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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, June 6, 2001

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, June 6, 2001

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1400)

[*English*]

The Speaker: As is our practice on Wednesday we will now sing O Canada, and we will be led by the hon. member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore.

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the important pieces of legislation before the House prior to the election was the endangered species bill. That bill has been reintroduced. I urge all members on all sides of the House and the government to work together to provide strong federal protection for endangered species.

We are proud to be the best country in the world to live in. Surely we should in return make it the best country in the world for other life forms to live in. We have a chance here to produce laws that lead the world. Let us seize that chance and pass the strongest endangered species legislation ever.

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PROSTATE CANCER

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, June 24 is the date for this year's "Do It For Dad" Walk/Run for Prostate Cancer to raise funds to aid research in prostate cancer.

• (1405)

When I took part in the very first of these runs four years ago, hardly anyone talked about prostate cancer. However times have

changed and no one is hiding the fact that four members of the House have had prostate surgery in the last nine months.

For this year's run many members of the House have already sponsored me with \$20, \$50 and even \$250 donations, but there is still time to contribute. Last year the run organizers were able to announce that MPs of Canada in all parties had contributed the single largest lump sum in aid of the run for prostate cancer research. We need to lead by example and do it again.

Mark your calendar on June 24, Mr. Speaker, and send me your cheque. Mark your calendar as well on October 30, which will be PSA day on the Hill when you can have your PSA test for prostate cancer.

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CLEAN AIR DAY

Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is the third annual Clean Air Day, a time to increase public awareness and action on cleaning the air we breathe and on climate change.

At this time the government of Nova Scotia has embarked on a public review of the province's energy strategy. We have long known about the links between our use of fossil fuels, our health and our environment. Today with newer and better technologies we are seeking cleaner, more efficient means of heating our homes and uses for alternative energy sources to power the world around us.

Partnerships must be fostered between governments and private industry to develop and expand our use of environmentally cleaner energy sources to reduce our dependency on traditional, non-renewable energy sources. I encourage all Nova Scotians to get involved in the review process as it impacts on the daily lives of each and every one of us.

* * *

RAOUL WALLENBERG

Mr. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the establishment of Raoul Wallenberg Day recognizes this lost hero of the Holocaust, this Saint-Just of the nations, whom the UN characterized as the greatest humanitarian of the 20th century for having saved more people in the second world war than almost any government.

It is an historic initiative that will have enduring resonance. We will be recognizing, teaching and inspiring Canadians about the unparalleled and unprecedented heroism of Canada's only honor-

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ary citizen who, in his singular protection of civilians in armed conflict, signified the best of international humanitarian law; who, in his singular organization of humanitarian relief, exemplified the best of humanitarian intervention; who, in his warning to Nazi generals that they would be held accountable for their crimes, foreshadowed the Nuremberg principles; who, in saving 100,000 Jews, personified the Talmudic idiom that if a person saves a single life it is as if he saved an entire universe; and who, in having the courage to care and the commitment to act, showed that one person can make a difference, that one person can confront radical evil, prevail and transform history.

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PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past weekend in Montreal I had the pleasure of participating in the Inclusion by Design conference of the Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work. The conference coincided with access week from May 27 to June 1.

The goal of this progressive international event was to focus on planning for a barrier free world, one that would include all people regardless of ability and encourage universal policies both within government and in the community at large. This vision of inclusion is shared by the subcommittee on the status of persons with disabilities. As chair it is my hope that the declarations developed over the weekend will be implemented.

The Minister of Human Resources Development reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to ensure that Canadians with disabilities get the supports they need to participate fully in society. The minister stated that we need to focus on understanding the labour market and the challenge it presents to Canadians with disabilities. We must recognize that universal access is fundamentally about human rights and social justice.

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D-DAY

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we sit in the House of Commons today with the privilege of serving our country because our ancestors fought to make it so.

Fifty-seven years ago today on D-Day 14,000 Canadians were fighting, many dying, on the beaches of Normandy. The soldiers were mostly kids the ages of my three sons.

D-Day has often been called the beginning of the end of World War II. Despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles our soldiers

fought on bravely. By day's end Canadian troops had progressed further inland than any of our allies. If Canada became a nation at Vimy Ridge we reinforced it on D-Day.

Our country has a long and proud military history which has helped purchase our freedom. Today I thank our veterans not only for their service and sacrifice but for ensuring I do not have to send my sons to war.

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TABLE TENNIS

Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House that the Canadian Chinese Table Tennis Federation of B.C. will host the first international table tennis tournament to be held from July 23 to July 29 in Vancouver.

● (1410)

The Prime Minister, the premier of British Columbia and the executive administrator of the Hong Kong special administrative region have endorsed this special event. The whole tournament will be broadcast by Shanghai television for viewers in China.

I congratulate the president and the many volunteers of the Canadian Chinese Table Tennis Federation for their initiative and effort to make this event possible.

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[Translation]

MONDIAL DES CULTURES DE DRUMMONDVILLE

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in my riding since 1982, the organizing team of the Mondial des cultures de Drummondville has created an exceptional event in my riding. This event has become one of the greatest festivals in the world in its category.

Every year, for the ten or so days of the festival, some 15 to 20 countries delegate talented folk ensembles to act as their ambassadors and to delight audiences with the expression of their traditions, the richness of their dances, music and culture.

Later this afternoon in the Centre Block some of the members of Mackinaw, a group from my riding, will be giving us a little preview of the festival.

I would like to take advantage of their presence in Ottawa to invite the public to attend the 2001 version of this extraordinary folk festival, held this year July 5 through 15 in Drummondville.

You will all be very welcome.

[English]

D-DAY

Mr. John O'Reilly (Haliburton—Victoria—Brock, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is the 57th anniversary of D-Day. Fifty-seven years ago allied and Canadian troops established a bridgehead in France which would lead to the liberation of northwestern Europe.

It is difficult to imagine the conditions our troops faced as they disembarked on the German occupied beaches of Normandy. Laden with equipment, some were dropped off in water that went over their heads. They were greeted on the shores by enemy artillery, machine guns, barbed wire and mines.

Even though the landings were a success more than 1,000 Canadians were killed or wounded on D-Day. By the end of August when the allies had succeeded in breaking out of Normandy, Canada had suffered more than 18,000 casualties of whom 5,000 lost their lives.

Today we take the opportunity to pay tribute to the great courage and devotion of our troops in that campaign. Let us never forget.

* * *

LINDA ROBAR

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to a good friend who has been a great source of strength and encouragement to me over the last 12 years: my executive assistant, Linda Robar.

Linda is retiring at the end of June after working on the Hill for 32 years. She started in 1969 on the research staff of the PC Party. From 1972 to 1983 she worked with the hon. Walter Baker, MP, and then she worked with the hon. Alvin Hamilton, MP, from 1984 to 1988.

In March 1989 I came here as the lone Reform MP. I needed qualified, skilful help to get me oriented quickly to Parliament Hill. Linda has certainly more than fit the bill. She has managed my office for 12 years, made sure I fit in the right place at the right time and generally kept my very busy life organized.

Linda is retiring to spend more time with her husband Ernie and their family, and of course to further develop her fabulous chocolate business.

Many people on the Hill in various parties and many of the staff who have worked here over the years have become good friends with Linda. This afternoon I am hosting a great big thanks to her in my office. She is one of the many staff who have made all our lives here as MPs easier. I will miss her.

[Translation]

MAISON MATHIEU FROMENT SAVOIE

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 1993, the Maison Mathieu Froment Savoie has been bringing support and comfort to patients and their families.

The mission of this non-profit community organization is to provide accommodation and comfort to residents of the Outaouais who are terminally ill. Over 200 people have benefited from its services since the palliative care centre was opened in January 1999.

I would like to pay tribute today to the wonderful work being done by the employees and volunteers of this organization, who provide a warm family atmosphere to terminally ill people in the Outaouais.

