government member.

Such was the case with Bill C-13. Although most members around the table agreed in principle with the bill, numerous amendments were put forward to legitimately improve it. Unfortunately, the vast majority of these were turned down at committee.

The Standing Committee on Health is not unique in these aspects. We have seen the same scenario over and over again. We have watched as the government did not even listen or pretend to listen to the people of British Columbia over the debate on the Nisga'a treaty. It was not until the Reform Party denied the finance committee the opportunity to travel in its prebudget deliberations that the go-ahead was finally given for the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development to do likewise and meet with the people of B.C. Surely it is our job as members of parliament to hear what the people have to say. Even then, the committee blatantly stacked the witness list. Imagine going to the city of Prince George on an issue like this and not hearing from anyone who lives there.

Government Orders

• (1235)

There is a saying: not only must justice be done; justice must appear to be done. The appearance of justice is not apparent in the many dealings that go on in this Chamber. I will refer to yet another example.

We currently have Bill C-2, the elections bill, before the House. As my colleagues and I, and in particular the hon. member for North Vancouver, spoke this week and in the past about the inadequacies of the draft legislation contained within Bill C-2, I was reminded of how many times the government has missed opportunities to improve something. It has failed to grab hold of those opportunities. Bill C-2 could be a vastly improved bill if the government chose to listen and act on the recommendations put forward by opposition parties.

The government fails to recognize that each member represents thousands of people. When the Prime Minister dictates to government members how to vote and what actions to accept and not accept, the wishes of millions of people are blatantly ignored.

To paraphrase, the people of Canada must not only see that we are a democracy, they must see that we are a democracy enacted and fulfilled. On this issue I believe that the government has failed the people of Canada miserably.

Bill C-13 could indeed have had many improvements made to it. The majority of the amendments before us are worthy of true debate and consideration and I hope that members of the House will give them due deliberation. Among these I would include the following.

There is the recognition of provincial jurisdiction in the role of the provision of health care. In far too many instances the government has attempted to manipulate or manage a program or service that has not any legal or constitutional jurisdiction.

I believe that the administrative bureaucracy should be limited to a maximum of 5% of the total budget and use definitions which are normally applied to departments by the Treasury Board.

We need to be certain that the main thrust of this bill ensures that support for health research is based upon scientific merit. Funding should be based upon the validity of the project, not on the basis of employment equity groups or political connections.

We must be certain that research funding methods are accurate and clear.

We must be sure that the clause dealing with ethical issues in this bill is strengthened. Those issues include such topics as biomedical research, reproductive technology, gene therapy and other ethical issues of the future.

We must ensure that there will be a subcommittee for the CIHR which can act as an ombudsman for complaints by researchers and private sector partners.

I believe that there are problems with this bill. In the main, however, I support the bill. I believe that we need to strengthen research in the medical community in Canada. Canada has been a world leader in many areas of medical research, but it needs to take its place in other areas. We need to do what has been suggested through this bill to put together both the framework and the financial resources to bring together medical researchers to work on specific areas.

This bill is a step in the right direction. It will indeed divert the flow of good medical brains that are going to the U.S. The Prime Minister has been quoted as saying that he does not think there is any serious problem in terms of brain drain. Let me say that in the medical profession it is a real problem. I am glad to see that there are some people in the government who have the intestinal fortitude to recognize that brain drain and to do something about it in a bill such as this, which will create the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Because of that I will be supporting this bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, although we worked very hard in committee and I was diligent in my efforts there to improve Bill C-13, I cannot resist mentioning as an aside that we are sad today.

The people watching us must realize that once again the Liberal government has been barbaric with the opposition by imposing time allocation in a most inconsiderate and cavalier manner. That said, I would like to speak to Bill C-13. I would add, incidentally, that the doormat Liberal members from Quebec have once again not risen to defend the interests of Quebec.

• (1240)

Bill C-13 concerns an important issue, that is, the efforts we have to make in research and especially in the biomedical sector.

It is interesting, because in the early 1990s, the Medical Research Council of Canada asked parliamentarians to do, in the biomedical research sector, what had been done in the communications sector in the 1960s, that is make it a leading edge sector. We can understand that, historically, Canada has invested in the communications sector because this is obviously a big country, and necessitates several communications networks working together.

There are three problems with Bill C-13, and they are the focus of our amendments. We do not oppose it. I want to be very very clear and I am all the happier to be clear, with the member for Jonquière by my side here. She has always been interested in such questions because of what goes on in the riding she represents here in the House and will have the opportunity to introduce later on today.

Government Orders

We believe that we must invest massively in biomedical research. We are pleased to see that, next year, \$485 million will be allocated for biomedical research.

However, we cannot understand why the provinces were not more closely involved in the drafting of the bill. Sure, the interim governing council included people from Quebec. I am thinking of Mr. Bureau, from the Fonds de la recherche en santé du Québec and one of Quebec's top experts in the field. There was also Dr. Renaud, a sociologist by profession and chair of the Humanities Research Council of Canada. I hope members from all sides of the House will give them a good hand of applause, because these people were extremely dedicated in establishing the interim governing council.

We are concerned that the bill, in its present form, not only promotes research in the biomedical sector, but is also intrusive. The current wording of the bill alludes at least 15 times, in the 52 clauses, to health research or to health related issues. This creates an opportunity for the federal government to get involved which, unfortunately, is of concern to us.

In its last budget, the Quebec government earmarked \$406 million over a two year period. This gives an idea of the scope of the projects. The Quebec government, which is setting up a science and technology department, is allocating \$406 million over two years, while the federal government will earmark \$500 million a year for all ten provinces. This is to say that Quebec is making considerable structuring efforts to provide a consistent framework, a concerted action plan for its research initiatives.

Would it not have been a good idea—and this is exactly what the amendments before us today are all about and I hope that government members will vote in favour—for the provinces, Quebec for example, which historically has received 33% of Canada's Medical Research Council grants and has trained generations of top-notch biomedical researchers, to be able to provide lists to guide the federal government in its recommendations so that the governing council is truly representative of the people that would have been selected by the provinces? This is what the amendments before us have in mind.

• (1245)

I have been in close touch with the scientific community, and we know that it is not easy to be a researcher. It takes perseverance; generations of equipment must be replaced every 5, 6 or 7 years. We are not opposed to \$500 million being invested, particularly in the biomedical research sector, but why stipulate in the bill that there will be a single institute?

I have asked this question again and again. If they want to establish 15 research institutes, which they claim will operate autonomously, why word the bill as if there were a single research institute, with a single governing council, a single series of appointments by the governor in council, as well as equipment and research to order that will become the property of the Crown?

Would it not have been desirable, as my colleague from Jonquière and I indicated to the committee, most assiduously and in a most articulate manner, for us to have a truly decentralized bill?

Once again, the government was not willing to bow to the arguments of the opposition, and that is why today we are here with some thirty-plus amendments. I would ask the parliamentary secretary, the hon. member for Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, known in certain circles as “the man with the millions” and who is feigning ignorance, to lend an ear to our arguments and our amendments.

I say again: this is a bill that means a lot to us. There is not a single democrat in this House today whose heart is not heavy. There is not a single democrat in this House today whose thoughts are not for the future, and who does not say “shame on you” to this government, which is making a travesty of democracy and showing its contempt for the opposition and its lack of respect for Quebecers.

Because the government is acting in such a cavalier manner, because we cannot count on the members of this parliament who sit at the Liberal caucus table to defend the referendum act, and because we cannot count on them to defend the extraordinary vitality of the democracy of the National Assembly and its right to decide on the matter, I have no other choice but to move the following, pursuant to Standing Order 60:

That the House do now adjourn.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Call in the members.

• (1335)

[English]

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

Government Orders

(Division No. 749)

YEAS

Members

Alarie
Asselin
Bergeron
Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok
Blaikie
Cardin
Crête
Debien
Desrochers
Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)
Earle
Gagnon
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Gruending
Guimond
Laurin
Lill
Marceau
Ménard
Nystrom
Picard (Drummond)
Rocheleau
Solomon
Turp
Wasylycia-Leis

Anders
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—
Bigras
Canuel
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)
de Savoye
Desjarlais
Dockrill
Duceppe
Fournier
Girard-Bujold
Godin (Châteauguay)
Guay
Lalonde
Lebel
Mancini
Marchand
Mercier
Perron
Plamondon
Sauvageau
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)
Venne
White (North Vancouver)—49

NAYS

Members

Adams
Anderson
Axworthy
Beaumier
Bélanger
Bennett
Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Bevilacqua
Bonin
Boudria
Brown
Bulte
Cadman
Casson
Cauchon
Clouthier
Collenette
Cotler
DeVillers
Dion
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)
Easter
Epp
Gagliano
Godfrey
Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)
Grose
Harvard
Hill (MacLeod)
Hubbard
Jackson
Johnston
Keddy (South Shore)
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Konrad
Lastewka
Lincoln
Lowther
MacAulay
Malhi
Manley
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McKay (Scarborough East)

Alcock
Assadourian
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bélair
Bellemare
Benoit
Bertrand
Blondin-Andrew
Borotsik
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Bryden
Caccia
Carroll
Catterall
Charbonneau
Coderre
Copps
Cullen
Dhaliwal
Drouin
Duhamel
Eggleton
Finlay
Galloway
Goldring
Graham
Grewal
Harb
Harvey
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Ifody
Jennings
Karetak-Lindell
Keys
Knutson
Kraft Sloan
Lee
Longfield
Lunn
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Maloney
Mark
McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton West)

Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)
Mitchell
Myers
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Penson
Phinney
Pratt
Proud
Redman
Richardson
Rock
Schmidt
Shepherd
St. Denis
St-Julien
Strahl
Telegdy
Torsney
Vautour
Wappel
Whelan
Williams —135

Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Minna
Muise
Normand
Paradis
Patri
Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Price
Proulx
Reynolds
Robillard
Saada
Scott (Fredericton)
Solberg
St-Jacques
Stewart (Brant)
Szabo
Thibeault
Vanclief
Volpe
Wayne
Wilfert

PAIRED MEMBERS

*Nil/aucun

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to make a few comments on Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

First, I want to thank the witnesses who appeared before the Standing Committee on Health to provide their input and give their strong support to this bill. This was very much appreciated.

I also want to mention the work done by opposition members who, in general, were very regular in attending committee meetings. They also made suggestions. Finally, I thank members of my own party, who also worked very hard on this issue.

A number of amendments are before us and we are currently debating the first group of these amendments. I should point out that, for us, investing in health research is the best possible preparation to ensure adequate health services in the years to come and to continue to provide such services to Canadians.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. I ask all members to have the courtesy of following the debate with me.

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau: Madam Speaker, health services, health care and quality research into health, are all linked in our opinion and will mean improved health care services for Canadians

in general. Each poll tells us that health is the number one priority in Canada.

• (1340)

We decided, by transforming the existing health research structure into the institutes, to invest and to double our investments in the coming years in health and health research, and I think that the people of Canada are generally pleased with this decision.

[*English*]

The creation of health research institutes has been thought to address key issues of importance to the health of Canadians. It will allow greater focus for health research than existed with the previous granting council model.

[*Translation*]

Thanks to the research institutes model, which we will call virtual institutes, research will be better integrated across the entire country. The research done here in a number of fields will also be in daily contact with the best of what is being done internationally. This is the sense of the way we want to integrate these new institutes. I think the people of Canada will surely benefit.

In addition, we do not want these research institutes to be limited to theoretical research only ending up as impressive reports for a few dozen specialists. We want this research to mean specific benefits for the people, specific applications. It will not just be a matter of information circulating among highly specialized individuals, but measures, drugs and improved services arising from this research for the people of Canada.

That is our style on this side of the House. Instead of talking we are acting.

The bill also ensures collaboration with provincial governments. Our second group of amendments includes clarifications that address the loud—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau: —but not necessarily lofty—concerns expressed by a number of members of the opposition.

Mr. Réal Ménard: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I am afraid that the member for Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies is misleading the House when he says that he has the support of provincial governments. I am prepared to table a letter to show that the government—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): This is not a point of order. It is part of debate.

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau: Madam Speaker, as the House is well aware, Bill C-13 was based on the recommendations of an interim

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governing council composed of 34 well-respected Canadians representing all fields of health research in Canada.

This interim council includes people from provincial governments, universities, hospitals, the academic community and charitable organizations in the health and private sectors, as well as researchers from all fields of health research.

The institutes work with organizations that focus on the three areas of health, health care and health research. For us, this is all interconnected, since research is what makes quality care and services possible. In general, the Canadian public and the research community have been receptive to this message and given it their strong support.

Research also provides Canada with an important opportunity to contribute to improving people's health, not only in Canada but internationally as well. That is one of our responsibilities as an industrialized and developed country. Canadian researchers in fact—and this is something to be stated with pride—are often at the leading edge of their specialties and their contributions are recognized worldwide.

It should be obvious to everyone that decision makers in the political arena need to have research data to call upon. Those of us who have to make decisions, who are in politics with the people in the various departments backing us up, need to be informed of the top research data when the time comes to make decisions on policy, regulations, or mechanisms for managing the programs for which we are responsible.

Public access to research material and reports on public health related issues is also governed by the Privacy Act and the Access to Information Act.

• (1345)

These are acts to protect people's rights while guaranteeing public access when appropriate. Some of the amendments are, therefore, prompted by the bill itself, or by other bills ensuring the public of access to information.

As for conflict of interest issues, which are addressed by some of the proposed amendments, and matters of ethics, the health committee's report contained a recommendation to the government that application of the principles of ethics be enhanced as far as the health research institutes are concerned. Our committee recommended "that the Governing Council develop and implement appropriate conflict of interest guidelines for the agency, including the Institutes of Health Research".

We are waiting for the government's response to this recommendation. This recommendation shows that our committee is concerned by this issue and has brought it to the government's attention.

Therefore, it is not necessary to state in the act that the governing council has the authority to develop a conflict of interest code. The

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federal government has already taken measures to ensure that organizations have a conflict of interest code that meets their specific needs.

The federal government's ethics counsellor will work with the president of the institutes to develop a code that meets the specific needs of the new organization. As part of this process, they will determine whether it is necessary to develop additional conflict of interest policies for all members, employees and volunteers of the institutes' committees and advisory boards.

It must be understood that these institutes are headed by a president. There is also a governing council and there are advisory boards. When developing a code of ethics on conflict of interests for the institute, it will be necessary to take into account the various levels within the organization and the positions held by those concerned.

Some of the concerns expressed earlier by opposition parties, including the Reform Party and the Bloc Québécois, concern motions in both Group No. 1 and Group No. 2. Later on, when we discuss Group No. 2, we will have the opportunity to provide answers to these concerns. Some of these answers are in the form of amendments proposed by the government to meet these concerns expressed by the opposition.

The committee did a good job and its Liberal majority took good note of the most important suggestions made by the members of the opposition parties.

[English]

Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I rise with pleasure today to talk about Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian institutes of health research and to repeal the Medical Research Council Act. I agree with the objective of the bill and the new Canadian institutes of health research. Before I speak to the bill which I am pleased to support, I want to take a moment to speak about the decorum in the House and what has happened.

When I came in here earlier this morning a member from the Bloc was speaking about the bill. The member said it was a very important bill for Canada. I listened to the hon. member's speech. I would hope that Bloc members would show the same respect for all members of the House.

I understand the Bloc members are upset about closure being brought in at the committee stage on the clarity bill but that does not give them the right to derail the entire House. It is okay to take a stand on a bill and I acknowledge we did it on the Nisga'a bill. However it does not mean that they should try to derail the whole House and cause problems on every single bill over their one issue. I appeal to the Bloc members to give all members of the House including those on the government side the respect to be heard on this bill. It was very important to say that at the outset.

• (1350)

Why is this bill so important? At first glance one wonders whether it will create another billion dollar boondoggle. On really looking at the bill I agree with the concept of what it is trying to do. It is putting money back into medical research. It is very important that we make this investment. It will also help stem part of the brain drain by making this investment in our scientific community and will put the resources into medical research. The intent is correct.

The Canadian institutes of health research appear to have a precise game plan with the sole intention of promoting research. There are couple of qualifications. First, there is little time available to consult the scientific community for input on research projects that are to be undertaken. It is important to make sure that the scientific community is targeted. Second, I have some concerns that the president of the Canadian institutes of health research may bypass recommendations of the governing council and simply appoint people to the advisory councils based on individual choice rather than their qualifications. I say that because of what we have seen historically in that appointments become much more political.

When one reads the bill it does appear that the appointments will be independent and made at arm's length from the federal government. I applaud that and hope that will be carried out. Of course, we will not know until the bill is passed and we see the appointments but that issue seems to be addressed. Again, I point these concerns out because it is very important that the institutes operate independent of the government.

I wish I could say that was the case at HRDC. This all ties together. It is government grants going out as subsidies. Again, I think it has to happen in scientific research. That is an important role the government must play and that is why I support that. But we must make sure that the money gets to where it is supposed to be and is done in a non-partisan way.

Unfortunately we have seen the billion dollar boondoggle at HRDC. Not only that, it is the whole culture that flows through all levels of many government departments. I personally witnessed it with the TAGS program and the fisheries in Atlantic Canada. The federal government paid \$2.8 billion for fishermen to stay at home and wait for the fish to come back. The government did not achieve any of the desired goals. We have seen it in Indian affairs, CIDA, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and the list goes on and on.

I point out these concerns because if this is to work and we make this investment in our scientific community, we have to make sure it is done in a non-partisan way. The government has addressed that in the bill. That is why I intend to support it but it is important that we follow up and make sure that it happens.

All grant money should be administered that way. The new Canadian institutes of health research will replace the Medical Research Council which until now has not been accountable. It has not worked and that is why there must be a change. It is very important that the money is fully accounted for and transparent. This is the first step in making that happen.