My best wishes for a long life to the Maison Froment Savoie, executive director Suzanne Fitzback, spokesperson Françoise Boivin, and president Robert Gendron.

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[English]

D-DAY

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I bring to the attention of all parliamentarians the fact that this is the 57th anniversary of D-Day.

• (1415)

Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador sent many of its finest young people to the beaches of Normandy so that millions of Europeans can be free. On a personal note, some of those Europeans were my mother, my father and my oldest brother.

As a Dutch born Canadian, I owe a debt of gratitude to those brave Canadian men and women who gave so much so that I could live in freedom. On behalf of parliamentarians across the country, I would like to read the following:

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We shall remember them

I salute all the veterans and our current military personnel.

* * *

[Translation]

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Robert Lancôt (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in Quebec this is the week of persons with disabilities. I would like to remind the House on this occasion that, since 1996, the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec has promoted their rights and must continue to do so, despite all the progress made to date.

Oral Questions

As a member of the Sub-committee on the Status of Persons with Disabilities of the Standing Committee on Human Resources and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, I can say that we still, unfortunately, need to become more aware, even though, as the slogan for the week says, "Together, everyone wins".

For a number of years, Quebec has been the leader in integrating persons with disabilities. The Bloc Québécois believes it is time to follow Quebec's lead and achieve the objective of fully integrating people with disabilities into society.

Integration is vital. It is up to us to see to it right now, because, indeed, together, everyone wins.

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[English]

GEORGE LESLIE MACKAY

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on June 2 a heritage plaque was unveiled in Embro, Ontario, marking the 100th anniversary of the death of the Reverend George Leslie MacKay, a renowned Presbyterian missionary who hailed from Zorra township in my riding of Oxford.

In 1872 Reverend MacKay founded the first Canadian overseas mission in Tamsui, Taiwan. Until his death, he served the needs of the people of northern Taiwan in many ways. He trained the local clergy while ministering to members of the 60 churches that he established. He also founded a hospital and several schools, including Tamsui Oxford College. The first school was built with funds MacKay raised during his first furlough home to Oxford in 1881.

Today George Leslie MacKay remains a national hero in Taiwan. As we honour his memory, it is my hope that future generations of Oxford residents will learn more about the extraordinary accomplishments of this exceptional man.

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SAINT JOHN FLAMES

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to rise today to praise true excellence in Canadian sports.

Last week before a record crowd, a sold out house in the greatest little city in the east, the Saint John Flames defeated the Wilkes-Barre Scranton Penguins from the U.S.A. to capture the AHL's 65th Calder Cup championship. This was not just a victory for the Flames. This was not just a victory for Saint John. This was a victory for all of Canada.

On Canadian soil those incredible athletes, under the watchful eye of the head coach, Jim Playfair, showed the world how Canada's game is supposed to be played. All Canadians, from the very young to the young at heart, should take pride in the tireless

dedication of this band of hockey patriots in their quest to win the cup.

It is therefore with great appreciation that we say those three words that show our pride, and I would ask everyone to say it: Go Flames go.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are wondering about the government's priorities. All week the Canadian Alliance has been calling upon the government to do the right thing and bring in stand alone legislation to protect children from predators who use the Internet and not to have the legislation tied up with other non-related measures but the Prime Minister refuses to do this.

Will the Prime Minister put aside the roadblocks for the sake of our children and allow stand alone legislation to come forward that we could deal with as early as today to protect our children? Will he move on this?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the House has been confronted with this legislation for weeks. If there is some blockage in the House it is coming from the other side of the House.

If the Alliance members want this type of legislation they will see that it is part of the omnibus bill that has been debated in committee and in the House of Commons. There may be occasion to vote against certain elements but the majority of the House is in favour of passing the bill as is.

[Translation]

Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we must protect our children against pedophiles who use the Internet to attract young victims.

It is important to pass stand alone legislation on this matter on its own, not include it in a sort of omnibus bill that deals with everything and nothing.

Why is the Prime Minister insisting on putting the interests of children and animals at the same level? This is bizarre.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the bizarre part is the other side. We have a bill that addresses this problem, and the opposition resorts to excuses to prevent its passage. If they are reasonable people, they will understand that this bill must be passed as a whole.

For example, they opposed the gun control legislation. Parliament has already decided certain clauses of this bill need amending, and we can pass it. It was debated ad nauseam and the time has come for the House to decide.

[English]

Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we are not surprised he choked on his own answer. The opposition has said very clearly that we will work with the government to get second reading right away on the other elements of the bill, but we need to see this protection for children now from people who use the Internet to lure their young victims. We are willing to do this.

The Prime Minister has shown that he can be very swift to pass legislation related to pay raises. Today we can do something to protect children from those people who would abuse the Internet. Why will the Prime Minister not do this? We can do it today with stand alone legislation and give second reading to the other elements of the bill. The Prime Minister should protect the children.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is using the legislation for children for another agenda, and it is completely unacceptable. The Alliance has the occasion to vote on the bill but it has tried to find excuses for not passing it. If it wants the legislation passed, it can be passed this afternoon very easily.

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government is failing Canadian children. It has refused to establish an effective sexual offender registry. Now Bill C-15 has vulnerable children being forced to carry the government's political baggage.

Why will the Minister of Justice not quit playing American style politics and pass the bill on a stand alone basis to protect children?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the right hon. Prime Minister has just said, everyone on this side of the House is ready to pass Bill C-15 this afternoon. Let us do it.

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Canadians believe that the Liberal government should not use children as political cannon fodder. Canadians are asking the Minister of Justice to provide protection for their children and grandchildren from sexual predators.

Why will the minister not immediately pass that portion of the bill that provides that protection? Why will she not split the bill today?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no need to split the bill. As the right hon. Prime Minister has said,

Oral Questions

everyone on this side of the House is ready to stand in their place and pass Bill C-15 this afternoon. Let us do it.

* * *

● (1425)

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during the last election campaign, the Prime Minister admitted that the EI reform had caused hardship. He even went to New Brunswick, a region where seasonal work is widespread, to apologize.

Unfortunately, seven months after his apology, unemployed workers are still waiting for the Prime Minister to take action.

Will the man who apologized now listen to his own members and do something for seasonal workers before the end of the present session? If they are prepared to pass the omnibus bill this afternoon, could they not act just as urgently to pass the necessary EI measures?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I said during the election campaign was that the Bloc Québécois had blocked passage of the bill but that, if a Liberal majority government were elected, the amendments would be passed in the House of Commons.

The amendments we promised at the time were passed in the House of Commons. Should there be any other amendments, we are constantly studying all bills. But, in this instance, we took action despite the opposition of the Bloc Québécois.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that is simply not true. The government had all the means and the power to pass its legislation last fall. It refused to do so. It introduced Bill C-2, which is inadequate. It promised more than that during the election campaign. We on this side are supporting the bill to increase MPs' salaries. However, we think it is more urgent to do something to help unemployed workers.

If there is such a rush to increase salaries, could he now act just as quickly and generously when it comes to unemployed workers in this country and help young people and women in the regions? Is he going to get a move on?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we just passed legislation two months ago. We improved the situation. Some members would like to see other improvements. We will examine them.

But we have already taken action. And had it not been for the Bloc Québécois digging in its heels, this legislation could have been passed six months before it finally was, after the election.

Oral Questions

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister keeps repeating that the opposition is to blame for Bill C-2 on employment insurance not being passed before the election.

Recently, his own party members, in a unanimous report, recognized that the measures included in Bill C-2 were clearly inadequate.

If the Prime Minister does not want to listen to the Bloc Québécois, will he at least listen to the unemployed and to his own members, who are telling him, in a unanimous report, that what currently exists is not enough?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois has little credibility left, when it comes to employment insurance. One day it votes in favour of maintaining the intensity rule, while the next day it claims that changes should be made to the employment insurance program to help seasonal workers.