We have seen in the past and on the front page of every paper for a month concerning HRDC, that it has not been accounted for. Most important it has not been transparent. Canadians are wondering where their tax dollars are going. I hear over and over again from people in my riding and in the medical community that it is very important that we make investments in research. That is an appropriate goal for government but it has to be transparent. It has to ensure that the public has access to where the money is going.

That is only one aspect. I wanted to raise it because I believe this can play an important role in curbing the problem of the brain drain. I have talked about this before in the House. This issue is very dear to me. Some of our best and our brightest in particular in the areas of health, engineering and the high tech sector are going south.

• (1355)

It is worth noting that we need that private sector and government partnership. The bill addresses that. It brings in the private sector for that partnership aspect. It is a very important component. I encourage the government to look at that in all ministries and departments. If we are going to help stem the brain drain, I absolutely fundamentally believe we need to lower taxes, but we also have to allow the private sector to create the jobs. It is not a role government can play.

We have to make investments in the scientific community. However, in other areas such as industry, and areas of grants where there is no transparency and accountability, that is not working. The private sector has a very important role to play.

I commend the government for the bill. I support it. It is very important. We are putting money into scientific research. It appears the government has tried to keep it at arm's length and I applaud that. It appears that 95% of the resources will go to front line research and that only 5% will be used for administration. I applaud the government. It is an encouraging first step. It will help reduce the brain drain. Hopefully when the bill passes, this will happen.

We can apply this whole concept to other ministries such as HRDC. We need to invest in our people but it cannot be a political fund which is used to buy votes. That culture has grown and grown and grown. We need to change that.

S. O. 31

I will be supporting this very important bill. I look forward to seeing the results and to our scientific community benefiting from these so very important research dollars.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to the men and women who work at the Department of National Defence.

Canadian forces have record levels of overseas deployments to peacekeeping missions and increased activities at home.

The Department of National Defence has made fundamental organizational changes in order to ensure that the structure of the department and the Canadian forces are ready to support these new challenges.

An independent report released earlier this month noted effective implementation of reforms in over 300 areas. The reforms range from the creation of a military ombudsman, to the revamping of the military justice system and to the implementation of quality of life initiatives.

The Canadian forces and the Department of National Defence have demonstrated they are capable of fundamental changes at an institutional and cultural level. I applaud their flexibility and leadership. The department deserves our respect and our gratitude.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, farmers in Saskatchewan are losing the shirts off their backs and the government is to blame. The ministers brag about all the money they have promised but 75% of the money the Liberals promised is still in Ottawa's ivory towers, not in the farmers' pockets.

Today's announcement for farm assistance to Saskatchewan is just another billion dollar boondoggle. I held eight town hall meetings in January and attended farm crisis rallies in Toronto, Regina and Saskatoon.

A group of farmers asked me to bring the shirts they are losing to Ottawa and give them to the Prime Minister. I have a box full of them. I am going to be out in the lobby after question period with this box of shirts. If the Liberals want to show they care about western grain farmers, I trust one of the ministers responsible for this disaster will come out to the lobby and pick them up.

S. O. 31

Farmers are being taxed to death by Ottawa. One farmer wrote a note on his shirt, "Jean and Paul have taken—"

The Speaker: The hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

* * *

ESTONIA

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today Canadians of Estonian heritage are commemorating the 82nd anniversary of the declaration of independence of Estonia.

It is an anniversary that is foremost in the minds of all people who have been able to cast off the burden of foreign domination. Canada has played a major role in helping to re-establish democratic institutions in Estonia, in assisting Estonia to become a recognized member of the international community, and in providing infrastructure to make Estonia ready for membership in international security arrangements.

Estonians have played an important role in sharing their unique cultural attributes with all Canadians. I recognize the vital importance that Esto 2000, the Estonian world festival, will be to Toronto's cultural scene this coming July.

• (1400)

The song, dance and gymnastic festivals and other festivities will be followed with great interest by all Canadians.

May we wish Canadians of Estonian heritage success in all their endeavours during Esto 2000 and may the independence of Estonia be commemorated for generations to come. *Elagu Eesti.*

* * *

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Ms. Susan Whelan (Essex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, February is Black History Month. It is a time for all Canadians to cherish our country's history.

Yesterday the Reform member for Calgary East spoke and I could not agree with him more. The ancestors of Canada's black community have made a tremendous contribution building our great nation.

That is why the government, through HRDC and the jobs creation partnership program, invested in the Nazrey AME Church, the first black national historic site designated in Canada. Located in the town of Amherstburg, this architecturally distinctive stone chapel is an example of the small refugee churches from Ontario associated with the underground railroad.

For once I hope the Reform Party will recognize this useful spending.

It is a sad day for Canadians when the Reform Party extols the virtues of history in this country while at the same time trashing one of the very programs that preserved it.

* * *

COCA-COLA BOTTLING COMPANY

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member of parliament for Brampton Centre, it is with tremendous pride that I welcome the Coca-Cola Bottling Company to my riding.

Coca-Cola will invest \$150 million in the construction of a new market service centre facility that will include manufacturing, sales and distribution functions and will employ approximately 550 people. This is the single largest facility investment ever made by the Coca-Cola Bottling Company in Canada and will be the company's largest production and warehouse facility in the country.

Welcome, Coca-Cola, to Brampton where economic growth is the real thing.

* * *

THE SENATE

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last week Albertans learned that we have a vacancy in the Senate.

The last time this happened the Prime Minister appointed a senator with full knowledge of a Senate election underway in Alberta. These sneaky tactics were not part of his leadership campaign in 1990.

There is even division in the Prime Minister's cabinet over this. The MP for Edmonton Southeast is challenging the Prime Minister's methods. I guess he could not live with the Prime Minister's broken promises.

Bert Brown won the support of more Canadians than any other federal politician in history. The will of Albertans has been expressed, democracy has been denied.

There is no justice in the Edmonton West MP refusing to respect her constituents' demands for democracy in the Senate. The people, their premier and a cabinet colleague are all calling for Bert Brown to take his place in the Senate.

* * *

[Translation]

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a hundred or so mayors, municipal politicians and leaders of economic development in the Eastern Townships and the Montérégie area are here today to take part in a day-long event with an international focus.

We are talking about foreign affairs, about the promotion of culture abroad, international trade and, in particular, Team Canada and international co-operation, looking at such topics as how businesses can help in other countries.

I am delighted that so many of them accepted my invitation. I also congratulate them on their interest in always looking for new ways to help their town or municipality get ahead.

Municipal politicians are aware that they need to find ways of meeting the challenges of globalization. Increasingly, local communities will be called upon to work more closely with other communities.

In closing, I greet the delegation from my riding of Brome—Missisquoi and congratulate them on their initiative and excellent team work.

* * *

[English]

DEPLETED URANIUM

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, Ref.): Mr Speaker, a diabolical pallor of death looms over abandoned battlefields affecting all with its ominous nuclear glow. A waste product of our power industry that lights our homes is now a preferred weapon of war.

Depleted uranium's battlefield signature is a pyrophoric ball with a cloud of nuclear waste. Many suggest that the battlefield killing and suffering continues long after the soldiers depart.

Both government and scientists duck and dodge questions regarding this weapon's effect on man.

Depleted uranium is a nuclear weapon that does not discriminate. It must be banned for conventional warfare use for the sake of our soldiers and for the sake of all humanity.

* * *

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Mathieu Da Costa Awards Program was launched by the Department of Canadian Heritage in February 1996 to mark the official recognition by the Parliament of Canada of February as Black History Month.

• (1405)

At the Mathieu Da Costa Awards Ceremony this morning, nine students were honoured for their efforts to promote mutual respect and understanding between Canadians.

The award winners for best essay/short story and artwork were: Timothy Fung from Vancouver, B.C.; Lauren Inrig from Delta, B.C.; Karen Lowe from Abbotsford, B.C.; Charles Sargent from Calgary, Alberta; Boeseya Man-VanDyck from Winnipeg, Manito-

ba; Ellen Friesen from Winnipeg, Manitoba; Karine Houde from Kanata, Ontario; Isabelle Vachon from Welland, Ontario; and Sharon Boersma from Petrolia, Ontario.

I ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating these young, talented Canadians.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada's report on Canadian international trade for 1999 confirms that the federal government's economic policies and fiscal management have laid the groundwork for a booming trade economy.

Our annual trade balance with the rest of the world was just under \$34 billion in 1999, its highest level since 1996. Our volume of exports grew at almost twice the pace of imports.

In 1999 we exported over \$360.6 billion worth of goods; 11.9% more than in 1998. Much of this growth can be attributed to increased domestic capacity in the automotive industry and high demand for Canadian built models in the United States. Our television and telecommunications equipment industry also contributed significantly.

Overall, the resulting trade balance for 1999 was the third highest on record for Canada.

* * *

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to celebrate Black History Month and to extend congratulations to Brad Barton, a fellow black Nova Scotian who will be receiving the Order of Canada.

The history of Nova Scotia and all Canada reflects the tremendous contribution by black Canadians from all walks of life and often against incredible odds.

Black History Month, also known as African Heritage Month, has been celebrated in North America since 1926. These celebrations mark the contributions made by black Canadians through exhibits, informative lectures, cultural events, political activities, recognition ceremonies for distinguished black Canadians and many other events.

I encourage as many people as possible to participate in black history and African heritage events wherever they occur throughout the country.

I was pleased recently to attend an event to honour African-Canadian veterans and other blacks in uniform. I am looking forward to participating in an upcoming discussion forum on the state of anti-racist education in Nova Scotia public schools.

S. O. 31

I hope the government seizes upon the spirit of Black History Month to address the serious shortcomings in the role of blacks in the federal public service so that we may have even more—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Quebec East.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FLANGERS ROCK GROUP

Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec East, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with pride that I pay tribute today to the performance of Flangers, a group of four young rock musicians from the Quebec City area.

Fred Asselin, Serge Poulin, Julien Martre and P. O. Gosselin were a knockout in California's Battle of the Band 3, placing second in the finals on February 3.

The only Canadian group to make it to the finals since this event first began, they scored a perfect 100% in the Dallas semi-finals. With some 4,000 Canadian and American groups entered in this prestigious rock music competition, the largest of its kind in the world, their achievement was all the more impressive. In addition, a number of international celebrities told them that they were very talented and predicted that they would go far.

I congratulate the members of Flangers on their talent and their determination. All Quebecers—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Niagara Falls.

* * *

[*English*]

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Gary Pillitteri (Niagara Falls, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for weeks and weeks we have listened to the accusations by the opposition of mismanagement regarding the administration of HRD programs.

Maybe the time has come to say it as it really is. A recent letter from the regional chair of the municipality of Niagara states:

HRDC support to programs like Trade Niagara and the Niagara Investment Marketing Initiative has contributed in no small measure to the renaissance that is now underway throughout the region.

Furthermore, it commends and pays special tribute to Jim Williams and all the people at the HRDC regional office for their professionalism.

The letter also stated that the economic recovery the Niagara region now enjoys would not have been possible without the support and partnership of the HRDC office.

Let us set the record straight—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Drummond.

• (1410)

[*Translation*]

CHECHNYA

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday marked a sad anniversary indeed.

On February 23, 1944, Stalin ordered the deportation of the Chechen people. Exasperated by this unsubdued people's constant rebellion against Russia and threat to its territorial integrity, Stalin decided to impose on them his "final solution". He meted out similar treatment to other peoples, including the Qatari people, who never recovered from it.

On the pretext that the Chechens were collaborating with the enemy, 450,000 people, mostly women, children and the aged, were deported and spread through central Asia and Siberia. The men were at war with Germany. The international community kept quiet out for fear of damaging relations with Russia.

Truly, history repeats itself. The Chechen people, accused of terrorism today, are once again the victims of a dirty war. Although it has very politely raised its voice, the international community continues to put its own interests ahead of—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Compton—Stanstead.

* * *

REFUGEE IDENTIFICATION

Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC): Mr. Speaker, in early winter, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration announced a pilot project whereby all refugee claimants would be issued identification cards. These cards would allow better access to social services.

There are advantages to this initiative, but I am perturbed the minister did not reveal this project to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. She had ample opportunity to do so when she appeared before the committee on November 24. That was just under a week before she announced this initiative. I find it hard to believe that the minister was not informed of the plan when she was at committee.

The identification of refugees could be a costly measure for taxpayers. I find it strange that the minister said nothing when she had the opportunity to do so.

When will the minister be informing the House on the progress of this pilot project?

* * *

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Odina Desrochers (Lotbinière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since their re-election in 1997, the Liberal members have banished

democracy from the House of Commons. Elected representatives of this country no longer have freedom of speech.

There have already been 62 gag orders in the House. This is a sad record in the annals of Canadian political history. Of these, three were for the purpose of preventing Quebecers from expressing their views on the future of democracy in Quebec.

Every effort was made to ram through, without consultation, Bill C-20, a bill with no other purpose than to subjugate Quebec, as Claude Ryan has pointed out.

Democracy in this parliament has given way to arrogance and scorn, the trademark of the Prime Minister and his henchmen, including the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

In the next referendum, nothing will prevent the people of Quebec from making the break once and for all with this federal government, and they will do so by means of a democratic vote. That is clear.

* * *

[English]

GASOLINE PRICES

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian truckers are facing a crisis as rising fuel costs are causing many to actually lose money every time they put their rigs on the road.

When questioned about the truckers' plight, the Prime Minister responded that it was not his problem, despite the fact that the federal government is collecting 15 cents on every litre of fuel.

Last year the federal government collected over \$4.5 billion in fuel taxes, yet it only put \$150 million back into Canada's highways.

Despite this massive surplus, the federal Liberals are refusing to provide any tax relief to our struggling truckers, even on a temporary basis. The Prime Minister would rather build fountains in his riding and give grants to companies like Wal-Mart and Videotron than provide tax relief for our truckers. Why? Because tax relief does not give the Liberals the opportunity for a photo-op.

Hopefully, the government will come to its senses before Canada's truckers—

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

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Dennis Gruending (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thousands of farmers in Saskatchewan and Manitoba are in dire straits this winter due to circumstances

Oral Questions

beyond their control. There are international subsidy wars going on and while our federal government has not supported our farmers, the Europeans and Americans have supported theirs.

This morning the federal Liberal government took a baby step in the right direction. After months of lobbying by the premiers of Saskatchewan and Manitoba and by our federal NDP caucus, the premiers and the Prime Minister announced \$400 million in additional assistance to agriculture.

I want to welcome this announcement. Every bit helps. But having said that, it will not solve the farm income problem. What our farmers need is a long term program which will kick in and support their income every time it drops disastrously, as it has in the last two years.

• (1415)

We welcome this morning's announcement, but it does not get the federal government off the hook. There is a lot more to be done.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the government would love to distance itself from the billion dollar bungle at the Department of Human Resources Development, but unfortunately it is the government which gave it the money.

Since the government was elected the auditor general has repeatedly expressed concern about mismanagement of grants and contributions by this department.

After all of these revelations of mismanagement, waste and political interference, does the government still support spending millions of taxpayer dollars on the discredited Canada jobs fund?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government supports programs that help disabled people. The government supports programs that help students. The government supports people who need training and job experience. We support those programs, unlike the NDP.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Hon. Herb Gray: They should be supporting them. They are not and that is why they are doing so poorly.

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, these programs help none of these people and these answers are an insult to the House of Commons and the Canadian people.

Oral Questions

Canadians want action on this affair, not excuses. They want the mess at HRD to be cleaned up. They want these questionable files to be put out of the control of people in the department. They want ministers and those responsible removed from their positions and they want the suspension of these programs before more damage can be done.

When is the government going to stop protecting incompetent ministers and start protecting Canadian taxpayers?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have protected Canadian taxpayers by eliminating the \$42 billion deficit, by bringing down the unemployment rate from more than 11% to 6%, by having record low interest rates and again today record low inflation. We have protected taxpayers by cutting \$16 billion from the tax rolls, and we will have further cuts according to the Minister of Finance. That is how we protect taxpayers, not with the empty rhetoric and false innuendoes of the Leader of the Opposition.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: Order, please. I ask members to stay away from the word false.

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we have the ingredients of a bad movie. We have the tip of an iceberg that could sink the government over mismanagement. We have a captain of the *Titanic* blindly sailing to the iceberg. We have a minister of human resources over the bow of the ship saying "I can fly". But it will not fly with Canadian taxpayers.

The only question left is: Would such a bad movie qualify for a federal government grant?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the nerve of the Leader of the Opposition. He is the captain of the *Titanic*, now renamed the Reform Party.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this is *Gone With the Wind*. The Minister of Finance says this boondoggle is actually about job creation, but the government does not have a sweet clue as to how many jobs actually get created. He says it is about helping the needy, and yet Wal-Mart happens to be part of that category. We know that he likes to help the little guy. I will tell the House who he helps: the friends of the little guy from Shawinigan.

I am going to ask a specific question, and for once I would like a specific answer. Does the finance minister agree with the \$200,000 taxpayer grant for the musical fountain in the Prime Minister's riding?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has stated his support for the programs administered by the HRD department because of what they do to enable Canadians to have better lives.

The hon. member is the first mate on the Reform ship *Titanic*. The first mate does not care about helping people to have better lives through training, through job experience, through permanent jobs. She ought to change her optics.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I can see the program now: "Fountains for a Better Life", as if anyone is going to believe that.

The finance minister may sniff at \$200,000 of taxpayers' money, but to Canadians that is a huge amount of money. They can make fun of it, but that is a lot of money.

• (1420)

The finance minister said that he supports the old style government job creation schemes and now the Deputy Prime Minister has agreed with that. It is nothing but shame that should be heaped on them for that.

I would ask again, does he agree with the Prime Minister's claim that this boondoggle of \$200,000 for the fountain—

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if I am not mistaken, the program was supported by the local municipality and the provincial government, which were not supporters of the Prime Minister. The project did some positive things for the community in the short run, and in the long run in terms of the tourist strategy.

I think my hon. friend should check her facts. She would then have a different view of this project and the other projects of the Human Resources Development Department in her area and all across Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Human Resources Development told me that she was prepared to answer my questions after doing the necessary checks.