Will that party now admit that it made a mistake when it voted against Bill C-2 and seasonal workers?

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, after the unanimous report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, after months of discussions, promises and public apologies during the election campaign, it is now time to act. The time for prepared statements is over.

Can the Prime Minister give us one good reason that prevents him from having the recommendations of the unanimous report adopted before the end of the current session?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Bloc to give us a single, good reason why it voted to keep the intensity rule in place. It was members on this side of the House who worked very hard to ensure that the changes to the Employment Insurance Act were introduced in the House and that they received speedy passage. It is the Bloc that has blocked our attempts time and time again.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the environment minister says that he is setting an example for Canadians. Some example. The lesson seems to be that the environment is the lowest of all priorities, that the environment is less important today than it was under Mulroney. When it comes to departmental budgets, the environment is dead last. The government's environmental policies are bankrupt.

• (1430)

Would the environment minister tell us what precisely is the example that he is setting for Canadians?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps we could start with the \$1.1 billion that was put aside in the last fiscal year for climate change.

We could add to that the \$2 billion that we put in place for an infrastructure program to be matched so that it will be a \$6 billion program for green infrastructure. That is the second thing.

We could talk about the tens of millions of dollars that are being put aside for research into the impact of toxins on health and on the environment.

We could talk about the fact that we have negotiated and signed the Cartagena protocol and, in addition, the Stockholm protocol where Canada was not only the first nation to ratify but also the first nation to put up money.

We could talk about the agreement with the United States.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are asking the minister for environmental leadership and he cannot even show us that the government has replaced the money that it ripped out of the environmental commitments of the past. We mostly get token gestures and feel good announcements.

The minister wants to be an environmental superhero but he throws his weight behind Bush's continental energy plan, an energy plan that would raise Canada's greenhouse gas emissions to 44% above our Kyoto commitment.

Would the environment minister tell us why the government is choosing to follow Bush instead of following Kyoto?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can see why, when the newspapers and the media stop wondering about the splits in the official opposition, they start talking about the splits in the NDP. I can see why their members believe their party should be scrapped and thrown aside.

As the hon. member knows, the Prime Minister has committed the government again to meeting the Kyoto targets and he said that subsequent to the energy paper put out by President Bush and the United States cabinet.

We signed Kyoto, we stand by Kyoto and we will achieve the Kyoto targets.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, one of the major bidders for the maritime helicopter project is an important employer in the riding of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Oral Questions

Could the Prime Minister confirm that the Deputy Prime Minister is chairing a cabinet committee overseeing this project? If so, why did the Prime Minister choose a chairman with a serious potential conflict of interest? I wonder if the Prime Minister consulted the ethics counsellor. How does the Prime Minister justify this kind of conflict of interest?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, how low can the leader of the last party in the House of Commons go?

The Deputy Prime Minister is the most honourable member in the House of Commons. He is not chairing any committee on this program, and if he were I know he would do it with competence and honesty.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, I guess you call him a square-rigger.

The government paid \$500 million in cancellation fees when the Prime Minister scrapped a signed helicopter deal. Now the government is seeking an additional \$400 million to split the new contract. It says that would help 13 Canadian companies. Of the 13 Canadian companies, Oncap, a subsidiary of Onex, is wholly Canadian owned.

Which of the other 12 companies are wholly Canadian owned? Who exactly is this \$400 million—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable. There is no request for \$400 million. By doing that we will have more bidders so that we will have helicopters that will cost less money to taxpayers.

• (1435)

It is not like the Tories, who did not give a damn about the price of the previous program as long as their friends did well.

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JUSTICE

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-15 has four significant issues in this omnibus bill: sexual predators, firearms, cruelty to animals, and disarming police officers.

All these issues deserve consideration in and of themselves, but the Liberal government lumped all together is suggesting that it wants to push them through the House fast, knowing full well they would not go through the House fast. I would like to know why.

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has identified only some of the important elements found in Bill C-15. In fact Bill C-15 deals with amendments to the criminal law.

What I would simply ask members of the official opposition is why, if they are so keenly interested in the legislation, they do not do what the right hon. Prime Minister has suggested.

We will be here this afternoon to pass Bill C-15. We would ask them to be here. Let us just do it.

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is amazing that it takes the government but three days to put through a bill on a pay raise for MPs, yet parts of this bill have been sitting around this place for better than two years.

I would like to know from the government just why it is that sexual predators are being put ahead of a pay raise for members of parliament.

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the hon. member concedes that much of this legislation has been before the House in earlier parliaments. It is unfortunate that the opposition has not been able to get its act together and work with us to pass Bill C-15.

How long does it take? We are ready to act this afternoon. We would call upon them to join with us to pass Bill C-15.

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[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Human Resources Development tells us that we must review the committee report before passing the act and that it is complicated. In the case of family trusts, the issue was settled on a December 24, shortly before midnight. The issue was just as complex and \$2 billion were at stake.

Could the minister tell us why she is unable to act quickly to help seasonal workers, since the government was able to do so at the time for a family of billionaires?

[*English*]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have just introduced and passed amendments to the Employment Insurance Act that support seasonal workers right across the country. The Bloc voted against that.

We introduced legislation that reduced the number of hours required to get special benefits. The Bloc voted against it.

We introduced legislation, which passed, to double parental benefits. The Bloc voted against it. There is absolutely no credibility from the Bloc on EI.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that we could work together to improve the employment insurance program and help the public. We can do it

Oral Questions

immediately. I am telling the minister in all good faith that we should work together to pass the necessary amendments before the end of the session.

Will the minister agree, for the benefit of the unemployed and their families, to set aside party politics and to legislate immediately?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last fall we attempted to set aside all partisanship and asked members of the Bloc to join with us to speedily pass amendments to the Employment Insurance Act that would support seasonal workers. They said no.

We went to the polls and they lost seats as a result of it. They have a lot of explaining to do back home, where they say they support seasonal workers but then come to the House and vote against them.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton Centre-East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, over \$700 million to keep ancient Sea Kings flying until their replacement, over \$500 million in cancellation fees, close to \$2 billion before delivery, and we have not one new helicopter to show for that after a 25 year procurement nightmare.

• (1440)

Exactly where is the cost effectiveness the Prime Minister talked about yesterday? Where is it?

Mr. John O'Reilly (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government will not shy away from its responsibility to ensure the safety of the Sea Kings and those who fly them. The air force follows a very strict maintenance and inspection regime, including three rigorous flight inspections. We will not put anyone's life at risk, no matter what the opposition wants to push.

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton Centre-East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals simply do not get it. Defence document after defence document and senior officer after senior officer state that it is operationally essential that the helicopter have a minimum endurance of 3 hours plus 30 minutes of reserve at all temperatures.

In fact, lowering the endurance standards to less than 3 hours would make IFR flights from Shearwater to Sydney or Yarmouth illegal. There is no long term evidence within the military to support endurance requirements under 3 hours. Who asked for the specifications to be lowered and when?

Mr. John O'Reilly (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these are military specifica-

tions, written by the military, passed on to the Minister of Defence, passed on to cabinet and accepted exactly as they were written by the military. There is no political interference whatsoever in the requirement of the helicopters.

What the opposition does not understand is that there are two different helicopter projects plus the upgrade of the existing requirements. They just do not understand that they are trying to compare apples and oranges. There is no political interference whatsoever here.

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[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Environment has finally stated that the Americans' refusal to endorse the Kyoto protocol was a major political mistake.

As we know, the Prime Minister refused to criticize the American President's decision.

Will the Prime Minister confirm that his government is now on the side of the international community and will he condemn the decision by the American President to not ratify the Kyoto protocol?

[English]

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the position of the Canadian government is clear. It has been repeated time after time by a number of ministers, including the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, myself and of course the Prime Minister.

We disagree with the United States on the decision that was taken with respect to the withdrawal from the Kyoto process. We think it was the wrong decision. We have said that time after time. We think the grounds given, namely the economic grounds and the grounds with respect to developing countries, are both incorrect. We would prefer to have the United States come back, but under the circumstances we also point out that there are certain problems with the European Union position as well.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Environment is inconsistent.

This morning, he criticized the position of the United States and considered the European position too rigid. In addition, he announced measures to reduce greenhouse gases, but, at the same time, his government continues to subsidize the tar sands.

Does this not prove that this government's policy on greenhouse gas reduction is a failure and that, without Quebec's performance, the situation would be even more catastrophic?

[English]

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is clearly unaware of the negotiations that took place in the Hague. We will be having these negotiations resume in Bonn. I would invite him to come with the Canadian delegation so he can learn something about what takes place.

The fact is the Hague meeting collapsed because of a very rigid position taken by the Europeans which was not matched by the Americans, and therefore we had a division.

That said, the Canadian position is clear. We have signed the Kyoto agreement, we wish to continue under the Kyoto process and we will meet our Kyoto targets.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the government has finally admitted what Canadians have long known: that our standard of living, vis-à-vis the United States, is dropping like a stone. Today figures are out showing that our per capita incomes are 30% lower than those in the United States. What is the Liberal solution? It is more Ottawa style big spending programs designed by those great champions of efficiency, the Ministers of Human Resources Development and Industry.

• (1445)

Instead of having the productivity file handed over to the cabinet's spenders, why does the Prime Minister not accept the recommendations of our finance committee to eliminate the \$1.3 billion capital tax on innovation to increase productivity in this country?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only thing dropping like a rock around here is the rankings of the Canadian Alliance in terms of public opinion polls. The chief architect of that descent is the member who just spoke.

The fact of the matter is Canada is making substantial progress in terms of its economic growth. We have gone from the largest deficit in our history to the largest surplus in history, the largest pay down of public debt and 24 quarters of successive growth. This is a policy of which to be proud, under a leader who is effective, with his colleague the Minister of Finance, in delivering a solid economic platform for Canada.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): That is the best he can do, Mr. Speaker? It would be nice if this minister would actually provide a substantive answer once in the House.

Canadian families have 30% less money to save for their retirement, 30% less money to pay for their kids' college education

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and 30% less money to buy a new automobile because of this government's high tax, high debt policies.

Why does the government not listen to every major business group in the country and the House of Commons finance committee and eliminate the \$1.3 billion capital tax on innovation which is a barrier to our productivity and is hampering our standard of living? Why does it not do that?

Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me outline what we have done.

Apart from having one of the most generous R and D tax credits in the world, we have reduced our capital gains to where they are lower than the United States. Our employee stock options are better than the United States. Our corporate tax is going to down to 30% compared to 36% in Michigan, 40% in New York and 41% in California.

Those are some of the measures we have taken. However, it is not just about taxes alone. The member should look at what we have done in terms of the Canada Foundation for Innovation; \$3.15 billion.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Murray Calder (Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Last week the Canadian farm income program started processing and issuing cheques for farmers who have experienced a dramatic decline in income because of low commodity prices. We would like to thank the minister for that. However commodity prices are still low and incomes for farmers this year will still be low.

What further assistance will be made available?

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier this year the government announced \$500 million on top of the \$1.1 billion for assistance to farmers this year. The provinces were going to put their 40% share with that and put their agreements together. Some of the provinces have given those agreements to us. We signed those agreements and some of the money was sent to the provinces last week. Other money will be sent this week. As soon as the other provinces have signed agreements, we will send them their share of the \$500 million.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

Oral Questions

Given that he is such a strong proponent of Kyoto and he obviously has the support of the House, why does he not just leave the House today and ratify the agreement?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only industrialized country to have ratified Kyoto today is Romania. The reason none of the other industrialized countries have ratified it, and up to this point not a single country in the European Union, is that we have not concluded the negotiations on what will be part of the Kyoto agreement; what will count for those figures of minus 6% of the 1990 figure.

We are obviously going to continue. I would appreciate if maybe my hon. friend could come to Bonn so he too could learn more about the negotiations.

* * *

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in keeping with this government's feckless approach to all things environmental, the President of the Treasury Board has refused to authorize a scheme to allow public servants to access their bus passes through a payroll deduction. I thought we wanted more people to leave their cars at home and protect the environment. The government should be leading by example in supporting mass transit.

● (1450)

In view of the fact that it is environmental week and Clean Air Day, will the minister reverse her position today and encourage employees to use their payroll deductions to buy transit passes?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague in environment has said, we are really committed as a government to reducing greenhouse gases. That is very clear. So, we give mass transit our utmost support.

However, the matter before us consists in using payroll deductions for all public servants. We are one of Canada's largest employers and the administrative impact would be substantial if we agreed to do it.

A study is therefore warranted in order that we may really know the administrative impact before agreeing to such a principle.

* * *

[*English*]

SHIPBUILDING

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Industry has bent over backward to help companies like

Bombardier through a system of interest free loans and tax incentives, yet when it comes to shipbuilding the minister is suddenly all talk and no action.

When will the minister treat all industries the same? When will he put his money where his mouth is and make good on his election promise to revitalize our national shipbuilding industry in Canada?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting to hear that the Conservative Party is officially opposed to the protection of Bombardier, or at least the equal treatment of Bombardier, when Brazil offers up export financing for a company in an unfair trade practice, and that the Conservative Party is opposed to the tens of thousands of jobs in this industry in Ontario, Quebec, western Canada and, yes, in Atlantic Canada as well.

With respect to shipbuilding, as I said yesterday I am super confident that we will have an effective policy long before the member claims a seat in the second chamber.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, I never said we were against Bombardier. We are asking if he will do the same thing for everyone else.

Could the Minister of Industry inform the House as to whether or not the owners of the Saint John shipyard have approached the government seeking financial assistance to help turn the shipyard into a wood processing plant?

Could the minister also confirm what portion of these funds is intended for the severance packages of the countless shipyard workers who have lost or will lose their jobs if this proposal is adopted?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised the member has now reversed herself. She is now in favour of the aerospace industry in Canada and she is now against a shipbuilding policy, because she is asking me for funds to ensure that workers never go back to work.

Our purpose is to put people back to work, to be competitive, to have a solid shipbuilding policy, not to close down shipyards.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans denied the assertion made by the Department of Justice that there was no legal basis for a lobster food fishery in St. Mary's Bay. Let me remind him of what justice lawyers said:

Prior to contact with Europeans, harvesting lobster for food—from St. Mary's Bay was never an element of a practice, custom or tradition integral to the distinctive culture of the aboriginal group.

Oral Questions

That is to say, there is no aboriginal right to a lobster food fishery. Does the minister of fisheries agree with the legal advice from justice or not?

Hon. Herb Dhaliwal (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, the documents the hon. member is reading from are on a matter before the courts. However I want to assure the hon. member and other members of the House that I listened to the wisdom of the Minister of Justice and they should listen to the Minister of Justice as well. Her advice is taken very seriously.

We have set out a long term and short term strategy which is supported by the provincial fisheries minister of P.E.I., the provincial fisheries minister of New Brunswick, the provincial fisheries minister of Quebec and the provincial minister of Nova Scotia. It is a policy that is supported by all of them except the hon. member in the Alliance Party. That is very typical of them.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the lobster food fishery is a failed Liberal policy now rejected by the Department of Justice. There is no aboriginal right to a food fishery for lobster. If there were, this policy would be an abject failure because it fails to meet the supreme court's objective of reconciliation between aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities. Rather this food fishery leads to isolation and confrontation.

• (1455)

Who speaks for the government on a legal basis for the lobster food fishery? Is it the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans or the Minister of Justice?

Hon. Herb Dhaliwal (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the strategy which we laid out is supported by the government and supported by other parties in the House except the Alliance.

We have said right from day one that we would resolve this issue by negotiation. That was exactly what the supreme court said, that it should be resolved through negotiation.