Let us return to the case of the riding of Rosemont. How does the minister explain that the company moved before April 9, 1998, that it received a grant on April 14 of the same year, and that the local HRDC office and the company's owner confirm that it moved to the riding of Saint-Maurice, the Prime Minister's riding, and received a grant in the amount of \$165,984?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as promised, I asked my officials to look into this file and I can confirm these facts to the House.

In December 1997 the department approved a project under the transitional jobs fund for \$165,948 to create 42 jobs in the riding of

Oral Questions

Rosemont. Relevant community partners were consulted, including the province and the local MP. The company discussed with the Montreal centreville HRDC office its difficulty in finding a suitable location in Rosemont. The local office agreed to fund the project as long as jobs would still be created in an area of high unemployment.

The company then located to an area of high unemployment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is a very simple question. Of all the luck that it should be impossible to find a place to locate a textile industry in Montreal. Montreal is the textile capital of Canada. Better to head to the pulp and paper capital in Shawinigan, but that is another story.

That having been said, how is it that the lists she has given us dated February 15, 2000, show the project as being located in the riding of Rosemont, not in the riding of Saint-Maurice?

[*English*]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me confirm again that the company advised the local office that it could not find an appropriate location for the undertaking. It was agreed that as long as the company relocated to an area of high unemployment the project would go forward.

My officials continue to review this file.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I remind the minister that the company and the promoter had pledged to create jobs in the riding of Rosemont, more specifically at 5800 Saint-Denis Street.

Why then did the minister not at least inform the member that, due to changes that occurred in the process, the grant would no longer go to the riding of Rosemont but to the riding of Saint-Maurice instead?

[*English*]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me say again that I have confirmed the facts to date and the officials continue to look at this file.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this sounds like a true coverup operation.

Is this not simply a case of taking grants allocated to the riding of the member who approved the project and transferring them to the Prime Minister's riding?

[*English*]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me say again that the owner of the operation advised the local Human Resources Development Department that the company was unable to find a suitable area to base the undertaking.

The department advised the owner that if the company took the project to an area of high unemployment it would continue to be funded.

Let me say again that the officials continue to look at this file.

* * *

• (1425)

HEALTH CARE

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

Eye surgery in Calgary today costs \$1,500, and earlier in the week the health minister basically shrugged that off as if it was no problem.

Will the health minister stand in his place today and give an undertaking that no Canadian will have vital eye surgery denied or delayed simply because they cannot pay the money?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier in the week I reminded the hon. member that it was as a result of the efforts of this government that we ensured that those clinics in Alberta complied with the Canada Health Act, that all medically necessary services are available to Canadians, not just in Calgary but across the country, in accordance with the principles of the Canada Health Act.

That is what medicare is all about and we intend to ensure that those principles are respected in every part of the country.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about putting the principles into practice. Let the record show that this is the first health minister in over 30 years, since the introduction of medicare, who could not answer that question using one word, a simple yes.

When in practice did this government decide to give up on the most fundamental principle of medicare, namely, that a Canadian would receive the health care they need regardless of financial circumstances or where they happen to live?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in relation to this, as in relation to so many other things, the New Democratic Party is out of touch with reality. They are looking at a government which defends the Canada Health Act and each of its principles, each day, in each province across the country. Through our financial contributions, through the leadership we show in

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relation to necessary reforms and changes in health care, and by making sure that practices comply with those principles, this government stands four-square behind medicare. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Liberal—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough.

* * *

CIDA

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the international cooperation minister told us that her audit, although completed in September, was finally read by her in December.

Although this contradicted her official spokesperson and a January 24 newspaper account, it pointed out more irresponsible largesse and more frivolous spending to the tune of \$850 million.

Why has it taken almost five months and questions from the opposition, again, for the minister to come forward and tell us why she has not started to deal with this damning internal audit?

Hon. Maria Minna (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member continues to misrepresent the information.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. I ask the hon. minister to withdraw the word “misrepresent”.

Hon. Maria Minna: I withdraw it, Mr. Speaker.

However, the hon. member continues to use the information in different ways. First, the \$850 million is from 1978 to today. He is counting 22 years. It is not the budget for CIDA. CIDA's budget is \$60 million. In fact, in 1999 we spent only \$43 million, not the full amount.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, when asked for a list of companies that were audited, the president of CIDA and her department stated “This becomes an issue of how much you want to go into the public domain”. Shockingly arrogant. Heaven forbid that the Canadian public find out just how their taxpayers' dollars are being spent.

Does the minister agree with the president of CIDA, or will she release the full list of companies that were audited so we can finally get some truth and accountability from this department?

Hon. Maria Minna (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Conservative Party was the minister for seven years of CIDA. For seven years he did not make any changes.

With respect, I have already implemented 80% of the recommendations, and if the hon. member wants I will table the list tomorrow.

* * *

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in a desperate attempt to show that he is not stuck in the seventies like the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance recently told a reporter that governments should not be subsidizing business. Apparently fountains are okay, though.

However, here he is financing the HRD minister's nasty little habit with millions for Dairy Queen, Videotron and a contractor for Wal-Mart, to name but a few of the thousands of examples.

• (1430)

How does the minister square his comments of a week ago with his role as the chief financier of the business subsidy sweepstakes at HRD?

Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Reform's preoccupation is to deliver huge tax cuts to the rich. Unlike Reform, we believe that the role of government is to be there when Canadians need help.

Reform is the party that has called for cuts to equalization, cuts to farm support programs and cuts to health care. This is not the role of government.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, if that were true the finance minister would be in favour of tax cuts for the rich. In fact he might even bring his ships home and register them here, and maybe we could collect some taxes on them.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. I ask the member to go right to his question.

Mr. Monte Solberg: I want to know what the minister's excuse is for writing all those cheques. Is it that Wal-Mart really needs the money now? Or, maybe he thinks that peanut buster parfaits are the hot sector in the new economy.

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the moneys that flowed to the projects that included Wal-Mart did not go to Wal-Mart. They went to Metrus Properties.

In this particular project in the city of Cornwall, which I have visited, I can say that 300 men and women will be employed. The problem with that party is that it wants to play politics. It wants to forget about people. I also point out that its kissing cousins, the Government of Ontario, supported this project.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on October 27, 1997, Human Resources Development Canada had the hon. member for Rosemont approve a project to create 106 jobs in his riding.

On December 16—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Paul Crête: Mr. Speaker, on October 27, 1997, Human Resources Development Canada had the hon. member for Rosemont approve a project to create 106 jobs in his riding.

On December 16, 42 jobs were approved by HRDC. On April 9, 1998, the file was transferred to the Prime Minister's riding and, five days later, the sum of \$165,984 was paid out in the Prime Minister's riding.

Are we to understand that the reason the project dates have disappeared from the minister's new lists is simply to prevent us from making such discoveries?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have made the comments about the individual project, and my officials continue to look at it.

The hon. member makes reference to the list. We have provided to the House an unprecedented volume and scope of information at the request of members of the House. That information is available. It should be used. If there continue to be questions on individual projects we will answer them.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister claimed that there was only an overpayment of \$250 in this whole issue. This week, he increased the figure to \$5,960 for the whole country.

Today, February 24, 2000, at 2.35 p.m., does the minister realize that we are not talking about \$5,960 for all of Canada, but an amount of \$165,984 earmarked for the riding of Rosemont that disappeared only to resurface somewhere in the Prime Minister's riding?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know where the money has gone. We are following up on this particular project.

• (1435)

As we have promised, we have provided information to the House so that members of parliament who are interested can understand where federal tax dollars are going and how indeed this money has helped the citizens in their communities.

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HEALTH CARE

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, since taking office the government has increased spending on corporate welfare, pork barrel spending and patronage for its big business friends, but at the same time has cut health care spending by two-thirds or \$21 billion.

Given that Canadians think health care is a more important priority than corporate welfare, why has the government and the Minister of Finance placed a higher priority on corporate welfare to companies like Wal-Mart than on health care spending for Canadians?

Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is absolute nonsense. Transfers to the provinces for health care are now at an all time high.

Having said that, Reform is the party which has advocated massive tax cuts for the rich. That is the party that in the past has called for eliminating all subsidies in terms of equalization, getting rid of all subsidies for farmers and actually cutting health care. They cannot have it both ways.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the only way the minister could answer the question and justify the government's increased spending on corporate welfare and cuts to health care is by misrepresenting, I am sure incidentally, the position—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Jason Kenney: Let us be very clear. We want to get low income people who are below the poverty line off the tax rolls and we want increased spending on health care.

Why does the government continue to place a greater priority on corporate welfare for its big business friends than on increased spending for health care and tax relief for working families?

Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in terms of the Reform Party flat tax, let me quote:

But which side of the argument would you choose. . . The side that appears to spend the bulk of future surpluses on better off Canadians, or the one that bows to middle income earners and leaves more room for debt reduction and health spending?

That is from the *Edmonton Journal* of February 2.

[Translation]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, up to now the Minister of Human Resources Development has been

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unable to identify the criteria for awarding grants under the transitional jobs fund.

I would ask the Minister of Human Resources Development if the criteria were developed by riding or region, in writing, or were they based on flexibility or oral instructions to officials?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have said on a number of occasions that there is a certain flexibility in the transitional jobs fund that has allowed it to respond to local issues.

It is because of that flexibility that we have transitional jobs fund projects and Canada jobs fund projects in the ridings of many Bloc members of parliament.

[Translation]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have here a document from a Department of Human Resources Development office in downtown Montreal, which indicates that the minister is unaware of what is going on in her department, because this document mentions two criteria: job creation in a priority sector and the creation of a minimum of ten jobs. Many projects do not meet these two criteria.

Will the minister recognize the increasing importance of revealing the criteria used to award grants?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again let me say that there is a degree of flexibility in the transitional jobs fund and the Canada jobs fund so that local officials can respond to local needs.

Surely that party is not suggesting that all the decisions should be made in Ottawa. Surely that party recognizes that the Government of Quebec has been involved in all the decisions on those projects.

Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the HRD minister gave a Toronto group called CANDO \$1.15 million in taxpayer cash, and \$100,000 of that cash went directly into the pocket of a CANDO employee.

The president of CANDO says that repeated attempts to get the minister's department involved in recovering the money have been ignored. Why did the minister promise to investigate fraud and recover taxpayer money but did absolutely nothing when asked?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me confirm for the House that CANDO has already referred the matter to the police. The matter concerns an employee of the organization and as such it is inappropriate for me to say anything further.

Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, CANDO had to refer the matter to the police because the minister would not do a thing about it.

• (1440)

Even when the minister was alerted that the local HRDC office response was to take the money from one account and put it into another to cover the missing cash, there was absolutely no response from the minister.

Again, why did she promise to protect taxpayers and to look into this matter when she did absolutely nothing when asked?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me remind the hon. member that this is a matter about an employee of the company itself. The company has referred the matter to the police and the police are investigating.

* * *

[Translation]

CINAR

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this government has got us used to the policy of "Not guilty unless caught in the act".

Now the refrain seems to be instead "Apologies accepted, you are forgiven, provided some money found its way into my coffers, of course".

My question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage. Can she tell us whether the government plans to enter into a repayment program with CINAR so that this company will not be faced with legal proceedings later, having acknowledged that it was guilty of fraudulent actions?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of National Revenue and Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously, and I think that everyone in this House is well aware of this, one of the fundamental principles of taxation is the confidentiality of records. Under the Income Tax Act, CINAR's files are confidential.

Now, to pick up on what the hon. member was alluding to, there is a program of voluntary disclosure in place, one of which I as Minister of National Revenue am particularly proud, and it is part of the initiative for fairness. It enables us to provide better services to all taxpayers. Access to this voluntary disclosure program requires exactly that: voluntary disclosure.

* * *

[English]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the premiers of

Manitoba and Saskatchewan today announced additional help for farmers who have been struggling with low returns from their crops. Would the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food tell the House the amount of assistance involved and some of the details?

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everyone in the House knows the struggle that—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Lyle Vanclief: Mr. Speaker, everyone in the House is aware of the low income situation of a number of Canadian farmers, particularly those in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Both levels of government have been working to find means in which to help alleviate that situation. Last month we as a federal government announced another \$1 billion over the next two years to assist. Today, after long negotiations with the provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, the Prime Minister, the premiers and the government announced that we will make available another \$400 million.

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HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on February 1, CANDO sent the human resources minister an urgent e-mail about the missing money: “We are in jeopardy”. The next day it tried again by fax: “Critical situation. We are seeking your help”.

What help did the minister give? Absolutely nothing, none, while all the while she is telling everyone that she is fixing things. Why were there no steps to recover this money stolen from the taxpayer? Or, was the minister just too busy trying to fix her image?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I remind the hon. member again that this particular issue involved an employee of the company itself. The company referred it to the police and the police are investigating.

On the bigger issue here, we are talking about grants and contributions that have been extraordinarily valuable to organizations and to individuals across the country. The value of these undertakings is understood by this side of the House. Clearly it is not by that side of the House that would scrap all grants and contributions.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, here are the facts. In early February the minister was alerted to the theft of grant money. On February 8 she told the House:

Oral Questions

...we can do a much better job in administering our grants—I have taken it seriously. My department has made it a priority.

Today we find out that her words were absolutely hollow. Money was missing. She refused to do anything about it. The only reason the group went to the police is that the minister totally ignored them. What is the minister getting paid for, anyway?

• (1445)

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is making reference to one single organization. We have thousands of sponsors making sure that Canadians have the opportunity they need to get jobs, to get opportunities they may not have otherwise.

Is the hon. member suggesting that those sponsors are not using the money wisely? Again I say we know where the cheques have gone.

My job is to build a strong foundation of administration to support the grants and contributions that are so valuable to Canadians.

* * *

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians continue to ask the federal government to take a leadership role to deal with the energy price crisis.

Yesterday Yukon energy minister Trevor Harding wrote to the federal government saying:

Given the public's concern about increased fuel prices, I believe it is critical for the federal government to play a leadership role, and I urge you to convene a meeting of your provincial and territorial counterparts...to discuss common strategies for addressing this matter.

Other provinces have approached the government as well.

My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Will he agree to convene an energy summit of the provinces, the territories, the oil companies and other stakeholders to address the soaring energy prices?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first I am pleased to note that to date, higher prices for fuels in Canada have not contributed to higher inflation. Indeed inflation declined during the month of January.

With respect to the hon. gentleman's suggestion, at our last federal-provincial-territorial meeting of energy ministers we discussed the oil pricing issue. I have no doubt that item will be on the agenda for the next meeting as well.

Oral Questions

In the meantime I will canvass my territorial and provincial counterparts to seek their views and to determine if they have any plans within their jurisdictions to act on the matter.

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised to hear the minister say that because the last meeting of the council of energy ministers was in June 1998.

When the minister does convene a summit I ask that four things be included on the agenda: immediate aid for those who need it; elimination of the GST and/or a reduction in federal fuel taxes; energy conservation components; and an approach to the OPEC cartel to restore oil production levels. Will he put those items on the agenda?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to OPEC, the OPEC ministers will be meeting within the next month or so. It is obviously their jurisdiction since Canada is not a member of OPEC. OPEC is very aware of Canada's views which do not support the actions which OPEC takes in the marketplace.

With respect to diesel fuels, it should be noted that most of the consumers of those fuels qualify for such as things as the GST tax credit. The impact of that tax credit has the effect of reducing the burden on consumers.

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[Translation]

INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION PROGRAM

Ms. Diane St-Jacques (Shefford, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister for International Cooperation joined Cabinet on August 3. On what date was she informed of the audit by her staff?

[English]

Hon. Maria Minna (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, I was informed of the CIDA audit in September. I saw it in December, I read it in December, I was briefed on it in December. It was released in December. That is very clear.

With respect to the CIDA situation and CIDA aid, it is important to note that the leader of the Conservative Party had seven years in which to fix the problems of CIDA. He chose not to do that. I have only been there for seven months and I have already implemented 80% of the recommendations and every one of them will be done by June.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane St-Jacques (Shefford, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is again for the Minister for International Cooperation.

In the name of transparency and openness, will the minister also provide us with a full list of businesses and projects for which funding was approved between 1997 and 1999?

[English]

Hon. Maria Minna (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, maybe the hon. members are not listening to this question period at all or are not participating. I just responded to her colleague. Yes, I will table the list tomorrow if the members so wish.

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● (1450)

COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Public Works and Government Services.

Given the tremendous support shown by Canadians to recognize the Queen Mother's 100th birthday, is the minister willing to issue a stamp in her honour?

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me explain the process. The minister for Canada Post does not make that decision. An independent advisory committee decides which stamps are to be issued. The committee met last week and recommended that Canada Post issue a stamp to commemorate the Queen Mother's 100th birthday. Canada Post will issue such a stamp.

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[Translation]

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Human Resources Development refuses to take responsibility for the boondoggle in her department. The same goes for her predecessor. Moreover, the Minister of Finance was in charge of the money throughout that period.

When was the Minister of Finance first informed of the mismanagement and political interference at the Department of Human Resources Development?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member gives me a chance yet again to talk about the undertakings in my department to fix the administrative deficiencies. I remind him that we have worked with

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outside experts, including the auditor general, to build a plan of action that is going to fix the problem in my department.

I take responsibility for that. I look forward to continuing to inform this place and Canadians on the progress in ensuring that we have strong administration of grants and contributions.

* * *

[Translation]

IMPORTATION OF PLUTONIUM

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on January 14, the federal government secretly imported by helicopter plutonium from the United States.

Tuesday, nuclear surveillance groups tabled a legal opinion establishing that Canada had violated its own rules and that it had acted illegally.

Considering that the public is opposed to importing plutonium, what is the Minister of the Environment waiting for to demand that his government at least comply with the process it set up itself?

[English]

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the process was respected. The transport shipment complied with all of the requirements of the Atomic Energy Control Board, the transportation packaging of radioactive materials regulations, the International Civil Aviation Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

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SCOTIA RAINBOW

Mrs. Michelle Dockrill (Bras d'Or—Cape Breton, NDP): Mr. Speaker, several questions about Scotia Rainbow have led to either inconsistent answers or no answers at all from the government and its ministers.

Canadians want to know how a \$750,000 grant turned into a \$2 million cheque. More and more alarming questions arise daily in the community about how much public money was received by Scotia Rainbow and how it is being spent.

If the government has nothing to hide, why does the minister not table today the complete Scotia Rainbow file if she has one? Will she do that?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. I am sure we all want to hear the answer.

Hon. George S. Baker (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, speaking of opinions from the local community, yesterday's editorial in a local paper in Cape Breton said: "Now our NDP MP is condemning aid to a fish processing facility here. Many of the workers at that plant have traditionally made their living from the sea. The downturn in the fishery left them and their families destitute. When our elected representative openly condemns aid in this area, then it is time to ask that representative to step down".

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

• (1455)

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough.

* * *

CIDA

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, the minister for CIDA has selective listening skills. We are looking for the full list. We hope she realizes that.

The CIDA audit that was released and ready in September was not read by her until December. A departmental memo also says "we will make our staff more aware of the role starting in January 2000", six months before they wanted their employees to know of the audit in the first place. Where was the minister? Is she willing to take responsibility for this unreasonable delay?

Hon. Maria Minna (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the member has been the last couple of days. First, I said that I will release the whole list tomorrow. I have said it three times now. I hope he does understand it this time.

Second, the CIDA audit was done. It was reported to me that it was done in September. I was told that it was finished in December. I read it in December. I was briefed in December in my boardroom in Hull and it was released in December. I do not know how more clear than that I can be.

* * *

IRAN

Mr. Bill Graham (Toronto Centre—Rosedale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

A significant shift in the Iranian political landscape has occurred as reformers supportive of President Khatami have scored an overwhelming victory in the Iranian elections. What is Canada's reaction to this election? What will our government do to encourage the reintegration of Iran into the international system?

Business of the House

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we are all encouraged by the recent political developments. Of course we will do everything we can to support the reform spirit.

I do want to point out—

Mr. Monte Solberg: Reform is sweeping the world.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy: Mr. Speaker, they have their own ayattolah. They have their own problems.

I would like to point out there are still very serious concerns relating to the detention of Baha'is for religious purposes and the detention of Iranian Jews for purposes that simply are unfounded. We hope the new parliament will take steps to respond to our entreaties to let those people go.

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HOCKEY

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice regarding violence in hockey.

All Canadians were appalled by the vicious assault in an NHL game in Vancouver a few days ago.

Can the Minister of Justice explain why there is one standard of justice for NHL players and another for ordinary Canadians? Can the minister explain why the criminal code for which she is responsible is not enforced in NHL rinks?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think everyone in the House condemns violence in hockey. I would hope the hon. member knows that the enforcement of the criminal code rests with local provincial law enforcement agencies. Therefore, local police should be investigating this event. In fact it will be a decision of the provincial prosecutor as to whether or not charges are laid and a prosecution takes place. That is not within our jurisdiction.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the minister is responsible for the criminal law. Surely she must be concerned that the criminal code for which she is responsible is not enforced equally across Canada.

May I put this question to the minister: Will she urge provincial attorneys general to apply the criminal law equally across the country?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no evidence that

provincial attorneys general are not enforcing the criminal law across the country, be it in a hockey rink or on the streets.

I would ask the hon. member to direct his question to the relevant attorney general.

* * *

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the human resources minister's words about a plan of action are laughable. CANDO got nothing from her but inaction.

• (1500)

Another of the minister's favourite lines is "no money is missing". Even while she kept repeating that, she had an urgent e-mail and fax on her desk that said the complete opposite.

Why should Canadians have any faith in what this minister says?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about faith. We know that this party has faith that trickle down economics will make sure that Canadians with disabilities get opportunities in the economy. We know that this party has faith that trickle down economics will make sure that young people have the opportunity of getting that very important first job. We know that this party thinks that trickle down economics will ensure that communities in northern British Columbia somehow magically are transformed into dynamic economies. We know that is not right. We take faith in the undertakings of this government to work with communities to make sure—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the House leader for the government exactly what kind of legislative plans he has for the coming week. Does he plan to continue to bring in more time allocation and closure in committees and does he plan to issue a stamp with a fountain on it for the Prime Minister?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the risk of pouring cold water on the hon. member's question, I want to answer to him about the program of the government.

This afternoon we shall continue with Bill C-13, the health institutes bill at report stage. Tomorrow the House will consider third reading of Bill C-2, the elections bill.

Monday we shall begin consideration of Bill C-26, the airline legislation. If we do not complete Bill C-13 this afternoon and we

complete Bill C-26 on Monday, perhaps we could then attempt to conclude Bill C-13 then.

In any event, at 4 p.m. on Monday the Minister of Finance shall deliver the annual budget and we will continue to debate the budget on Tuesday and Wednesday of next week.

Thursday of next week shall be an allotted day.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1505)

[*English*]

CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT

The House resumed from February 23 consideration of the motion that Bill C-229, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act (letter that cannot be transmitted by post), be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): It being 3.05 p.m. the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment to the motion at the second reading stage of Bill C-229 under Private Members' Business.

Call in the members.

• (1525)

And the bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The question is on the amendment. As is the usual practice, the division will be taken row by row. We will begin with those in favour of the amendment sitting in the back row of the side of the House on which the sponsor sits and move forward. After proceeding through the rows on my left, members sitting on my right will vote similarly.

Those opposed to the amendment will be called in the same order.

• (1535)

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

(*Division No. 750*)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy
Anderson
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bakopanos
Bellemare
Bertrand
Blaikie
Bonin
Bryden

Anders
Augustine
Baker
Bélanger
Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Bevilacqua
Blondin-Andrew
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Caccia

Private Members' Business

Cadman
Catterall
Clouthier
Cotler
Desjarlais
Dockrill
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)
Easter
Fontana
Goodale
Grewal
Grose
Harb
Hill (Macleod)
Iftody
Jennings
Jordan
Keddy (South Shore)
Knutson
Lastewka
Lill
Longfield
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Maloney
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McGuire
McNally
Mifflin
Minna
Murray
Nunziata
O'Brien (Labrador)
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Peterson
Phinney
Pratt
Proulx
Reynolds
Rock
Schmidt
Solberg
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Stinson
Szabo
Torsney
Vautour
Wayne
Wilfert

Casson
Charbonneau
Copp
Cullen
Dion
Dromisky
Earle
Epp
Gilmour
Graham
Grey (Edmonton North)
Gruending
Harvard
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Jaffer
Johnston
Karetak-Lindell
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
Lee
Limoges
Lowther
Malhi
Manley
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)
Mitchell
Myers
Nystrom
O'Reilly
Pankiw
Penson
Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Price
Redman
Riis
Saada
Scott (Fredericton)
Solomon
St-Jacques
Stewart (Northumberland)
Strahl
Thibeault
Vanclief
Wasylcia-Leis
White (North Vancouver)
Williams—118

NAYS

Members

Alarie
Bergeron
Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)
Canuel
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)
de Savoye
Desrochers
Duceppe
Fournier
Girard-Bujold
Guay
Lalonde
Lebel
Marchand
Mercier
Picard (Drummond)
Rocheleau
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)

Asselin
Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—
Bigras
Cardin
Crête
Debien
Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)
Dumas
Gagnon
Godin (Châteauguay)
Guimond
Laurin
Marceau
Ménard
Perron
Plamondon
Sauvageau
Venne—35

PAIRED MEMBERS

Coderre

Lefebvre

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Accordingly, the order is discharged, the bill withdrawn and the subject matter thereof referred to the Standing Committee on Industry.

(Order discharged and bill withdrawn)

*Government Orders***POINTS OF ORDER**

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) and on behalf of the Minister of Justice, I am tabling, in both official languages, a document containing a list of groups supporting the firearms registration system at the Supreme Court of Canada, and which was quoted from by the minister during yesterday's question period.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADIAN INSTITUTES OF HEALTH RESEARCH ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian institutes of research, to repeal the Medical Research Council Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and on Group No. 1.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to participate in this debate on Bill C-13.

At the very outset I cannot help but indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, a certain amount of cynicism about the process. Time and time again we were told by the members of the Liberal government that this bill was urgently needed. We were under considerable pressure at committee to get it through the whole process.

Interestingly, there were many occasions when Liberal members failed to show up for their responsibilities at the committee. In fact, there was a meeting where we could not proceed because no Liberal member chose to show up. We had that real push to get this through, yet the government could not even ensure that the process was followed with integrity.

I also have to indicate my cynicism around this bill. While we are debating a bill that parliament has a say on, the Minister of Health is out trotting across the country announcing money under the auspices of the Canadian institutes on health research.

We have had press release after press release. On January 11, 28 and February 4 the Minister of Health announced grants for research saying that they were under the MRC, soon to be renamed the Canadians institutes on health research. It was very clever.

We have seen parliament bypassed on many occasions and this is just another example of how little weight this place has when it comes to thorough review of legislation. That disregard for parliament and the democratic will was evident throughout the entire process on Bill C-13.

Earlier today we heard Reform members and other members who participated at the committee talk about how seriously we took the process at committee in terms of amendments and discussions with no credence or support from the Liberal members on that committee for that kind of participation. I think it is absolutely important to put that on the record.

• (1540)

When the bill was introduced, we in the New Democratic Party said—and I think other caucuses have said the same—that we support the concept behind the Canadian institutes of health research and we endorsed the principle of the bill at second reading.

However, we also identified a number of concerns that we felt had to be addressed at committee stage. We therefore participated actively in that process by listening to witnesses, seeking clarification and proposing amendments. In that regard, it is important on the part of everyone in the House to thank the dozens of individuals and organizations who either appeared before the committee or wrote to us with very thoughtful presentations and in-depth analysis of the bill.

What struck me, and I am sure struck others who were at committee, was a recurring theme, an opinion repeated time and time again, to the point where we had to take it seriously. The theme was yes, but. It is a good idea on paper but how will it work? How can we be sure that the noble principles of the bill will be translated into action? That really is the essence of our concerns with the bill before us today and with the process that we are involved in today.

We all know what the bill attempts to do. We know it ends the Medical Research Council and establishes the Canadian institutes of health research. It appears to support a considerably expanded range and volume of health and health research in Canada. It deals with addressing a full range of health research priorities in the country today, from biomedical services to applied clinical research, to health systems and services research, and finally to research on the broader social and economic determinants of health that lie outside the system.

Who can disagree with that? Obviously that is something many of us have been saying for a long time. It is much needed in Canada today. On the basis of that stated objective, it is a bill worth supporting.

However, what we are left with is trying to answer the question: In terms of the details of the bill, are we sure? Have we been guaranteed that these noble principles will be put into practice? Is

the bill prescriptive, clear and detailed about how this transformative approach to health research in the country will happen? Or, are we left with vague statements and unclear requirements that leave in doubt the application of the principles? That is exactly the situation we are dealing with.

I would point members to a very useful presentation we received at committee from a well-known health researcher and policy analyst in the country today, Bob Evans. He wrote a letter to the committee, dated November 19, saying:

My impression, watching mostly but not entirely from the sidelines has been of a continuing struggle between those genuinely committed to this broad view of the CIHR mandate, and those who would prefer to see an "MRC on steroids"—a vastly expanded program of basic biomedical and clinical research, with at best a nod in the direction of research on either the provision (and financing) of health services, or the more fundamental determinants of health embedded in human social economic and economic environments.

That point has to be addressed by the House today because we were unsuccessful in committee in terms of trying to convince the government to put more weight on the whole issue of research based on economic, social, cultural and environmental determinants of health and well-being.

Over and over again presenters mentioned how imbalanced the legislation was when it came to this very issue. A great deal of weight, a lot of words and a lot of emphasis on biomedical research and applied clinical research but only passing references to economic, social and environmental determinants of health.

• (1545)

We heard from many groups involved in women's health. We certainly heard from people involved in environmental health. I want to briefly quote from a document presented by the Canadian Labour Congress, which really captured the essence of this difficulty. It states:

—the fact is that there is no central focus given to the environmental determinants of health, no priority given to research on the prevention of ill-health and no mention at all of the importance of research into the causation of ill-health.

That reflects a very important gap in the legislation and one which has to be addressed.

We have a number of concerns. I have said that we support the principle, but we obviously have a number of concerns with the bill. Let me go through those concerns, because it will help to reveal how much disregard the government had for the process.

The bill mentions commercialization and in fact includes as one of its objectives facilitating the commercialization of health research. There is no need for legislation dealing with public health research to emphasize commercialization. There are other places

Government Orders

where we deal with the question of the commercial advantage of business in the country, but surely our job in parliament is not to give any credence to the needs of private interests over the wishes of the public. We tried to amend the bill to get rid of those words about commercialization. We failed. The Liberals said no to that amendment.

On conflict of interest, there is no provision in this bill to ensure that people who are appointed to the board have no pecuniary or proprietary interests in the pharmaceutical industry or the medical devices industry. We proposed a clear conflict of interest amendment to ensure that kind of situation would not occur. What did the government do? It said no to that amendment.

We also tried to ensure that there was an independent process around ethics. We called on the government to put in place an independent ethics advisory board to ensure that we could guarantee the protection of human beings in all clinical trials of research projects undertaken. What did the government say? It said no.

We made proposals on some basic, fundamental issues.

We said that there should be in this day and age, given what the Liberals themselves have said, gender parity on the board. We thought that would be a normal assumption and that the government would gladly adhere to that principle of equality between women and men on appointments to the board. The government said no. Liberal members on the committee said no.

We did not win on that one, so we suggested mainstreaming in terms of a provision for the institutes of health research. What did the government do? It said no.

We then proposed a women's health research institute. The government said no.

We then proposed that the government address some of the other concerns by looking at ensuring that there was an institute on aboriginal health. We proposed an institute on occupational and environmental health. The government said no.

The devil is in the detail and that is why we have concerns with this bill and why we want the government to take seriously the need for amendment to ensure that this bill is a shining beacon when it comes to transparency and accountability.

Mr. Speaker, could I have the unanimous consent of the House to continue for two minutes?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre has asked for the unanimous consent of the House to continue for two minutes. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Government Orders

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the flexibility you have provided me on this very important bill.

We really want to support this bill because the principle is such an important one, but it is very difficult to give our blessing to a bill when the government refuses to address very fundamental questions which would ensure that the principles are translated into action the way they have been outlined and portrayed.

Why would the government not agree to some basic changes to the bill to ensure transparency and accountability? Why is there no provision on conflict of interest in terms of appointments to the governing council? That was supported by numerous organizations, including the Canadian Healthcare Association, the Canadian Nurses Association, the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Labour Congress, the Women's Health Research Institute, and the list goes on and on.

• (1550)

There was absolutely clear support for ensuring that this bill upheld some very fundamental principles around which there would be no questions of conflict between private greed and public need.

We are left with big questions around the future because there is not that kind of specificity in the bill. We would implore members opposite to consider amendments that would actually improve the bill and give people guarantees and the comfort that in fact we will transform the research agenda and improve and enhance Canada's public health care system.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I will now give the floor to the hon. member for Compton—Stanstead, then we will hear a government member.

Mr. Réal Ménard: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I apologize to the Progressive Conservative members. This has nothing to do with their speeches. I understood that we had agreed that, because of the number of motions we have on the Order Paper, you would recognize the Bloc Québécois members, and then the Progressive Conservative members and finally the New Democratic Party member spoke.

Would you please explain the rationale for the order in which you intend to recognize speakers or what you expect that order to be, so that we may know where we stand?

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): We discussed what the order would be. There is no formal order. I had said that there would be the opportunity for the government to respond. However, as is the tradition, every time there is a set of motions a member

from each of the recognized political parties has the opportunity to speak. The hon. member for Compton—Stanstead will be the first speaker representing his party. Then we will recognize a member on the other side and then we will recognize the hon. member for Bloc.

I understand that the Bloc has many motions and from now until the end of the day we will keep that in mind.

Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my hon. colleague from New Brunswick Southwest, I rise to speak to the amendments he has put forward at report stage of Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian institutes of health research and to repeal the Medical Research Council Act.

I hope my hon. colleagues on all sides of the House will listen carefully to the motions that are being put forward and will give them every consideration when it is time to vote.

It is my belief that these motions will by no means take away from the bill, but in fact will add to its credibility. We could probably even say clarity at this point.

The government must demonstrate a commitment and respect for the principle of accountability through public access to research material and reports pertaining to public health issues.

The Minister of Health has given us a bill that is specific in its explanation of the organization of the CIHR. The CIHR will consist of a president and governing council. Together they will be responsible for the overall direction of the institutes.

The bill states that the members of this governing council will reflect the highest standards of scientific excellence. The bill further states that the appointments will be made by the governor in council; by definition, the cabinet and ultimately the Prime Minister. Here we go again. This is a very cozy arrangement and the very reason we should be concerned. In other words, cabinet and the Prime Minister will decide who will hold these positions.

• (1555)

The president and the governing council of the CIHR will hold these positions at the pleasure of the government and they will be up for review every five years. The motions before us speak clearly to the re-examination of the formula we currently use for appointments to positions such as these.

I believe the motions before us today offer a distinct opportunity to move beyond partisan politics. We must put in place a process that is both transparent and principled, a process that will be dependent on the credentials of the highest order.

As I read the bill it became increasingly evident that I was on familiar ground. The bill projects Jean Charest's plan for Canada's next century, the platform for health care that I ran and won on in

the 1997 election. I cannot fault the minister for coveting the plan of the Progressive Conservative Party because our plan is visionary.