That hon. member wants us to go to the courts and litigate. We do not want to litigate. We want to negotiate. The difference between the Alliance Party and us is that we want to build bridges through dialogue, through co-operation and through peaceful means, not divide Canadians as it wants to do.

* * *

[Translation]

FREE TRADE AREA OF THE AMERICAS

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister for International Trade is still patting himself on the back about his

supposed diplomatic success in Buenos Aires in getting the texts of the free trade area of the Americas negotiations made public.

Buenos Aires dates back some two months, and the Quebec City summit was six weeks ago now. Yet we are still waiting on those texts.

Unless he can provide us with the texts, can the minister explain to us what is going on?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, sometimes the more significant the political success, the more time organization takes. What I can assure you—

Mr. Yvan Loubier: Braggart.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: No, I am not a braggart, to use the vulgar language to which the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot is treating this House, as is his wont. He would have a hard time fitting into the international scene with a mouth like that on him.

I would like to tell the hon. member for Joliette that I would be extremely pleased to see the texts released as soon as possible. The FTAA secretariat tells us that they will be forthcoming within days, when the texts in all four languages are ready.

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we do not have much need of empty successes like that one. We still do not have the texts.

Does the minister realize that, at the rate things are going, the texts will be out of date before we get them? As long as people are still waiting, the public debate cannot take place.

Is the minister prepared to commit to providing all updates as they are made available? Is he prepared to commit to that?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government always respects its negotiating partners.

The reason for the great success of Canadian diplomacy throughout the world is precisely the respect Canada has for the partners with which it is involved. That is how international diplomacy works, respecting one's partners.

We too are impatient to see the texts made public, but we are going to respect Brazil and others, whose wish it is to have the texts available in all four languages. We are not going to be pushed into disrespecting our partners by any partisan impatience from the Bloc Québécois.

* * *

[English]

HERITAGE CANADA

Ms. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, yesterday during testimony on the

Oral Questions

marine parks bill, a member opposite from northern Ontario revealed that an appointee of the government staff advisory committee on Lake Superior was an agent for Donahue Corporation, which may net a windfall profit when the government buys land Donahue owns in the area for a marine park.

Will the government now do the right thing, withdraw the marine parks bill and launch a full inquiry into this questionable land deal?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at my request about three weeks ago the hon. member in question has undertaken a process involving the director of the Lakehead University to ensure that the advisory capacity is full and open. I believe the hon. member is very happy with the process that has been established.

Ms. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, these are serious accusations that come from a member on the government side who told the Canadian heritage committee that his party did not want him in committee.

The chair of that committee refused to permit witnesses to be heard from the official opposition. Why is the government covering up what is really going on in the Department of Canadian Heritage?

• (1500)

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I already advised the hon. member that about a month ago I had a meeting with the hon. member in question. At his request we have appointed a special adviser to look into the whole issue. The adviser happens to be the chancellor at Lakehead University.

If the member has a problem with that, I think she should understand the chancellor at Lakehead University is above reproach and is establishing an open and transparent process.

For the marine conservation areas to work we need everyone on side. That is normal. Obviously that is not the case in the Reform Party.

* * *

[Translation]

ROAD TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Serge Marzil (Beauharnois—Salaberry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians living in the greater Montreal area are going through hell every day in terms of access to the island of Montreal, because traffic is getting heavier every day.

According to available studies, over 2.3 million trucks per year are in transit on the island of Montreal, thus damaging the infrastructures and contributing to the increase in CO2 emissions.

According to the same studies, the Jacques-Cartier and Champlain bridges are the most heavily travelled in Canada. Moreover—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transport.

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the federal government is examining on a priority basis the extension of highway 30, which impacts on bridges.

Transport Canada recently commissioned Deloitte & Touche Corporate Finance Canada to help it determine how interested the private sector is in this project. As early as July 1, private contractors should be actively involved in the process.

Due diligence must be observed in checking estimates, basic assumptions and forecasts of traffic volume and revenues.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, some Canadians are actively participating in the black market trade of human organs. As reported today, organ brokers are profiting from this trade on Canadian soil. They are recruiting desperate patients to pay thousands of dollars for live donors to go under the knife in overseas hospitals.

Will the federal government take action today to end this practice in Canada?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure there could be amendments to the criminal code that would deal with the issue of trafficking in organs. I am sure the Minister of Justice will speak to that at the appropriate time.

What the member should know is that in terms of the availability of organs in Canada for transplant, we recently opened in Edmonton a national headquarters for a national strategy to encourage organ donation by Canadians and to provide organs in Canada to those who need them so that such tragic practices do not occur.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of The Honourable Suresh Prabhu, Minister of Power of the Republic of India.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: I also draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Ben Ngubane, Minister of Arts, Science, Culture and Technology of the Republic of South Africa.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Routine Proceedings

● (1505)

The Speaker: I also draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of a delegation from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, led by Dr. Abdulaziz Al Fayezi, head of the delegation and chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Consultative Council, the Shura, of Saudi Arabia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to eight petitions.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Bill Graham (Toronto Centre—Rosedale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

[English]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) the committee considered the issue of Canada's foreign policy objectives in south Caucasus and central Asia and has made recommendations for our future policy in this important but little understood region.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109 the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

TRANSPORT AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Mr. Ovid Jackson (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Transport and Government Operations regarding an order of reference of Tuesday, May 15, 2001, in relation to Bill S-3 respecting the Motor Vehicle Transport Act, 1987, and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

I am reporting the bill without amendment from the committee.

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Ms. Susan Whelan (Essex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology on Bill S-11, an act to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act and the Canada Cooperatives Act and to amend other acts.

The committee reports the bill with amendment.

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

[English]

Pursuant to the standing orders the committee asks the subcommittee to consider the issue of Canadian economic relations with Europe.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts containing the conclusions and recommendations of the committee on the Government of Canada's new policies on internal audit and evaluation.

● (1510)

I also want to table the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on the performance and plans and priorities of the Office of the Auditor General of Canada.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to both these reports.

[English]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 25th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the selection of votable items,

In accordance with Standing Order 92 this report is deemed adopted on presentation.

I also have the honour to present the 26th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, in both

Routine Proceedings

official languages, and I should like to move concurrence at this time.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, I should like to present a resolution which I know has the support of the four opposition foreign affairs critics. If you would seek unanimous consent, I hope it will be given. The motion concerns the advisability of proclaiming Nelson Mandela an honorary citizen of Canada.

[*Translation*]

I move the following motion:

Whereas the majority of people in South Africa, whose skin happened to be black, were denied elementary democratic rights by white racist administrations for hundreds of years;

And whereas courageous black South Africans initially formed the African National Congress in 1912 to crusade against apartheid and subsequently opened the organization to people of all colours;

And whereas Nelson Mandela, having emerged as a leader of the ANC, was imprisoned for almost three decades following criminal proceedings that made a mockery of justice;

And whereas after Mr. Mandela finally emerged as a free man, he demonstrated remarkable statesmanship and compassion by forgiving all who had oppressed him and his people;

And whereas Mr. Mandela was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993, was subsequently elected as President of the new South Africa in its first democratic election and emerged as a moral leader of extraordinary and global stature;

[*English*]

And whereas Canada, beginning with the leadership of John George Diefenbaker, consistently opposed apartheid and supported the struggle of Mr. Mandela and his compatriots during times when many other nations were indifferent;

And whereas Mr. Mandela, most recently on a visit to Canada in 1998, has continually inspired the members of this Parliament, the people of Canada and, most especially, young Canadians with his profound commitment to liberal democracy, human rights and the struggle against oppression of all people;

And whereas the highest recognition that Canada can bestow upon a foreigner is honorary citizenship;

And whereas Canada has previously granted this high honour only once, in 1985, to Raoul Wallenberg in recognition of his remarkable effort in saving the lives of almost 100,000 Jews in Nazi controlled Hungary and his subsequent imprisonment and suffering in the former Soviet Union;

And whereas other remarkable crusaders for justice, including Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, met with violent deaths before Canada could properly recognize their contributions;

And whereas Mr. Mandela's sunset years are devoted to the freedom and welfare of children in Africa and elsewhere;

And whereas Mr. Mandela has graciously agreed to accept this high tribute and will be making his last trip to North America in September of this year,

Now therefore—the House of Commons resolves that the said Nelson Mandela, that icon of the human spirit, be hereby declared to be an honorary citizen of Canada;

And that a message be sent to the Senate requesting that House to unite with this House in the said resolution by filling in the blank with the words "Senate and the".

• (1515)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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PETITIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to introduce two petitions today.

The first petition is from constituents in West Vancouver who urge the Government of Canada to enact legislation explicitly recognizing the freedom of conscience of health care workers in Canada.

MISSILE DEFENCE PROGRAM

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from constituents in the area of Powell River, British Columbia who are asking the government to declare that Canada objects to the national missile defence program in the United States. They ask that Canada play a leadership role in banning nuclear weapons and missile flight tests in Canada.

GASOLINE ADDITIVES

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I am honoured to present petitions on behalf of the citizens living in Grand Bend in the London area. They call upon parliament to protect the health of seniors and children and to protect our environment by banning the gas additive MMT.

PESTICIDES

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of constituents of Calgary Centre to present a petition that calls upon parliament to enact an immediate moratorium on the cosmetic use of chemical pesticides until such time as their use has been scientifically proven to be safe and the long term consequences of their application are known.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from citizens of my riding concerning the use of cosmetic pesticides in Canada. These 25 petitioners also call upon parliament to enact an immediate moratorium on the cosmetic use of chemical pesticides until such time as scientific studies show their use to be safe and the long term consequences of their application are known.

CANADIAN COAST GUARD

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by residents of the lower mainland who wish to draw the attention of the House to their concern that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has disbanded the coast guard dive team at Sea Island in Richmond.

The coast guard dive team provided a valuable service to people who were on the waters of the Georgia Strait which is one of the busiest waterways in the country. Shortly after the dive team was disbanded a young man died who may have been saved if that dive team had have been in place. The petitioners call upon parliament to reinstate the coast guard dive team.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Janko Peric (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have the privilege to present to the House a petition from hundreds of concerned constituents in my riding of Cambridge. They wish to draw to the attention of the House that Canadian health care workers are often forced to participate in practices and procedures that are against their deeply held ethical beliefs. These health care providers experience discrimination and have no recourse to protect themselves.

The petitioners call upon parliament to enact legislation recognizing the freedom of conscience of health care workers by protecting health care providers from participating in procedures that are against their conscience.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today from Elizabeth Crowther and 111 other residents of North Vancouver. They urge the Government of Canada to enact legislation explicitly recognizing the freedom of conscience of health care workers.

They call upon parliament to prohibit the coercion of and unjust discrimination against health care workers because of their refusal to participate in matters contrary to the dictates of their consciences and to establish penalties for such coercion and unjust discrimination.

• (1520)

BILL C-16

Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present to the House.

One is from dozens of Winnipeggers who are concerned about Bill C-16, the charities registration act, which they feel violates fundamental freedoms and makes a fair and transparent trial impossible.

The petitioners call upon parliament to make certain and significant changes to the bill before it is passed.

HOME HEATING FUEL

Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition signed by a number of citizens from Winnipeg who are concerned about the high cost of heating fuels. They are particularly concerned about the price of natural gas, which they believe is creating a disincentive for people to buy homes and businesses and to continue operating businesses.

The petitioners call upon parliament to enact legislation to supplement the income of individuals receiving pensions to reflect the rising cost of natural gas in Canada.

PARENTAL LEAVE

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to present a petition from citizens of Canada. They bring to the attention of the House that extended parental leave would only apply to parents of children born on or after December 31, 2000, and that parents of children born before that date would not have the same privileges as those born after that date.

The petitioners call upon parliament to bring extended parental leave into effect immediately so that parents of children born before December 31, 2000, could also benefit from it.

[*Translation*]

PESTICIDE CONTROL

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I wish to present a petition signed by people from my riding of Pierrefonds—Dollars regarding the use of chemical pesticides.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to enact an immediate moratorium on the cosmetic use of chemical pesticides until such time as their use has been scientifically proven to be safe and the long term consequences of their application are known.

[*English*]

MARITAL SEPARATION CODE

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present today. The first is from a group concerned about the divorce and child custody laws at this time.

The petitioners call upon parliament to implement a national strategy to create a non-adversarial marital separation code, the object of which would be to reduce tension and acrimony within divorce for the sake of the children.

Routine Proceedings

CANADA POST

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from rural mail couriers. The petitioners point out that subsection 13(5) of the Canada Post Corporation Act was put into place to deal with conditions that have long since ceased to exist.

They therefore call upon the Government of Canada to abolish subsection 13(5) because it is very discriminatory against its employees.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the final petition is from a number of citizens in different parts of the country and is in addition to many petitions that have already been presented.

The petitioners call upon government to implement a national strategy for end of life care in accordance with that put forward by the Carstairs report in the Senate of Canada.

PESTICIDES

Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition which calls upon parliament to enact an immediate moratorium on the cosmetic use of chemical pesticides until such time as their use has been scientifically proven to be safe and the long term consequences of their application are known.

[*Translation*]

TRADE

Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to the House eight petitions signed by hundreds of people who want to express their concern with regard to free trade.

The petitioners are opposed to the Free Trade Area of the Americas and are calling upon the government to make the text of the agreement public. They are concerned about the negative impact the FTAA will have on the environment, children and all the people of the Americas.

• (1525)

[*English*]

CANADA POST

Mr. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting a petition that brings to the attention of the House of Commons that Ashton Potter, contracted by Canada Post to produce postage stamps, will be moving its printing facility from Mississauga, Ontario, to facilities in the United States. As a result, several Canadians will lose their jobs, and Canadians will be forced to buy Canadian postage stamps manufactured in the United States.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon parliament to require Canada Post to have its postage stamps printed in Canada, and to terminate its contract with Ashton Potter if it does not continue printing Canadian stamps in Mississauga.

FALUN DAFA

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton Centre-East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to put forth a petition by 500 persons, most of whom are from Edmonton. The petitioners are appealing to the Canadian government to strongly urge the Chinese government to discontinue the persecution of the Falun Dafa practitioners, and through open dialogue to reach a peaceful resolution to their differences.

The Speaker: I should advise the House that there are only four minutes left in the fifteen minutes allowed for petitions. I know that the hon. member for Peterborough will want to move with dispatch.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am most grateful to you for giving me the time to compose my thoughts.

I rise to present three more petitions signed by thousands of people in the Peterborough area who want VIA Rail commuter service between Peterborough and Toronto restored.

The petitioners point to the environmental advantages, to the reduction in greenhouse emissions, to the reduction in accidents and to the wear and tear on the highways. They point to the advantages in terms of business, educational opportunities and tourist opportunities in Peterborough.

The petition has already resulted in constructive meetings between the Minister of Transport, representatives of the Peterborough riding and representatives of the—

The Speaker: The hon. member's thoughts may have been composed but not with a view to brevity. I remind him that other hon. members also wish to present petitions. I had hoped that being near the end he might be quicker so we could get the others in. I know he will want to co-operate with the Chair in every respect.

Mr. Peter Adams: Mr. Speaker, not only is it difficult for me see you from here, I have difficulty hearing you as well.

These petitioners call upon parliament to re-establish VIA Rail service between Peterborough and Toronto.

Routine Proceedings

POISON CONTROL

Ms. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from people from the rural municipality of Etonia in Saskatchewan who wish to have the liquid strychnine for the control of Richardson's ground squirrel made available to agricultural producers.