As Mr. Charest said, we should continue to adopt new medical treatments, new pilot and experimental programs that would provide Canadians with state of the art, cutting edge services and treatments, and new technologies to improve the access to care in rural and remote areas of the country. He said there would be programs to test new integrated delivery systems aimed at providing health care based on the the highest quality of health practices. He spoke of the development and maintenance of a Health Canada worldwide website on the Internet to provide a state of the art health care information system, including advice on the prevention and treatment of illness to help hospitals and researchers link their knowledge bases in the country. Is that not the task of the new agency?

In 1997 the Progressive Conservative Party said that it would create a national institute for health with membership drawn from the health care field. It would have a board that would be co-chaired by the federal minister, along with the provincial and territorial ministers. The Progressive Conservative platform in 1997 laid out the right process to save our health care system. It was one of vision and challenge.

[Translation]

The Liberal policy is a disaster for our research institutions and probably the major cause of the brain drain, particularly on top of very high taxes. Are members aware that people with cancer are being sent to the United States for very high-priced treatment?

Today, they are forced to go after those brains for the new technology and superior equipment that we should have here.

[English]

Members of the Progressive Conservative Party support Bill C-13 in principle since we had already written most of it. However, the government now, more than ever, is under scrutiny by the Canadian people for its accountability, responsibility and lack of transparency and it might do well to give consideration to the motions before us today, which pertain to these very issues.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to the report stage motions in Group No. 1 to amend Bill C-13. As a member of the health committee I had the opportunity to listen to the excellent witnesses who appeared before the committee.

Fourteen institutes of health research will be established. It turned out to be a bit of a love-in early in the testimony of the witnesses. Many groups and organizations appeared before the committee to lobby with regard to issues concerning cancer, women's issues, aboriginal issues and so on. It became very clear that there are far more demands for health research dollars in

Government Orders

specific areas than there will be research institutes. That means that it will be a very difficult process for the governing council of the new Canadian institutes of health research to determine how to properly structure those research institutes.

The previous NDP speaker, who did an excellent job in representing her views on the committee, suggested that the government was opposed to setting up specific institutes for women, for aboriginals and so on.

• (1600)

According to the bill that is the responsibility of the governing council. It is not a matter of the government being opposed to any particular research institutes or promoting any particular research institutes. Those are the responsibilities of the governing council.

The NDP member also raised a twofold issue with regard to conflict of interest. All order in council appointees will automatically be subject to the public service conflict of interest rules. However, the member was quite right to point out that there was an extension in this regard to the extent that there would be appointees by the governing council which could include the executive committee and the various advisory and standing committees of the institutes of health research and of the governing council. They will not specifically be subject to any conflict of interest guidelines.

It would therefore seem appropriate to ensure, as with every agency exercising authority in terms of government funding, that appropriate conflict of interest guidelines be established. There is a generic clause in the bill that requires them to put into place all good management practices. It is included implicitly although not as explicitly as the member requested.

Once we were beyond the lobbying for who wants to have health research institutes, the issue for a number of witnesses changed to that of accountability and transparency. As the previous speaker mentioned, it is a very important issue with respect to all legislation with which the House deals.

With regard to the government model for the Canadian institutes of health research, the Public Policy Forum published a document called "Proposed Governance Structure for the Canadian Institutes of Health Research" on January 4, 1999. It articulated excellent points for consideration, which were taken into account by the advisory committee to the government, with regard to structuring the legislation and designing the governance model for the CIHR.

It laid out six principles of a good governance model and No. 3 was accountability and transparency. It stated:

Those within the CIHR, those who make decisions about funding the CIHR, and the Canadian public in general, must be able to hold accountable those in whom the responsibility for health research has been entrusted. The lines of accountability must be clear and clean. Making that accountability clear is the transparency that is deemed fundamental to the CIHR.

Government Orders

There are many references in this document with regard to accountability and good governance, transparency, et cetera. It is an issue to which we are very sensitive.

A number of interveners before the committee decided to raise specifically some of these issues. Dr. Susan Pisterman was one such intervener. The Canadian Nurses Association, the Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Health Association all raised the same theme with regard to transparency and accountability.

I have a couple of interesting quotes. To put it in context, the first one is from Dr. James Turk, executive director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers. His final issue was commercialization and he said:

—there is a potential conflict of interest of members of the governing council, which is not addressed in this bill. Quite frankly, no one who represents major private commercial interests should be able to be appointed to the governing council.

This matter is covered by the conflict of interest guidelines to which order in council appointees by the governing council will be subject. I believe that concern has been appropriately addressed. However, as I said earlier, any other appointees by the governing council who are not covered by the public service conflict of interest guidelines should be adequately covered by good management practices. He went on to say:

This is a public body that will control millions of dollars of research money and will be probably the most decisive institution in Canada with respect to the health of Canadians.

● (1605)

There is no question about that. The Canadian institutes of health research will be responsible for peer review and consideration of about \$500 million worth of grants. In view of its size and importance there is no question that accountability and transparency issues will be carefully taken into account by parliament to ensure that they are in place. I am very confident about that.

Other concerns were raised. The Canadian Health Association and its spokesperson, Mrs. Sharon Sholzberg-Gray, also raised issue about the fact that the CIHR president and the chairperson of the governing council would be the same person and that there should be a review in that regard. She also recommended that to further strengthen transparency and accountability Bill C-13 should include provisions for a parliamentary review.

There was consistency with regard to those who came to talk, not just about the importance of having an authoritative body to manage such an important area as health research in Canada but to ensure that if there were ever any problems with regard to the Medical Research Council, or any others, the mechanisms are in place so that the public and parliament are comfortable with the provisions of the bill.

I want to conclude my comments. I support the bill. I support those who came before the committee to compliment and to congratulate the government with regard to the structure of the governance model being proposed. I am very sure the concerns raised by a number of the witnesses with regard to issues such as accountability and transparency have been adequately dealt with in the bill and will be taken care of as we move forward to establishing probably one of the most important health institutions in Canada.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Churchill River, The Environment; the hon. member for Halifax West, Visible Minorities.

Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-13 at report stage. We are dealing with the first group of amendments.

This bill is aimed at officially creating Canadian institutes of health research to organize, co-ordinate and fund health research at the federal level. These institutes will replace the Medical Research Council and will receive additional funding totalling \$65 million for the 1999 fiscal year and about \$500 million until 2002.

What will the institutes of health research do? They will promote new ways of conducting research on biomedical themes and also on issues more directly related to social sciences, which is something totally new.

Moreover, these institutes will be virtual, since they will allow researchers in universities, hospitals and other research centres in Canada, as well as university students, to communicate with each other and to share information electronically.

The institutes will have various themes on which they will be able to focus their research, including ageing, arthritis, musculoskeletal development, cancer, molecular biology—a new area of research—the health of children and their mothers and the relationship between the two, clinical assessments, technology assessments, heart disease, and many more. They should also look at new genetic and reproductive technologies. These themes will be studied from a social perspective.

The mandate of these institutes also includes other interesting and innovative elements. Ethical issues are to be taken into consideration.

● (1610)

I am always surprised when this issue is raised, because the feeling is that, in the scientific community, ethics are at the

forefront. It seems however that, with the new developments in science, this issue will become more pressing.

Emphasis will also be placed on the need for integrated health research with the co-operation of several groups: various organizations, women's groups and governments currently involved in research. This will be an important element in the future. The approach is clearly multidisciplinary.

Moreover, the institutes will not be dedicated, which will allow them to be more flexible and to alter their priorities to adapt quickly to the changing nature of society and the fast-paced developments in the research field. This is in response to the OECD, which has been urging Canada since 1993 to increase its investment in R and D.

It is expected that the health research institutes governing council might start its activities as early as April 2000, in keeping with the wishes of the government and the scientists who are insisting on this timeline.

The Bloc Québécois, whose support for increased R and D funding is unwavering, salutes the efforts of the scientists who were involved in the drafting of the bill to ensure they would have access to innovative tools to improve the dissemination of health information and facilitate the development of cutting edge technologies in this area.

However—and this is significant—in its present form, Bill C-13 might encroach on provincial jurisdiction over health. The Bloc Québécois cannot support the bill as it is currently worded. The problem is not the creation of the institutes per se. R and D falls under residual powers and, as such, is theoretically subject to federal jurisdiction. The problem comes from the possibility of direct encroachment on provincial jurisdiction in the area of public health care, without any prior earnest consultation with the provinces.

This is why the Bloc Québécois is proposing a series of amendments mainly designed to highlight the importance of respecting and sharing jurisdictions, and to reaffirm the primacy of provincial jurisdiction in the area of health.

In addition, the Bloc Québécois supports increased investment in health research, and it is vital Quebec receive its fair share of federal research and development funds, especially since, historically, Quebec has received only 14% of federal spending on research and development on infrastructures.

It is particularly noteworthy, however, that we receive about 30% of funding for researchers awarded on the basis of an evaluation by their peers, because this funding is awarded on the basis of merit. This means, therefore, that our researchers are productive in Quebec and excel in such fields as mental health, cancer research, genome research and biotechnology.

Government Orders

Although the multidisciplinary vision of Bill C-13 is commendable, it is unacceptable that the provinces were not given a major role. Respect for Quebec's jurisdiction should be at the heart of any intervention in the field of health. This is why we must oppose the bill, if our amendments are defeated.

The government is doing a good thing by investing more money in research now, but there is no need to lose sight of the need to reinstate the transfer payments to the provinces. In fiscal year 1999-2000, the shortfall in social transfers to Quebec is estimated to be nearly \$1.7 billion. Of this amount, Quebec is denied nearly \$850 million annually in the area of health.

We supported the principle of Bill C-13, we support the flexible and multidisciplinary structure, the increased funding to research and development, which could make researchers feel more secure and slow down the brain drain. However, our basic conditions are that the government re-establish transfer payments and respect provincial jurisdictions.

• (1615)

Given the events we have witnessed of late, Bill C-20, which denies Quebecers' basic rights, and the number of gag orders we face with the clarity bill and the concerns we have about the democratic process with regard to this bill, I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

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

• (1700)

[*English*]

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

*Government Orders**(Division No. 751)***YEAS**

Members

Alarie
Asselin
Bergeron
Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok
Canuel
Casson
Crête
Debien
Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)
Dumas
Gagnon
Guay
Laurin
Marceau
Ménard
Perron
Plamondon
Sauvageau
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)

Anders
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—
Bigras
Cardin
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)
de Savoye
Desrochers
Duceppe
Fournier
Girard-Bujold
Lalonde
Lebel
Marchand
Mercier
Picard (Drummond)
Rocheleau
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Whelan

PAIRED MEMBERS

Coderre

Lefebvre

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure today to speak to the amendments to Bill C-13, the CIHR.

I want to publicly congratulate Dr. Friesen on the great work he has done in pushing this through. I also want to make some comments about my friend from the NDP, the health critic, who also brought up some excellent points that were ignored in committee and to which answers were not forthcoming.

Quite frankly, when I sat on the committee last year as the health critic, we as a party were firmly in support of the essence of the bill, the organization of it and the public-private partnership notion. It had a great deal of foresight. Dr. Friesen and his colleagues deserve a great deal of credit for that. It is a good idea and something that we in the Reform Party support.

However, a number of very constructive solutions that our party put forward at committee stage were repeatedly shot down. Why? Because once again the committee demonstrated very clearly that it was not demonstrating the autonomy that it ought to have if it was going to have credibility as an institution.

Committee members made amendments that would have strengthened the bill and allayed the concerns of the research community. These amendments were universally defeated by the government without, I might add, a great deal of forethought. The amendments put forward—some by the NDP, some by the Reform Party and some no doubt by other opposition parties—would have strengthened the bill and made it better. However, those amendments were defeated because they came from the opposition, and I think that is a sham.

Unfortunately, this takes place far too often in committees. Committees are supposed to be an avenue where members from across political parties can negotiate, discuss and debate issues related to bills in a manner that is largely beyond partisanship. The health committee chose not to pursue that course on a bill which could be enormously supportive of the research community and of the health and welfare of Canadians.

The organization is fairly good. We support Dr. Friesen's contention and promise that a maximum of 5% of the moneys allocated toward research will go toward administration, making this a lean, mean organization, one where 95% of the money is spent on the hard edge of research, which we support. In order for this to happen, I put forward an amendment on behalf of the Reform Party but it was not accepted.

• (1705)

Another important issue is to ensure that basic research, a fundamental aspect of research in Canada, would be secured and that 20% of the money that was available would be proportioned directly to basic research.

One of the problems of involving a public-private partnership is that basic research, which does not have any short term to intermediate term benefit and no observable, concrete benefit in terms of profit-making for the private sector, would not be adequately funded in Canada. Dr. Polanyi, our Nobel prize laureate in chemistry, and other researchers, sent letters to all committee members saying that this was very important. We put forth an amendment to ensure that at least 20% of the money allocated to the CIHR would go toward basic research but that was defeated.

There are no assurances in the bill that basic research will be financially supported, basic research that may not have the support of the private sector. This is a flaw in the bill which I hope the government will rectify as soon as possible.

We also found that there was not enough support for conflict of interest provisions, which the NDP health critic talked about very eloquently. These provisions could affect the decision making and allocation of funds through the CIHR. This needs to be addressed and I would ask the government to do that.

I have further issues that need to be addressed in the bill for the sake of research in the country.

First, at least 20% of the money that is available should go toward basic research. I challenge the new CIHR to investigate naturopathic substances. As a physician, one of the problems we have in the practice of medicine is trying to incorporate naturopathic substances. We know some of it has a placebo effect, is not useful and is not backed by any science. Others have a demonstrative therapeutic effect on people but we do not know if it is a placebo effect or if it is based on good science. The medical community would love to know which naturopathic substances have a therapeutic effect and which ones do not.

Pharmaceutical companies are not prepared to engage in the roughly \$500 million required to determine if a substance has an effect. Therefore, it would be up to organizations like the CIHR to engage in a public-private partnership to see which of these naturopathic substances have an effect and which do not. This would be fascinating.

It is frustrating to see substances such as EDTA being used by people in Canada and the United States with allegedly profound impacts on cardiovascular disease when there is not enough evidence to show whether it truly works or whether it has a placebo effect. If it does not work, then we should know about it. If it does work it could have a profound impact on lessening the need for

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surgical and non-surgical interventions in treating cardiovascular disease. Statements have been made by patients indicating that this has had a profound impact on their health and well-being. I have no factual evidence to back this up and no scientific proof that substances such as EDTA work.

St. John's wort can work very well for people with depression. This is the impression we have and it has worked on patients. However, we would like some scientific basis as to why these things work. It would certainly help medical practitioners in Canada.

I would also like to bring up the issue of research and how moneys are allocated. Too often moneys are allocated on the basis of special interest groups. The interest group that screams the loudest gets the most money.

My colleague from Vancouver North Shore has done a yeoman's job in bringing the issue of prostate cancer to the forefront. For many years prostate cancer did not get the funding it warranted based on the number of people it affected. Similarly, breast cancer did not get the funding it required based on the number of women it affected.

• (1710)

We should base the research, and the moneys that are proportioned to it, on the morbidity, mortality and economic effects a disease has on society. It should not be based on the group that screams the loudest.

The House might be interested to know that unipolar disorder or major depression will have a profound effect on our country in the future. In fact, it will be the second leading cause of disability in the next 20 years. Just imagine major depression being the second leading cause of morbidity in our country.

Another issue our policy makers are ignoring is the impact that psychiatric disorders, particularly dementia, will have on our health care system in the future. There is not enough leadership on this issue. I plead with the Minister of Health to meet with his ministers to look at what can be done today to address the future problem of dementia. As we get older the issue of psychiatric and dementia problems in the geriatric population will have a profound impact on our health care dollar. If we do not put in place today the tools to deal with it, we will be caught in a very difficult situation in the future.

I will now put a plug in for my private member's motion that passed in the House in May 1997 for the national headstart program. I know it was supported by members across party lines, but we need a spark to ignite it. It will save the taxpayers billions of dollars. It will save thousands and thousands of children in the country. It will deal with issues such as fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effects. It will reduce teen pregnancy by 40%. It will

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keep kids in school longer. It is something that will benefit children.

Our party is prepared to work with members from across party lines to put this into action. I implore the relevant ministers to call their provincial counterparts in justice, health and human resources and work together to put a national headstart program in place that will benefit all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to speak today in the debate on report stage of Bill C-13, the short title of which is the Canadian Institutes of Health Research Act. I would like to congratulate my colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve for the excellence and relevance of his speech this morning.

My pleasure at being able to speak on the institutes of health research stems from my very longstanding interest in this matter. As far back as 1997, I wrote the federal Minister of Health submitting a medical research project in the area of genetics that had been prepared by a leading group of researchers in the region I represent.

At that time I asked him to examine the merit of the proposal in order to award it some funding. At that time, unfortunately, the Minister of Health informed me that there was no money.

Last June, I again wrote the Minister of Health, inviting him to take advantage of being in my region to meet a team of researchers interested in the possibility of a virtual research institute which might meet their needs.

My party and I have long been calling for a fair share of R and D investments for Quebec, and if these were to benefit my region, all the better.

I would like to conclude this overview by mentioning that last week I sent a letter to the Minister of Health in which I pointed out my disagreement with federal government cuts since 1993 in the health sector and with the longstanding unfairness in the disbursement of federal research and development funding in Quebec.

I then observed that of course we would respond favourably to an opportunity to receive our fair share of these new investments and to provincial jurisdiction over health being respected.

• (1715)

At this time, I also wish to thank the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve for giving me a prime spot in committee during clause-by-clause consideration of Bill C-13.

I used the opportunity to invite two researchers from my region to appear as witnesses. Dr. Marcel Mélançon, director of Quebec's

genetic and ethical research group at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, and Michel Perron, director of the ECOBES research group at the Cegep de Jonquière, which is studying the living conditions and needs of populations, pointed out that expertise in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region in the field of genetic determinants in the health of the population is very promising.

They also reminded committee members that it was important to consolidate scientific expertise in the regions and to promote the integration of researchers and interdisciplinarity. Mr. Perron said that it was essential to support the training of research graduates from the regions and that incentives were necessary to keep them in contact with regional health problems.

Mr. Mélançon testified that project evaluation should be done by peers, i.e. other scientists, and that it was essential that a single committee of experts not be given sole authority.

CIHRs should ensure that science is conducted with conscience and that it serves the public's best interests. The contribution of normative social sciences such as ethics and law should not be neglected. This is why he was saying that CIHRs should have ethics committees or even that an institute dealing exclusively with ethical issues in research would be totally justified.

It would be good if people outside the scientific community, sometimes called lay persons, could have their say, without interfering with strictly technical decisions, so that the wishes and concerns of the people can be heard and so that scientists are not isolated in their ivory tower.

My party, the Bloc Québécois, and I have long supported the idea of reinvesting in research. The Bloc Québécois supported the principle of the bill at second reading.

Even though we agree with the principle of the bill, it does not mean that we are willing to accept it as is. The Bloc Québécois has proposed amendments which, if adopted, would make the bill acceptable. I truly believe in the importance of this bill and I think it is possible to amend it to make it better.

My colleague, the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, has brought forward essential amendments, which would recognize the provinces' jurisdiction in the area of health and which would subject CIHRs to a consultation process with the provinces. It is crucial that the bill be more explicit with regard to the importance of treating the regions fairly in allocating the research institutes that will be created.

I will briefly summarize the amendments brought forward by the Bloc Québécois. Specifically, the first group of motions is comprised of 11 amendments, which clearly specify that the bill is about health research, not about a potential expansion of mandates beyond that research.

The idea is to ensure that decisions about the choices and principles underlying health networks and services to the public come under the exclusive authority of the provinces, as provided by the Constitution, which the Liberals claim to protect when in fact they are violating it through increasingly more unacceptable infringements on provincial jurisdictions.

We are simply asking that the bill allow the establishment of the institutes while respecting the division of powers.

• (1720)

This is why we insist on these amendments, which seek to clearly indicate that Bill C-13 is about health research. Again, it is not the establishment of institutes that poses a problem to the Bloc Québécois, but the possibility of infringement on a provincial jurisdiction, namely health services to the public, without meaningful consultations with the provinces.

It is essential that the federal government make it clear that it has no intention of using this bill to create parallel structures and that it supports the initiatives undertaken by the provinces.

In conclusion, the Bloc Québécois is prepared to co-operate with the federal government to amend this bill, so that it will truly serve health research while also respecting federal and provincial jurisdictions, for the benefit of the public's health, and so that the region of Jonquière, which I have the honour of representing, can benefit from it. In our region, we have top researchers who, in spite of limited funding over the years, have made their mark at the local, provincial and national level.

Therefore I call on the government to pay very close attention to the Bloc's amendments. If it does, we will be pleased to support its bill. But if the government does not do that, we will unfortunately have no choice but to oppose the bill.

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is extremely important that the Bloc Québécois be here to speak to this bill.

While this may also be true of other provinces, we all know that, in Quebec, research, and health research in particular, has been extremely hard hit by the cuts made by the central government. We have just gone through a period when transfers were cut by some 40%. Universities have seen their budgets reduced. We have been hard to provide training to new researchers.

Yet, Quebec has continued to contribute more than Canada, allowing Canada to build up its resources, which, as we now know, have become surpluses the importance of which we will find out on Monday.

As a result, while graphs on the growth of health research in the United States showed an increase, those on health research in

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Canada for the same period showed a decline. It was urgent for the Canadian government to invest in health.

We have nothing against the Canadian government investing in health, on the contrary. But how does it go about it? It decides to change the structure. Instead of putting money back into the centre for biomedical research which had been funding and supporting, all over the country, groups that may also find other funding sources and thrive, as was often the case in Quebec—Quebec and its research groups are often cited as examples—the federal government has seen fit and necessary to centralize biomedical research through this legislation.

Some may argue that these are virtual centres. True, but the intention is clear. That is why one of the Bloc's amendments seeks to change a paragraph in the preamble of the bill.

• (1725)

On page 2 of the bill it states, and I quote:

Whereas Parliament believes that health research institutes should be created to coordinate, focus—

I did not invent the word “focus”.

—and integrate health research based on

When they talk about co-ordination, one might wonder, because this usually involves independent entities. They use the word “focus” in reference to research, but focussing is not always necessary; sometimes complementarity is required, and teams working in different directions may, at some point in time, through healthy competition, achieve results faster. This bill however seeks to focus and integrate health research.

I know that distinguished people have worked on that issue, but we are here to fulfil our responsibilities as politicians and, in politics, one cannot rely on politicians and deputy ministers fits of generosity. We read the enactments. If we did not read them and report what we found in them, we would not be doing our job.

Too many extraordinary efforts have been made in the field of biomedical research in Quebec, and too much creativity and genius has been put into not only discovery but also preparation and organisation processes to let the federal government step in with its maple leaf and centralise and integrate health research when money is being invested.

It is totally unacceptable. There is no doubt that those who drafted this bill knew that it was totally unacceptable to Quebec, but they also knew that the research industry has become exhausted because of lack of funding and that it needs money. We do understand that. But it is our responsibility to say that we will not agree to anything just because we need money. Otherwise, we would be saying that the government was right in doing what it has

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done since 1994, which was to impoverish the provinces, and particularly Quebec, when we all know how the health budget was treated the last time. It would be saying that the government had been right, because it would allow it to take control over the centralization and integration of health.

This clearly shows the importance of the Bloc Quebecois' presence here.

Under such conditions, Quebec's opposition is not surprising. I am sure that nobody is happy about it, because we all know very well that we need the money, but we cannot easily give up what could be called community ownership. It would be utterly unacceptable.

Although its authors' intentions are praiseworthy, this bill is dangerous and unacceptable as it stands, and the Bloc will say that it is dangerous and unacceptable. Would it be so difficult for members opposite to accept to take away the words "to centralise and integrate the research"? I would be very surprised if they accepted to take that passage out.

What is happening with Bill C-20 can be seen in a general way in the attitudes. I know that the members opposite are laughing, but I urge them to try to understand that the people of Quebec, its representatives, the National Assembly and all those who defend our common heritage cannot understand that, for this country that they claim to care for, they do not accept to make amendments that are only legitimate, normal, necessary and minimum.

We will therefore strongly oppose this bill.

* * *

• (1730)

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I inform the House that under the provisions of Standing Order 30, I am designating Thursday, March 2, 2000 as the day fixed for the consideration of private member's Motion No. 211, standing in the order of precedence in the name of the hon. member for Churchill.

[Translation]

This other period set out for the consideration of Private Members' Business will be held from 6.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. and the House will then move on to the adjournment proceedings pursuant to Standing Order 38.

[English]

It being 5.31 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business, as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

SENATE

Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton, Lib.) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, all proceedings of the Senate of Canada in the Senate Chamber should be televised.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this evening's debate revolves around Motion No. 98, which states that in the opinion of the House all proceedings of the Senate of Canada in the Senate Chamber should be televised.

While the House of Commons will not hold a recorded vote on this subject, it is my sincere hope that perhaps some senators are watching and may finally take action. Perhaps some senators are even watching tonight's proceedings live on television. Maybe they are working late on Parliament Hill. Maybe they have gone home and are watching a rebroadcast on CPAC.

If I say something particularly outrageous tonight they may see it repeated on television newscasts throughout the day tomorrow, but I would never do that. I must therefore choose my words carefully.

The point is that our debates in this Chamber are open to television cameras. We have nothing to hide in this place. To senators watching tonight this may seem surreal. We are in front of television cameras debating whether the Senate of Canada should allow television coverage of its debates. Currently the Senate forbids such broadcasting. Granted, it allows some cameras into selected committees, but the Senate of Canada is not a group of committees engaged in study after study. It is a legislative body. It is the other half of Canada's parliament and it is a chamber where unelected people debate proposed legislation. It amends bills. It adopts bills. It even defeats bills passed by this elected chamber.

Regardless of how one views our current set-up, whether we want it to be reformed, abolished or left alone, surely we want to be able to watch our senators in action. We ought to be able to watch them stand and be counted.

The Senate of Canada should draw back its dusty curtains and expose itself to the scrutiny of television. Perhaps I should contrast the Senate's approach to television with our experience in this place. The House of Commons reached agreement to go on the airwaves in 1977.

By way of background, I should say that the legislative chambers in all democratic countries and states have public galleries. Since the days of the Magna Carta the public's business has been seen by the public. If I flash forward from 1215, some 762 years later a debate occurred here in the House of Commons on extending the

galleries by way of television, realizing that in the era of electronics and as the medium known as television matured it was the ideal and modern way of extending the principle of the public galleries in the Commons into Canadian homes.

On January 25, 1977 the House adopted a motion to broadcast live all of its debates and proceedings. In September 1977 our Chamber went on the air.

• (1735)

The concept of extending the galleries is based on some very clear and sound philosophies. First, as I have said, the public has a right to see its legislators debating the public's business.

Second, for our federal chambers to be relevant—and we have to be more relevant—debates and proceedings must be fully accessible to the public.

Finally, public broadcasting gives viewers firsthand experience of legislators at work, as opposed to what otherwise would be received through reports or commentaries prepared by journalists. Quite simply, it is not filtered and it cannot be construed or censored in any way.

It is interesting to note that today more than 100 countries broadcast their legislative chambers' proceedings on a daily basis, yet in this parliamentary precinct, which was the first elected chamber in the world to broadcast its proceedings, there is an exception and it is called the Senate Chamber.

I should tell the House that the only debate in that place on this issue took place on November 5 and December 3, 1975, 25 years ago, when senators expressed a majority opinion that the public should not view their proceedings by way of television. I will provide details on this later.

I draw the attention of the House to the Senate rule book, which is the equivalent of the standing orders of the House of Commons. Its rule book says that the televising of proceedings is strictly prohibited.

I should declare my own bias concerning the Senate. It will come as a great shock. It would be my preference to see it abolished. In fact, I have joined with other members of this elected chamber in circulating petitions in support of abolition. I want to read part of the official response to these petitions. This is an official response from the government, and it states:

The government shares the petitioners' concern about modernizing parliamentary institutions. However, a constitutional amendment would be required to abolish the Senate—

We know that.

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A consensus does not exist on what the role and form of the Senate should be in the future, that is, whether it should remain as it is, or be reformed or abolished. . . . In the meantime, the Senate will continue to play a fundamental role in the federal legislative process.

Let me repeat that. "The Senate will continue to play a fundamental role in the federal legislative process".

Let us look around the world. There are 80 countries which televise all of their legislative chambers' proceedings, yet we in this parliament average 50%, one out of two.

The British House of Lords, for example, went on the air in 1985, about four years before the British House of Commons, and rather than affect the general demeanour of that place, public opinion polls suggest in Great Britain that it has clearly revealed two points. First, the public in Britain actually like the House of Lords. In fact, it became a rating success. Second, it is agreed among the British public that the quality of debate in the House of Lords went up, not down.

Finally, I want to repeat that we live in an electronic information age. I have to ask, is it not ironic that the other place, the Senate of Canada, is not available to Canadians through the medium known as television?

We can gain inspiration from the practice of televised proceedings elsewhere in Canada. It is alarming to realize that the Senate of Canada is the only major assembly not to televise its proceedings. I think it is odd that such a centrally important institution is effectively not open to the public. Other sorts of assemblies in Canada are required to bear the democratic weight of visibility. Why should the Senate not meet this democratic litmus test?

Unfortunately, the overwhelming majority of Canadians are effectively barred from the affairs of the Senate. For the 30 million Canadians who do not live within the boundaries of the national capital region and cannot make it to the Senate public galleries, the lack of television coverage means that they are unable to follow the business that is being transacted supposedly in their names.

Why deny access to a key component of our legislative process? Whether someone agrees or disagrees with a unelected Senate, the fact is that it is a central player in our legislative process.

No government bill, private member's bill or finance minister's budget can be enacted without the Senate. The Senate signs off on every piece of legislation it receives from the Commons. Without the Senate's acquiescence laws could not be made. That is the law of this country. That is the way it is.

Under the constitution the Senate holds as much power as this place, the House of Commons. While it has usually been the practice of that place of the unelected senators to defer to the elected Commons, there have been occasions when it has invoked

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its constitutional prerogative to reject or to withhold approval of Commons legislation.

• (1740)

We know by our constitution, principally by the British North America Act, that the Senate is central in the lawmaking ability of what we call the federal parliament. Canadians need to have access to this component of the Canadian legislative process. It is 50%.

Not willing to televise the Senate places a shroud over an integral part of Canadian governance and, at worst—and I think this is becoming more common—it creates the perception that something is going on that the Senate is hiding.

Let us open up the old heavy oak doors, part those old dusty curtains to allow the fresh breath of public transparency and the bright light of visibility into a place that has been, some would say, dark and stale for too long.

The Senate belongs to all Canadians and, while only a select few can trespass on to its royal red adornments, it is important to at least provide some degree of ownership to citizens over an institution that is key to the conduct of public affairs.

It is not as though what I am proposing can even be considered radical or trend-setting because legislative assemblies across Canada already broadcast their proceedings, as do municipal councils, school boards and all kinds of quasi-judicial tribunals. Even the Senate of Canada standing committees have been known on occasion to allow the public to catch a glance of senators at work in committee, although it should be noted that Senate committees involve only a dozen of the 105 people who occupy that place.

Not only in Canada, but elsewhere upper chambers have their proceedings televised. As I have said, the U.K., the United States, Australia and over 100 other chambers in countries around the world televise their proceedings. I should say that in my own municipality of Sarnia I can get the Sarnia city council, I can get the Chatham council, which is about 75 miles away, I can get two city councils, but I cannot, unless I have a Ouija board, get the Senate of Canada.

In the House of Lords of the United Kingdom daily sittings have been permanently broadcast since 1985. The opponents of Canadian Senate broadcasting wrongly argue that TV would destroy its deferential and so-called polite decorum at the very high level of civilized debate that we are told takes place in the Senate. One senator has even described the place as being serene.

In the early 1980s, when the House of Lords was discussing proceeding with broadcasts, some peers echoed a similar concern. However, the track record tells a different story. The decorum and the politeness of the lords' debates has not gone down, but has

probably gone up. The Senate of Australia, an elected body, has been broadcasting since 1990.

The wonder of the Westminster parliamentary system is its ability to evolve toward greater democratic governance with stronger links to citizens. The history of parliaments in Canada and the U.K., and I assume elsewhere in the Commonwealth, has shown that they have never shied away from strengthening the link to citizens. Televising the Senate should be viewed simply as another logical step in that evolutionary process.

Even though television did not exist in 1867, the Senate, I would suggest, has a duty and a responsibility to adapt toward greater accountability and visibility so that the link with citizens is strengthened. Letting public business into the living rooms of Canadians is a good thing. Not only will it let citizens hold senators to account in a more effective way, it will also contribute to a heightened legitimacy of parliamentary institutions, this place known as the Parliament of Canada.

If, as senators maintain, they are truly effective and they make a positive contribution, they should not fear television. Their deliberations should be able to withstand the bright lights of TV cameras.

As I said, in 1975 the Senate debated the idea of televising proceedings. It decided against the practice at the time and since that time it has been loath in any way to discuss it.

In 1975 former Conservative Senator Martial Asselin provided insight into why the Senate is so apprehensive about televising its proceedings. At that time he said:

I will give you my own point of view, since I feel that the best way to get the Senate abolished is to permit television and radio coverage of our proceedings.

• (1745)

As the Senate *Hansard* showed, some hon. senators concurred by saying "aye, aye". They obviously did not feel that the Senate's work at that time was all that valuable. He seems to indicate that it would not be able to stand up to public scrutiny and that upon seeing the Senate in action, or should I say inaction, the public would call for its abolition.

I think it is a sad state of affairs when senators themselves do not even have confidence in the work they do to hold up their institution to public attention. I think I speak for all members in saying that we certainly hope senators no longer believe this.

I would like to close by referring to an op-ed piece written by a senator who occupies that place at the moment. Senator Joyal lists his daily schedule and tells how busy he really is, or says he is. He may have chosen a busy day to illustrate his schedule. His examples are by no means an accurate composite of activities for all senators, nor does his schedule appropriately address the

substance that a senator might encounter in a typical day's work. It was a criticism against a newspaper article. I think Senator Joyal's criticism should not be directed to a columnist's assertions that most Canadians would agree with, but rather should be directed to the institution and its members who have a massive credibility problem.

We know that 90% of Canadians would prefer to see it changed. Of them, half would support it being abolished and the other half would support it being elected in some way. We know that 10% have no opinion or like it the way it is.

It is an institution which has an incredible problem of legitimacy. I am saying that TV would encourage senators to respond to issues that Canadians care about, lest citizens judge them as completely useless.

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, why should the Senate be televised?

The regions of Canada need to be more involved in decision making and policy making at the national level. To meet the hopes and dreams of those who live in the west and the Atlantic, a reformed Senate is essential. It must be a Senate that is elected, effective and equitable.

Those were the words of the Prime Minister as recorded in *Hansard* on September 24, 1991.

I on the other hand support Senate reform. If it is done properly, a restructured and revitalized upper chamber can give Albertans a voice in the governance of Canada. If elected Liberal leader I pledge to work for a Senate that is elected, that has legislative powers of its own and contains strong representation from all regions of Canada.

That was said by the present Prime Minister on June 23, 1990. "You want the triple E Senate and I want one too". That was the Prime Minister again in the *Toronto Star* on February 2, 1990. "The Liberal government in two years will make it elected. As Prime Minister I can take steps to make it happen". Once again that was the present Prime Minister speaking to 400 delegates at the annual general meeting of the Alberta branch of the federal Liberal Party.

Liberal prime ministers agree that the Senate needs to be reformed. One of the steps to make that happen, one of those true reforms, is what the member for Sarnia—Lambton has put forward today in the House of Commons, which is the idea of making the Senate televised.