[Translation]

RURAL ROUTE MAIL COURIERS

Mr. Claude Drouin (Beauce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, I am pleased to present a petition regarding rural route mail couriers in the riding of Beauce.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 39, 41 and 51.

[Text]

Question No. 39—**Mr. Charlie Penson:**

With regard to the Strategis website: (a) does the government track visitors to this website; (b) if so, what data does the government compile on each visitor; and (c) does the site disclose that it is tracking and compiling personal information on visitors?

Mr. John Cannis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.): Industry Canada: Strategis is a website intended to provide business and consumer information. It is assumed to be the most popular website of Industry Canada. Its users are primarily Canadians who consult the site to obtain information or transact business with the department.

Parts (a) and (b): Strategis uses web server log file analysis software to record the Internet protocol, IP, address of computers that have contacted the website: Strategis makes no attempt to associate particular IP addresses used in contacting the website to individuals. Strategis also occasionally uses a technology known as "cookies" to identify that a particular computer has returned to access the Strategis website more than once. Finally, Strategis occasionally invites users to provide views and opinions in the form of voluntary surveys. In no circumstance is any attempt made to link information obtained by these technologies to specific individuals.

However, from time to time, personal information such as name, phone number, e-mail or conventional address is required in order to respond to a particular client's question or to register in a secure area of Strategis where transactions are conducted. This information is supplied by the client on a voluntary basis or may be required by law. This information is retained as appropriate to circumstances.

Part (c): Strategis includes standard statements as required by the Privacy Act. These statements clearly describe the nature and extent of personal information being collected and ensure the rights of the individual are set forth. A web Privacy Statement summarizing the privacy and policy practices of the Strategis site is also available on every page of Strategis.

Question No. 41—**Mr. John Herron:**

With regard to the causes of mortality of mature wild Atlantic salmon in the Atlantic Ocean: (a) what programs does the government have in place to research these causes; (b) what is the budget for these types of programs; and (c) are these programs partnered in research and resource funding with other countries who are members of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization?

Hon. Herb Dhaliwal (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): With regard to the causes of mortality of mature wild Atlantic salmon in the Atlantic Ocean:

(a) Canada does not have programs in place currently to research these causes. Expenditures on Atlantic salmon assessment have concentrated on monitoring of returns to freshwater and on production from freshwater. Canada did however host an international meeting of scientists last June in Halifax to outline the research program that should be undertaken to research the causes of marine mortality. Some of the potential factors affecting marine mortality are reduced smolt quality, freshwater effects; adverse estuarine conditions; increased predation in the marine environment; and changes in ocean migration patterns. A number of these factors may be linked to changes in climate and/or oceanographic conditions. A research program to address these items will be long term and expensive and it will be supported as funds permit.

(b) There are no funds available to support research into this issue at the present time.

(c) The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization, NASCO, has agreed to develop ideas for a five year, internationally co-ordinated research program to identify and explain the causes of increased salmon mortality at sea and to develop measures to counteract the problem. Canada has already played a role in this initiative by working with other countries in the sharing and dissemination of scientific information, and it will be further discussed with the other NASCO parties in June 2001 at NASCO's annual meeting.

Question No. 51—**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:**

For each trip abroad by the president and CEO of the Canada Post Corporation between 1991 and the present: (a) what was the destination; (b) what was the itinerary; (c) what was the reason for the trip; (d) what was the total cost of the trip; and (e) what was the number of the accompanying persons?

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Canada Post has operated without government funding since 1989 and all its expenses are self-funded.

The president of Canada Post and corporate executives travel abroad on occasion to represent the corporation at various events, such as international postal conferences, meetings of the interna-

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tional postal union or meetings with customers. All such travel is paid for by the corporation and the details are considered privileged and commercially sensitive and cannot be specified.

[*English*]

Mr. Derek Lee: I ask, Mr. Speaker, that all other questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1530)

[*Translation*]

PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

The House in committee of the whole will now proceed to the consideration of Bill C-28, an act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act, the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act and the Salaries Act, Mr. Kilger in the chair.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Chairman: I am now ready to proceed with the consideration by the committee of the whole of Bill C-28.

[*English*]

The Chair has received 56 motions in amendment: 10 from the hon. member for Ottawa West—Nepean, 9 from the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, 28 from the hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt, 1 from the hon. member for Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, 1 from the hon. member for Elk Island, 2 from the hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, 1 from the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona and 4 from the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough.

All motions in amendment have been examined as to their procedural admissibility and the Chair finds them to be in order, with the exception of one from the hon. member for Saskatoon—

Humboldt and the one from the hon. member for Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan.

In the case of the amendment of the hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt, it is incorrect as to form. In the case of the amendment of the hon. member for Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, it is importing the provisions of another act into the bill which is beyond its scope.

Copies of all the receivable amendments are available at the table for interested members.

[*Translation*]

I want to take a few minutes to explain how the committee of the whole will be proceeding this afternoon.

Pursuant to the order made by the House on Monday, June 4, the committee will spend no more than one hour on consideration of clause 1. Then, the committee will proceed to subsequent clauses, which shall be subject to debate and amendment.

[*English*]

At exactly 5.15 p.m. I will interrupt debate to put all questions necessary to dispose of committee stage. This includes disposing of questions on all clauses and any amendments moved. I wish to alert all members that the bells are not rung in committee of the whole to warn members that the questions are being put.

All amendments received by the Chair will be put to the committee for a decision at the appropriate place in the bill, whether or not they have been debated. Members must be present to signify that they wish to have their amendments moved. If a division is requested, it is carried out as a standing vote and the names of members voting yea and nay are not recorded.

I would add, particularly today and particularly with this debate, in the spirit of co-operation and given our time limitations, that members could hold their remarks within a framework of approximately 10 minutes to give as many members as possible an opportunity to participate in the debate.

• (1535)

I am reminded that copies of the amendments will be ready in approximately five minutes.

Mr. Jim Pankiw: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. Could you please advise me as to which of my amendments you are ruling out of order?

The Chairman: The hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt has requested from the Chair the following information as to which of his amendments were not in order. It would be the one referenced 12819, the reason being that it did not refer to any specific clause.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

(On clause 1)

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Canadian Alliance) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 1, be amended by replacing lines 8 to 15 on page 1 with the following:

“54.1(1) Subject to subsection (2), the remuneration reference amount is equal to the amount of the annual salary, as of April 1, 2001, of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada.

(2) The remuneration reference amount shall be increased each year beginning on April 1, 2002, by the aggregate average percentage in the wage increases earned by the members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada.”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 1, amended by adding after line 15 on page 2 the following:

“(a) to members of Senate equal to 44”

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 1, be amended by replacing line 8 on page 1 with the following:

“54.1(1) Commencing in the 38th Parliament”

He said: Mr. Chairman, the amendment that I move with respect to the first clause of Bill C-28 ties into subsection 54.1(1) with respect to the commencement date of the remuneration reference amount.

The amendment would essentially post-date or stale-date the commencement of the bill and the effect it would have on members of parliament and members of the Senate and the rate of pay they would receive. The amendment would state specifically:

“54.1(1) commencing in the 38th parliament”.

It would take effect after the next election. Therefore members of parliament would not be put into the spectacularly unpopular position of conflict of interest by voting for themselves. In essence we would be setting the rate of pay for future parliaments.

It is a very straightforward amendment. It deals specifically with the starting date for the new rate of pay. It is consistent with the position taken by the Progressive Conservative Party in the campaign. It was in fact found in our platform document. I suggest the amendment would be much more palatable to Canadians in the sense that we would not be voting on our own rate of pay but setting the rate of pay for future parliamentarians.

It is consistent with the rest of the bill. It would also continue to be in sync with the remaining provisions of the bill which would take it out of the hands of future members of parliament and tie them into the Judges Act. Therefore I suggest the amendment should receive the support of all members.