Even in the grandmother of all parliaments, in Westminster, in 1985 the House of Lords televised its proceedings. Indeed the House of Commons in the grandmother of all parliaments followed four years later and televised its meetings in 1989.

• (1750)

Our Senate is a place that is undemocratic in that it is appointed. Our Senate is a place that is not accessible. Instead of providing

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information via the electronic method where most people get their understanding of the news today, our Senate instead is a place that is out of control. It allows people like Andy Thompson to spend but one day in the spring sitting and one day in the fall sitting and collect a full salary. Only because of public pressure, because of media pressure, because of light shed on the institution and scrutiny brought to bear did those things change.

The Senate should be a place that has nothing to hide, that stands behind no shroud. As a result TV cameras should be in the Senate.

I am going to talk about the public support for Senate reform, in particular an elected Senate, because it hinges on this very debate.

In British Columbia 84% of people are in favour of an elected and reformed Senate. In Manitoba 86% are in favour of such reforms. In my home province of Alberta 91% of people are in favour of reform of the Senate, of modernizing this institution. Television would modernize the institution.

We have had a recent development. One of the senators, the last Progressive Conservative or Tory senator in the province of Alberta, has expressed the intention to resign his seat as of March 31.

Last year Albertans elected Bert Brown, a man who has been campaigning for an elected, equal and effective Senate for over 10 years. He received more votes than any other federal politician in Canadian history. Even if we went back prior to 1867, nobody could compare to Bert Brown in the amount of votes he garnered. During the Senate election, in the midst of that process, the Prime Minister had the audacity and disrespect for the people of Alberta to appoint someone to sit in that chamber in Bert Brown's place. Shame on the Prime Minister.

Thankfully there is an opportunity to have that made right; that wrong can be made right. When that seat becomes vacant on March 31, I implore on behalf of the people of Alberta, on behalf of the premier and the letters he has written to the Prime Minister, and on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of people who cast their ballots, that the Prime Minister do the right thing. I ask that he stand by the convictions he ran for as Liberal leader in 1990 in Calgary, Alberta when he won his election, and by his predecessor Pierre Elliott Trudeau whom he served in cabinet, and uphold that idea of an elected Senate and appoint Bert Brown to that place.

My colleague from Sarnia—Lambton is talking about changing the rules of the Senate, section 130(1), which only allows for audio broadcasts in the Senate. My hon. colleague would like to expand it beyond audio broadcasts to broadcast the proceedings on television, to carry the business in the Senate as people see me tonight here in the House of Commons.

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Canadians wherever they live should be able to see their government at work. They have seen their government at work in the House of Commons since 1977. The debate for that began in 1973. They now see their provincial legislatures at work from coast to coast to coast. They see their municipalities at work. Municipalities across the land have taken it upon themselves to televise their proceedings.

• (1755)

More than that, even school boards in this country have gone so far as to televise their meetings so that the public knows what they do in their interests and that the business be known to all.

Canadians deserve to know what they are getting for the \$50 million plus a year they spend on the Senate. Last year the House of Commons attempted to draw before it those members of the Senate who did not want to explain their budget appropriations, their 16% increase in their budget. The people of this country deserve to know and to see with their own eyes what goes on in that place.

As it stands, people have to go into that chamber. Only from that vantage point, those few precious seats in that red chamber, are they allowed to see what goes on. As a matter of fact last year the Senate took steps to restrict access to the printed records of who takes their seat in the Senate and does their public business as they are paid to do. It is a crying shame that people are not even allowed to see those minutes, to have them published and available on the Internet as is other business of this Commons and of this parliament.

Michael O'Connor, a fellow who lives in Ottawa, was so upset over that very predicament that he took time away from his part time job to sit in one of the rooms in the Senate. He transcribed all of those sittings of the Senate to know who was or was not there and who was collecting his taxpayer dollars to sit or not sit in that place on his behalf. That type of thing is egregious and should not be going on.

When we consider that 80 countries in the world permit the broadcasting of all proceedings in their chambers and now over 100 countries permit some form of broadcast, the idea that our Senate allows none of its main chamber is a disgrace. The Senate must be reformed and televising it is but one of the mechanisms.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): There has been some use of the word hypocrite flowing back and forth. I want to make it absolutely clear that we are not going to let the use of this word creep into the proceedings of the House.

I have previously intervened if the term has been used to describe a specific member or a specific minister or describe a specific person's actions. It has been used in the House to describe the actions of a group. While it is still a word that must be used in the English language, we are going to measure its use very carefully.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec East, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton for Motion No. 98, which suggests that all Senate proceedings be televised.

Since the hon. member is in favour of the abolition of the Senate, knowing him as I do, I think his aim is mostly to get Canadians and Quebecers to see, through television, how useless the Senate is, how absurd what is going on there is, and how archaic and even undemocratic that institution is.

Basically, the hon. member wants to ensure that people understand that the Senate must be abolished. He said so himself in his remarks. My Bloc colleagues and I are in favour of the abolition of the Senate. But televising proceedings would be a waste of money, I believe.

• (1800)

Indeed, we know that the Senate spends over \$60 million every year. This is a waste of money, because we know very well that the Senate, even though it has many powers, which are equal to those of the House of Commons, unfortunately exercises these powers in a partisan way. They are exercised by people who often use this money and these powers for personal and partisan reasons.

If we want more Canadians to be aware of what is happening in the Senate, we should ensure that its budgets are more transparent and that the auditor general can examine the Senate's books. I think people would then be much more aware of what is happening in the Senate.

We know that only one auditor general's report, the 1991 one, dealt with the Senate. The auditor general found that the Senate lacked transparency, that it was trying to hide what goes on there. Indeed, my Reform colleague pointed out how it is difficult to get a precise account on Senate attendance. All the information on the Senate is very difficult to access, or they are trying to hide it.

Senators have no benefit in being known to Canadians. Nevertheless, ensuring transparency on spending and budgets would be sufficient for people to call for the abolition of the Senate. Ultimately, this is the only solution: the abolition of the Senate.

We know, for example, how the money is badly spent. We know that the Senate costs more than \$60 million a year. Public accounts show an amount of only \$47 million. However, if we add the services provided by a range of federal departments and organizations, the cost of the Senate exceeds \$60 million a year and could even reach \$70 million.

No one knows that. At this time, no one in Canada and not a single member of this House knows exactly how much the Senate costs. If only we knew the exact amount, we would be getting somewhere. We do not know how much the Senate costs because, unfortunately, this kind of information is not disclosed. About two

years ago, the House of Commons invited the Senate to appear before the House's standing committee to explain its expenses and cost increases, which had reached 16% over the two previous years. Well, the House of Commons was not allowed to know how the Senate had spent its \$47 million budget which, as we know, actually exceeds \$60 million.

We also know that senators do not work very hard. They sit an average of 65 days a year, for about three hours a day, and half or at least a third of the senators are absent half of the time. I did a calculation of the efficiency of senators and if you take all those factors into account, the cost of a senator reaches between \$3,000 to \$6,000 an hour. Those people, who spend \$60 million of the taxpayers' money, do not account for what they do and, furthermore, some of them may even use their position as senators to advance private interests, to become members of boards of directors or to get involved in many partisan activities.

• (1805)

For example, people should know that senators use their status, their offices, their funding, their privileges and their frequent flyer points for partisan purposes, either for the Liberal Party or the Progressive Conservative Party. I find it utterly immoral and unacceptable. However, it seems that here, in Canada, such practices are accepted in the Senate.

Moreover, senators can sit on boards of directors, which opens the door to potential conflicts of interest. Senators who sit on such boards are required to disclose the names of the companies.

I know that one senator sits on Power Corporation's board of directors as vice-chairman. Last year, just for sitting on that board, he received \$430,000. Add to that what he gets for sitting on other boards of directors, his salary as a senator and all the benefits he gets as a senator.

I have no problem with people who sit on the boards of large corporations being paid \$1 million. However, I find it immoral that they also sit in the Senate and use their privileges as senators to lobby officials in various departments. It is not illegal, at least not for now, but it is highly immoral.

When one looks closely at the Senate, when one sees how undemocratic and archaic it is, one realizes that it should have been abolished a long time ago. The longer this kind of institution is kept in place, the easier it will become to see how rotten it is, or so I hope. It is not necessary to put cameras in the Senate because I think that it would only be money wasted over and above what the Senate already wastes.

I suggest that my colleague from Sarnia—Lambton go directly to the heart of the issue. As a Liberal member, I find him very courageous to voice his opposition to the Senate and to work for its abolition. I think that we must go all the way and simply abolish the Senate. That would be doing an excellent service to everybody.

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We would save the \$60 million given each year to that institution. That money is wasted each year. This is not money that we waste once in a while but money that is thrown out the window every year. Over ten years, that adds up to \$600 million.

If that money were invested in job creation or in constructive projects, I think it would be a lot more useful to Canadians than to give it to tired old politicians who are there only due to patronage.

If the Liberals, among others, had the courage to do so, it would be very easy to get rid of the Senate. All they have to do is vote against the Senate's budget in June. That is what I suggest they do.

[English]

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton has moved an incredible motion. As a matter of fact I consider it to be quite mischievous.

I went door to door during the 1993 federal election campaign and 90% of the constituents in my riding signed the petition to abolish the Senate. The other 10% did not want to talk to me because they were concerned about other issues, were busy making supper and did not have time to sign it. There was not one person in my riding, and I canvassed about 45 polls, who said they would not sign a petition to abolish the Senate.

Televising the Senate proceedings would be like archaeology, moving a set of bones from one grave to another. They could have a sitcom style program if they televised it: *Who wants to be a millionaire senator*. Of course the questions would be rigged and the moderator would be the Prime Minister, and only his friends would win. That is what the Liberals would do.

• (1810)

Since it already costs \$60 million a year to operate the Senate, television producers might consider a weekly format. They could call it *What's in it for me*. Selected senators would discuss a piece of government legislation and how it would personally benefit them or their friends or the Liberal or the Conservative parties. It would be a great program, but there are no New Democrats in the Senate. There never have been and never will be.

If they televise the proceedings in that place, which by the way I do not support, I hope the Canadian public understands that it is just a Liberal and Tory chamber, somewhat like a bedchamber. Televising the Senate would be the parliamentary version of the sitcom *Friends*, or I mean friends of the Prime Minister.

What a novel idea is televising the Senate. Ratings would go through the roof. Can we not see the viewing public glued to their television sets while watching the senators cavort for the cameras?

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It would be like televising the *Titanic* at the bottom of the ocean hour after hour, week after week, year after year.

There would be some difficulties in translation if we were to televise the Senate, because how would we translate snores? Televising the Senate would be like televising homemade bread rising. Watching homemade bread rise would be more exciting than televising the Senate.

I have 10 top reasons why the Senate should be televised. The No. 10 reason for televising the Senate is to assist Canadians who are deprived of sleep. No. 9 is to show Canadians the fine and expensive furnishings of the Senate chamber. No. 8 is to provide an outlet for people experiencing anger management problems. No. 7 is to provide Canadians with a true non-news program. No. 6 is to provide Canadians with the funny side of politics. No. 5 is to give Canadians a break from reality. No. 4 is to encourage young entrepreneurs who want to know how to make a fortune by not doing anything useful with their lives. No. 3 is to endlessly bore Canadians. No. 2 is to frustrate Canadians. The No. 1 reason for televising the Senate is to reveal just what a bankrupt, nonsensical, patronage ridden, decrepit, useless outfit it really is.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I did not want to interrupt the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre just in case a talent scout from *The Letterman Show* happened to be watching CPAC and there may be a new job in line.

However, the fact of the matter is that parliament as a whole includes the Senate of Canada. One of the arms of governance of our country is the Senate of Canada, as is the supreme court, as is this Chamber. If we do not respect the occupants at any particular time, we must respect the institutions. If we choose to change the institutions then let us change the institutions in a parliamentary manner.

Our rules state very clearly that there should not be reflections on any of the chambers as a whole. I will not get to reflections on the Chair. We will save that for a different day. I will just talk about reflections on the House and the Senate because we must have respect for our institutions if we expect others to have respect for our institution:

Disrespectful reflections on Parliament as a whole, or on the House or and the Senate as component parts of Parliament are not permitted. Members of the House and the Senate are also protected by this rule. In debate, the Senate is generally referred to as "the other place" and Senators as "members of the other place". References to Senate debates and proceedings are discouraged.

• (1815)

I understand that we are debating whether the Senate should be televised. I am quite prepared to allow us to have some fun with

this, but we must keep in mind that we have the institutions of parliament in our hands and in our trust while we occupy our positions. We will come and go and our parliament will withstand any of us who happen to be elected at any particular time.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. You have just read a short excerpt from Montpetit-Marleau. I must say that it makes me uneasy, since this excerpt says that we must show deep respect for the institution of the Senate.

I have a problem with that because if, as elected members of parliament—we know full well that the members of the other place are not elected—we want to make major changes to the other place, it means that we do not have a very flattering opinion of it, so to speak. If we want to bring about these changes, we will be forced to voice opinions that might be less than flattering or more or less unrespectful.

In such a case, how will we settle this conflict between what the jurisprudence says and what our own convictions are, if we really want to make changes to the unelected Senate?

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Bloc is that although the Bloc came to parliament with a specific *raison d'être*, it has worked scrupulously within the confines of the democratic process. That is, in my view, a great honour for members of the Bloc Québécois. The nature of our parliament is to have the freedom to do what we need to do to change the way our country works but to do so within the regulations that are set down before us.

If we want to change those regulations then we should change them; and they can be changed through democratic and parliamentary means. It is not impossible to make the statements that are necessary to be made in order to effect a change in the other place and still have fidelity to the rules by which we conduct ourselves. It may require persistent application of imagination and it may require quiet consultation, but it can be done.

I meant it very sincerely when I said that if there is one group of parliamentarians in the House that has been respectful of the rules of democracy, it is the members of the Bloc. It is a great testament.

Mr. Derek Lee: Mr. Speaker, I am sure our colleagues appreciate your guidance in this debate.

In the instance that the remarks of the hon. member from the New Democratic Party were egregiously unparliamentary, I would

suggest that at least toward the end of his remarks there are elements that should be withdrawn because they were unparliamentary. You might invite the hon. member to withdraw them. He will stand advised and be guided by your remarks.

• (1820)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I appreciate the intervention by the parliamentary secretary. I chose, rather than to draw specific attention to any one member at any one time, because this is something that has been going on for some time, to make a statement to parliament as a whole. It was not my intention to address this to any one member. For that reason, I would not ask the member to withdraw his statement.

Mr. John Solomon: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your remarks. The Speaker is always correct in his observations and I respect that. If I have offended anyone, I apologize.

I will continue my remarks by saying that the Senate can never be reformed. The Reform Party members have said that the Senate costs us \$60 million and that they want to reform it. They want an elected Senate which will cost Canadians \$120 million or more every year to operate. If we put this question to a referendum and asked Canadians if the Senate should be abolished, my sense is that they, in a unanimous way—probably around 80% to 90%—would support the abolition if the alternative, as the Reform has said, will cost twice as much money.

I put the case forward that if we abolish the Senate we would encourage Canadians to petition us in the House of Commons to strike yet one more level of government that would cost all this money. I bet there would not be a lot of people signing a petition to do that.

The reason I say that is because we are already overgoverned in this country. We have municipal governments, urban hamlets, towns and villages, rural municipalities, counties, school boards, hospital boards, provincial governments, the federal House of Commons and the Senate. We have more governments than people want to pay for. They are asking us to downsize the number of politicians not to increase the number of politicians.

What we should be doing instead is undertaking a referendum on the abolition of the Senate. We should be downsizing the number of politicians we have in the House of Commons and eliminate the Senate. We should argue and put the case forward for more democracy for the members of parliament who are elected to represent constituents in this very important Chamber.

We should, for example, have a forced representation system to empower Canadians to elect as many individuals as they see fit. Whether they vote for the NDP, the Bloc, the Reform Party, the Liberal or the Conservative Party, their vote would count. Therefore, on a percentage basis, if the Conservative Party got 20% of

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the votes it would get 20% of the seats in the House of Commons. The same would go for the NDP, the Bloc, the Reform Party and the Liberal Party. This means that Canadians would have a vote that counted as opposed to the vote they now have where, in many ridings, they cast a ballot for candidates in political parties that do not get elected.

We should also move to more free votes in the House of Commons. This would empower members of parliament. Committees would be a little more worthwhile and a little more important if we gave members of parliament a little more authority in committees. If we made committees more democratic they could actually look at reviewing the thousands of appointments made by the Liberal government every week and month. They could make sure that appointments were reasonable and fair and that the people who were appointed were fairly competent, as opposed to the many cases where they are not.

The final check and balance we need once the Senate is gone is to have less power in the Prime Minister's office. Let us share the power with some of the cabinet members and some of the members of parliament like they do in other countries through the proportional representation system.

I want to tell a story that I think is very important. If we were to have two elected bodies at the federal level, including an elected Senate that the Reform Party is always pushing for to spend more money on government and politics, the result would be gridlock.

I had the honour and the occasion to meet Bob Dole's campaign manager. Bob Dole ran for president of the United States four years ago. His campaign manager told me that he admires the Canadian democratic process because in the House of Commons the government is accountable every day to the opposition which is elected by other Canadians. He said that what they have in the states is total gridlock. He told me that he was withdrawing from the political process because all they have are very wealthy individuals getting elected to congress and the senate, who are looked after in terms of their priorities and their time by the 12,000 registered lobbyists in Washington. He said that only the wealthy had access to their politicians. They are not accountable every day as we are in this House. We may not like the answers we get in question period, we may not like the things the government says from time to time, but the importance is that we have a democratic process in this country that with the House of Commons alone, if it was empowered in terms of more Canadians becoming involved, empowered because we would have more individual influence on committees, on free votes and so on, we have a very democratic process here.

• (1825)

I maintain that another elected Senate would be a gridlock. It would be counterproductive, costly and I do not think Canadians really want it.

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With respect to my colleague from Sarnia—Lambton who does support the abolition of the Senate, as I and all other members of the NDP do, I am not sure we will be able to support the motion, although individually some might. However, I really believe that spending extra money on the Senate at this time is throwing good money after bad. We should try to husband our resources like they are our resources, as opposed to the ministers' and the Prime Minister's money.

We should husband the resources that are given to us by the taxpayers and make sure they are spent efficiently and more wisely than we actually are spending them right now.

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to the private member's motion, Motion No. 98. I find it rather disturbing, with all the serious problems facing Canadians throughout the country, that the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton would choose to introduce a motion calling for the introduction of television cameras in the Senate to cover Senate proceedings.

I have listened closely to the debate this evening and two words keep coming to mind to describe it. Those two words are gratuitous frivolity. I have to question why we are debating having television cameras in the Senate at all. It is obviously not a point for the House of Commons to debate. It is a question for the Senate to debate.

The hon. member for Quebec Est discussed, at some length this evening, the attendance of Senate members. We never refer to the attendance of members of the House of Commons. It is against the rules to refer to the attendance of members of the House of Commons, yet we stood here and talked about the attendance of members of the Senate of Canada.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker—and I am saying this very carefully trying to stay within the rules—that any member who introduces any bill, private member's bill or other bills, in the House should stay for the full and complete debate of that bill. I think that would be following parliamentary procedure.

I recognize that the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton who proposed the motion has been openly critical of our Senate. He has certainly voiced his opinion on this subject through a number of mediums. Now he wants to use the time allotted for Private Members' Business to once again address the issue.

Major changes to the Senate, as all Canadians know, whether we are talking about the abolition of the Senate or the introduction of an elected Senate, will require constitutional change. I am convinced that Canadians do not have the patience for renewed constitutional discussions. Remember, we are not that far removed from the failed Meech Lake and Charlottetown accords. Minor

changes to the Senate, such as TV cameras, must come from the Senate, not from the House of Commons.

Since Confederation there has been a certain decorum that has been strictly adhered to by the upper and lower Houses. The House of Commons governs the way we operate just as the upper chamber governs itself.

• (1830)

Although there have been many disagreements among members of both chambers, there has, nevertheless, been a sense of mutual respect for each other's role in our confederation. Both Houses have their own important role to play in our government.

The member for Sarnia—Lambton appears to want to infringe upon the responsibility of the upper chamber. He wants to impose his views on how the business of the upper chamber should be managed and reported to the Canadian public. We may or may not agree with his opinion on TV cameras. Really, that is a moot point. It really does not make any difference. It is not up to us to decide.

I am sure his intentions are honourable. Perhaps he believes there is not a role for the Senate in the Canadian confederation, that it is a waste of money. Perhaps he believes we should have a cameral versus a bicameral system of government. To make this point he introduced a motion that would see the government invest significant amounts of money to televise Senate debates. This little gamesmanship is being played at the expense of the Canadian taxpayer.

Every time we rise in the House it costs Canadians money. Why is the member for Sarnia—Lambton not focusing on some of the major problems that we have in the House of Commons rather than going on a tangent about the upper chamber? Would we not think that after witnessing the terrible debacle that was orchestrated by his government over the past three weeks that he would be looking to make significant changes in the House of Commons and leave the Senate be?

With the Department of Human Resources Development being involved in the greatest example of government mismanagement in the history of Canada, we would think that the member would be pushing his government colleagues to provide Canadians with answers to how \$1 billion in government mismanagement was allowed to occur.

Why is he not pushing for changes within the House of Commons and, more specifically, question period? Right now question period is simply that, questions. We ask the questions of the government and it either chooses to ignore them completely or it answers something that is totally irrelevant to what was asked in the first place. Why is the member not pushing to change question period into question and answer period, whereby the government

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would be forced to answer the questions that are being put to it? Would that not be a novel idea?

Over the past three weeks the acting Minister of Human Resources Development and the real minister in charge, the hon. Prime Minister, have consistently ignored, sidestepped or made light of very serious questions and accusations. Actual answers to the questions have been at a premium. The government—particularly these two individuals—believes that it can simply throw Canadian taxpayers' money into the wind and not have to be held to account.

I really believe that Canadians do care how their hard-earned tax dollars are being spent. I firmly believe that the government has the duty to tell them. The government's smoke and mirror answers will eventually catch up to it and it will be held accountable for its actions.

The House of Commons and the upper chamber are filled with tradition. One of these traditions is that we respect each other's role in confederation and do not go about telling one side or the other how to run its business. In short, each House governs its own processes within our bicameral system.

If I remember correctly, another longstanding tradition in government has been maintaining the contents of the government's budget secret. Think about it. We have a budget coming down and the budget is secret. Nobody knows what is in the budget. Nobody has a clue what the finance minister is about to deliver to the House of Commons and, therefore, through the House of Commons to the people of Canada. Nobody has any idea what is in the budget.

I do not think that is necessarily correct. I think we do have some idea. Has it not become a joke the way the finance department has been leaking contents of the budget to the media in recent weeks? It is a wonder if anything will be left to announce come budget day. It will just be another day in the House.

It is no surprise that Canadians have been made privy to some of the details of the finance minister's budget. The government has been desperately trying to deflect attention away from the embattled Minister of Human Resources Development. The government hopes that by spreading a little good news here and a little good news there that the Canadian taxpayer will somehow overlook a \$1 billion discrepancy. The sheer amount of leaked information coming out of the finance department simply highlights the extent to which the Liberal government is concerned about the damage it has done by the HRDC fiasco.

There are a few other issues I want to raise. There are other important issues that we should be debating in the House of Commons. One of them is the HRDC debacle. The other one is the September 17 Donald Marshall Jr. decision made by the Supreme Court of Canada and the way the government has handled that decision. It is deplorable.

• (1835)

We do not have a set of rules. It has been five months. There are 33 bands in Atlantic Canada and one of them has been dealt with. One band out of 33. In less than 60 days the lobster season will open on the east coast and we will be putting boats back on the water. What is going to happen then?

We want to talk about Private Members' Business and we want to talk about the role of parliament. We have issues to debate and one of them is not whether we have cameras in the Senate.

We have a trucking situation going on from coast to coast in this country—

Mr. Roy Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I fail to see the relevance of what the member is saying. We are here to debate Motion No. 98, having to do with the televising of debates in the Senate. Is what he is saying relevant to the debate?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I have been following the member's remarks. From time to time it has been a stretch. There are other issues which, in the opinion of the member, are points of debate which he feels could be more relevant.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Mr. Speaker, there are many relevant items that need to be debated. There is the Atlantic fishery. There are serious problems in our farming communities. Sixty thousand farmers in western Canada are facing bankruptcy. High diesel prices are forcing our truckers off the market and out of business, which will raise the cost of living and the cost of doing business in Canada. We have a 15% tax on diesel fuel. The government brings in nearly \$4 billion a year and spends \$150 million of that \$4 billion on highways. Where has the rest of it gone? Who is it benefiting? Why do we have truckers going bankrupt in Canada? We cannot move goods and services.

There are a number of issues which need to be debated in the House. There are a number of issues which need to be brought to parliament to be debated by all parties, by all members, but this is not one of them.

Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank everyone who has spoken, even the member from the fifth party, who, in my opinion, gave a very spirited speech which displayed why he is a member of the fifth party. He has made a very convincing argument about why this is the last place we can argue about the relevance of parliament. That is a very interesting perspective.

It was also interesting that a party which some would suggest has had chemical traces in the public opinion polls would want to defend that 45% of the Senate of Canada which it holds.

Adjournment Debate

I congratulate the speaker from the fifth party for convincing me, and I hope others watching, that the fifth party does not get enough floor time to speak in this place and that it has shown very clearly why its members are having problems following the national agenda.

I appreciate the point of order made by the parliamentary secretary because there is something called relevance in this place. Indeed, there is something called relevance in politics. That party has clearly shown tonight why it might be deemed to be irrelevant at the ballot box.

I want to quote from a book written by a former occupant of the other place, Phillippe Gigantes. He wrote a book called *Thin Book: Reforming the Senate*. In his opinion “The evolution of the Senate as a more effective institution will be slow and will require changes in attitude from current senators and the House of Commons”—and I am sorry to reveal that to the fifth party—“but will be worth it. If we do not attempt to reform the Senate it will be abolished. If we persist in failing to address the shortcomings of the Senate there will come a time when it becomes impossible to justify its existence”.

This is a former occupant of the other place who said, notwithstanding what the fifth party says, that it must be done from within the House of Commons and the other place.

• (1840)

I have never pretended to advocate anything but the abolition of the Senate. However, on the issue of Senate TV, I think that former Senator Gigantes and other like-minded occupants and former occupants of the other place can make common cause with me in the effort to have the other place televised. With this in mind the televised broadcasting of all Senate proceedings could accomplish the following.

It could give Canadians the opportunity to judge for themselves whether they are getting their money’s worth. They pay about \$60 million to shore up the other place and keep it going. Are they getting their money’s worth?

The occupants of the other place would no longer work in relative obscurity such as those members in this place who are in parties which do not get a lot of time to speak. In fact, I would be very surprised if the average Canadian could identify one occupant of the other place. If Senate proceedings were open to television cameras, a consensus might finally emerge on the issue of the Senate itself.

In the year 2000 the occupants of the other place can no longer hide behind the curtains and maintain the quality of their debates is higher. They say that the quality of their debates is higher in the absence of television coverage.

I am absolutely shocked that members of the fifth party in this place would use the House of Commons to defend the approximately 48 members in the other place who are there, who are not accountable and some of whom were given 35 years of uninterrupted service to this country by their former leader. I find it shocking that they would try to defend that in this place. This is a place of debate and they do not want to debate it and that is that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The time provided for the consideration of private members’ business has now expired. As the motion has not been designated as a votable item, the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker,

[Editor’s Note: Member spoke in Cree]

[English]

The new millennium offered Canada an opportunity to start a new approach to resource development across this great country. We have a responsibility to learn from the mistakes in the last century so we do not repeat them in the next.

We have a duty to involve and respect the people’s views and recommendations to resource management issues. This includes the extraction of resources and the crown’s responsibility under the charter to respect traditional land use for hunting and gathering purposes.

As parliamentarians it is our duty to represent the best interests of Canadians and to ensure that our decisions today do not harm the generations that will follow.

I bring to the attention of the House that there are serious problems associated with the proposed Diavik diamond mine in the Northwest Territories. A multibillion dollar fiasco is unfolding in Canada’s north.

The Diavik project is an important step toward providing jobs and self-sufficiency for northerners. Northwest Territories proponents stated in an open letter to the Prime Minister that the 20 year project could create \$1 billion in federal corporate taxes, \$600 million in federal royalties and \$500 million in territorial corporate

taxes. This \$2.1 billion is in addition to the \$1.3 billion construction investment. The total is \$4.3 billion and most important, 400 permanent jobs will be created.

Liberal government mismanagement and a disregard for a proper environmental assessment process have placed this project and the crown's integrity at risk.

In October 1999 the environment minister was presented with serious concerns from the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board. The highlights included: abandonment and restoration of the Diavik diamonds project was not considered in the comprehensive study report; the environmental impact of loss of wilderness as a social value was not assessed; the cumulative effects of nearby mine operations were not addressed, a specific promise made by the government.

The environment minister decided to ignore the first major challenge by the Mackenzie Valley board to ensure proper resource procedures were followed. His decision placed little assurance on future northern development and community concerns.

• (1845)

The minister also chose to make his announcement while out of the country and not subject to direct questions or accountability for his actions. Thankfully the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development showed courage and called for specific recommendations to be met before land use permits would be issued, thankfully because a dramatic demonstration in federation incompetence soon followed.

The Northwest Territories Water Board discovered during routine proceedings that the tailings liners, a plastic and cement material crucial for protecting the environment, did not work in cold conditions. How could a federal environment minister approve a project when key project components failed? More remarkable, CBC North footage which aired on February 11 showed that work had begun on the site without permits. Shame.

With taxpayers on the hook for hundreds of millions of dollars in northern mine site cleanups, and with northern regions of Canada pleading for sustainable development that does not destroy the land and traditional land use, when will the Liberal government put competence and respect ahead of arrogance and neglect?

I look forward to the parliamentary secretary's response, although I do not expect specific details as the Diavik project is under federal investigation.

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to questions by hon. colleagues from Churchill River and Yukon on the Diavik

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mines project, let me say that the government's actions are completely consistent with the commitments outlined in the Speech from the Throne. We in the government continue to set tough environmental standards across Canada. We are taking steps that will continue to protect the northern environment and safeguard the long term interest of Canadians who live in the north.

The comprehensive study process for the Diavik diamonds project was the most detailed comprehensive study review that has taken place under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act so far. The Government of Canada spent more than 18 months working on the assessment of this project. Public consultation was extensive with more than 300 meetings, workshops and technical discussions conducted in affected communities throughout NWT.

More than three-quarters of a million dollars was provided to northern stakeholders to help them participate in the review process, a process that was open and inclusive and placed a high priority on public participation. The minister heard from and took into account the concerns of aboriginal organizations, environmental groups, concerned citizens, as well as the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board.

The comprehensive study report prepared by the departments of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Fisheries and Oceans, and Natural Resources reflects the tremendous amount of effort that has been invested in assessing the potential environmental impacts of this project. The minister fully supports the conclusions of the comprehensive study prepared by these federal departments. He is confident that with the implementation of the mitigation and monitoring measures set out in this report, the Diavik mines project is not likely to have significant adverse environmental affects.

To further demonstrate the government's resolve in protecting the northern environment, I draw my hon. colleague's attention to the additional commitments set out in the decision on this project. These commitments include the implementation of a regional, cumulative effects management framework, establishing a monitoring program mechanism that will include aboriginal peoples, and the approval of a program to abandon and restore the mine site in a manner consistent with sustainable development. These commitments address concerns raised during the public consultation process, and they will contribute to further reducing the residual effects.

These actions demonstrate the government's environmental commitments, including the commitments set out in the Speech from the Throne.

VISIBLE MINORITIES

Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in October I raised the issue of the terrible situation facing visible

Adjournment Debate

minorities in the federal public service. I pointed out at the time that the Canadian Human Rights Commission noted that there was a decrease of 501 visible minorities in permanent public service jobs in 1998. Of the 28 executive positions filled from outside the public service, a grand total of zero were visible minorities.

The minister responded by claiming that the government had been “working for years to increase the number of people of visible minorities working in the public service”. It is now four months later, and we have still seen no action.

This month is Black History Month. The Liberal government has taken no major concrete action this month or since its election to address the representation of blacks or other visible minorities within the federal public service.

• (1850)

In about one month from now I expect the task force on the participation of visible minorities in the federal public service to table its report with the President of the Treasury Board. On behalf of all Canadians seeking fairness, justice and equity, I challenge the Liberal government to act quickly and with integrity when the report is tabled. The report may very well call for specific quotas and targets to be met in the short and medium term.

While there are legitimate concerns with quotas, I fear that the Liberal government has let racism and discrimination in the federal public service become so out of control that such short term measures are the only way to begin to address the extent of the crisis.

I am appalled that the government has chosen to exclude those designated as permanent residents who are not Canadian citizens from the available rate established for visible minorities. Our Canadian community includes visible minorities, many of whom are permanent residents but not yet Canadian citizens.

It is outrageous and inexcusable that the Liberal government treats these people as statistical pawns in an ill fated effort to make the numbers look better. The Liberal government can also take action to improve the current accountability mechanisms used by departments with respect to staffing and equity.

While the Canadian Human Rights Commission does very good work, it should not fall upon it to undertake employment equity audits or complaints investigations. Surely simple logic would suggest that the government has an obligation to people of colour and to all Canadians to ensure there is accountability that works.

The accountability mechanisms must ensure that non-complying departments and agencies can be dealt with and forced to comply. Will the government also ensure that the increasing number of

hirings done through acting appointments and secondments are subjected to the same scrutiny and considered part of the analysis of hiring shares which are used by the government to determine participation rates from various sectors of society?

I also encourage the Liberal government to no longer hide from the issue of the participation of visible minority women. I challenge the government to develop concrete plans out in full view of the public to increase the participation of visible minority women in non-traditional occupations. Is the government even aware that the proportion of visible minority members entering the female dominated administrative support category is at 40%?

In closing, should the Liberal government finally agree to meet the challenge posed by racism and discrimination in the public service by actually coming forward with a plan, I encourage the government to work closely with its elected employee representatives.

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in response to the question posed by the hon. member for Halifax West. This is an issue that has been near and dear to my heart in all my life and in all my career.

As the President of the Treasury Board has already pointed out, the government is working to increase the number of people in a visible minority in the federal public service. It is important to recognize that during fiscal year 1998—99 there were a total of 14,338 indeterminate departures from the federal public service, of which 3.7% were visible minority employees. During the same period we recruited 2,533 new indeterminate employees, of which 6.9% were persons in a visible minority. While we recognize that 6.9% does not meet the labour market availability of 8.7%, we are continuing to make progress toward a representative public service.

During fiscal year 1998—99, 38 executives were hired from outside the public service, of which 10.5% were persons in a visible minority. We are demonstrating our commitment to increased representation of persons in a visible minority in the executive ranks.

A task force on the participation of visible minorities in the federal public service was established in April last year, as the member opposite recognized. The task force is examining the situation of visible minorities, building on previous studies and developing a government-wide action plan with concrete strategies to address the issues and improvement of the situation of visible minorities in the federal public service.

We expect the action plan, as the member recognized, to come in the coming months. The government is committed to making the

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Public Service of Canada better reflect the diversity, the strength and the growth of the Canadian society. I join the member opposite in encouraging the President of the Treasury Board and all hon. members, in making their suggestions for concrete action, to come forward and see that plan implemented. It is important for all Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.54 p.m.)

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