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is the first opportunity I have had to speak to the bill in committee of the whole. I take the

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opportunity to comment on what is no doubt a very symbolic amendment by the hon. member, my vis-à-vis in the Conservative Party, the House leader of the Conservative Party.

● (1540)

I am sure the amendment he is offering to the committee of the whole is well intentioned, but I profoundly disagree with it for a number of reasons.

First, it is not at all part of the recommendations of the Lumley report. The Lumley commission and the commissions we have established following every election have never operated that way. We have had recommendations in the past about dealing with the state of parliament as it exists. Comparisons made in the Lumley report with the private sector, the public sector, the inflation rate and everything else, and I am looking at table 3.1 on page 12 of the report, refer to conditions as they are now. The scales are adjusted to the level we have at present and no other level. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to consider an amendment of this kind.

The hon. member proposed that we not vote an amendment to the compensation package that applies now. He said it would somehow not be appropriate. I believe the words conflict of interest were used. He said such an offering would be somehow better if it applied to a future parliament.

I profoundly disagree. I have always stood up for the rights and privileges of members of the House. I did so when it was somewhat more popular than it is now. I also did so when it was far less popular. I remember some pension issues several years ago when the fashionable thing was to say how much of a pay cut we should all take. I refused to participate in anything of that nature.

I have taken the position that if I am not worth the salary, my constituents will surely replace me with someone who is. That is why I disagree with the proposition. Debasing the currency is in no way helpful for any of us in the House or indeed for the high office we all hold.

The hon. member is not proposing to reduce the salary, so I will not overstate what he said. However on the business of applying it to a future parliament, that would make someone else accountable four years from now for the decision we make today. That is not correct either.

Members are free to agree or disagree with that proposition but it is one I believe in very firmly. I will make my decisions today. I will stand out there in front of the microphones or whomever and defend the decisions I have made. I will defend them before my constituents this weekend and so on because they are the decisions I made. I will not say that I made the decisions now and whoever is here four years from now can judge them. That would not be right. As a matter of principle it is wrong. I recognize that other people might feel differently about it but I do not. That is the right way of doing it.

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Finally, if we create that kind of condition what will occur four years from now? There will be a huge debate as to whether the previously voted increase should be knocked down by whoever may start a form of surenchère about the issue again.

That is no way to legislate. We do not legislate anything else that way and we should not legislate this matter that way. We should legislate it in a proper and responsible way. We are doing what the Lumley commission asked us to do. We are offering, by way of this clause, to put it in place.

The government therefore cannot support the amendment put forward by the hon. House leader of the Conservative Party. As I said, I am sure it is well-intentioned and properly put and so on. However I fundamentally disagree that it should be done and I cannot support the amendment for all the reasons I have just enunciated.

• (1545)

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Chairman, I would like to rise in support of the amendment put forward by the House leader for the Progressive Conservative Party. I am at a bit of a disadvantage because we have not yet received the amendments and I understood that in fact my House leader would be putting forward a similar or identical amendment to delay the effect of the bill until after the next election, into the next parliament.

Let me just respond briefly to the hon. government House leader. First he suggests that to delay the effect of this bill until after the next election would be inconsistent with the recommendations of the independent Lumley commission. How disingenuous, coming from the very same government House leader who has ignored the recommendation in that report for the beginning point of April of this year for the effect of this legislation and has dialled this back so that it is retroactively covered as of January. Talking about an unprecedented way of doing legislation, to begin to impose pay increases retroactive to six months before the bill is even considered is highly unconventional.

I want to point to a very ancient rule of this place and, I think, of our mother parliament, which is that we as members ought to absent ourselves from voting on matters in which we have a direct pecuniary interest. I refer the Chair to Standing Order 21 which states:

No Member is entitled to vote upon any question in which he or she has a direct pecuniary interest, and the vote of any Member so interested will be disallowed.

This rule has been in place since Confederation. The government House leader will no doubt argue that it is trumped by the precedent whereby parliament does in fact, through the appropriation power, approve its own pay. However it does not have to be this way. We do not have to continue to put ourselves in this conflict of interest.

I refer the government House leader to the fact that several years ago the congress of the United States, finding itself in precisely the same sort of conflict of interest, managed to elicit sufficient support to pass a constitutional amendment requiring that any potential pay increases in the U.S. congress would not come into effect until following an election. Why? Precisely because it would take the congresspersons, and in our case parliamentarians, out of this untenable conflict of interest and would allow the voters, upon whom we impose taxes to pay for these salaries, to determine whether or not they are appropriate.

This amendment reflects the policy of my party. It ought not to be a partisan issue, though, and all members should see this as a elegant way in which we can extricate ourselves from this untenable conflict of interest in which we find ourselves in every parliament.

I have one last point. The government House leader says that this would become an issue in the next election or after the election. The point is this: I do not think a single member of the House campaigned on a 20% pay increase. I do not think a single member raised, in a piece of election literature or an election speech or a visit to a constituent, the notion that one of the priority pieces of the business of the House would be an increase in compensation for members of parliament. This was not considered by the public when they gave the House a mandate. If we delay this pay increase as this amendment would seek to do it would allow Canadians, the people who pay the bills, to make a final determination.

I believe that as sensible people Canadians will make the right decision. They will look at the independent commission and say that most of those recommendations are sensible. We can trust Canadians to make the right decision in an election and the next parliament to respect that decision.

I speak in favour of this amendment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my party is against such an amendment, but supports the bill and the government initiative for a number of reasons.

First, this amendment was brought forward because of a potential conflict of interest. My colleague from the Progressive Conservative Party and the member for the Canadian Alliance have supported this proposal.

• (1550)

I think a mistake is being made here, because this bill is the logical follow-up to the process that got underway when the act respecting the compensation of the elected members of this House was passed.

Lawmakers decided that, after each parliament, an objective committee of experts would review the whole issue of compensation. Each time there is an election, this is done. Too often,

lawmakers, lacking courage and unable to explain to their fellow citizens how things really are, have put aside reports that had been paid for, reports that established, based on objective parameters, what the decent salary of a parliamentarian, of a minister and of the prime minister should be.

This is about following up on a report based on a high quality study that was done by people who are totally above reproach with regard to the conflict of interest issue, knowledgeable people who can be objective, people who have such wisdom that we in parliament should agree that their recommendations have to be implemented.

Therefore, there is certainly no conflict of interest in doing what the law says and following a process that was established by previous parliaments. I take absolutely no shame in taking part in the proper application of an act. Clause 1 states that the prime minister's salary should be equal to that of the chief justice of the supreme court. I tested the idea in the riding of Roberval, Quebec, which is not a rich riding. I met dozens of people, some of whom upbraided me, saying "You MPs will be voting yourselves a raise; you are going to have huge salaries". I checked, and then I asked each of them "Are you opposed to the Prime Minister of Canada earning the same as the chief justice of the supreme court? After all, the Prime Minister is the one who appoints the chief justice and, in my view, the responsibilities of the Prime Minister are greater and have more of an impact on the citizens of this country".

They all told me "Well, no, we thought that the Prime Minister earned more than the chief justice". All citizens know in their heart of hearts that there is one basic principle: if politicians had not been cowardly in the past, if politicians had had the courage to treat themselves as they treat the public, if politicians had had the courage to respect certain principles, the Prime Minister of Canada would never have earned less than the chief justice.

Similarly, ministers should earn more than their deputies. When I asked people in the riding of Roberval "Do you think it is right that a minister, who is responsible for a department, who has no job security, who is accountable day in and day out for his department, should earn less than his employees who are deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers?", everyone answered that this made no sense.

There is a place for common sense in legislation, and I think that this bill adopts principles to which we cannot object. The only reason for refusing to have anything to do with such a bill is lack of courage.

I will tell the House something: I do not think that anyone here is interested in going down in history over a question of salary. But everybody would like to leave this parliament with his or her head held high, saying "When the time came to make decisions, even

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the most politically difficult ones—by which I mean the ones that concern us personally—I had the courage to make them, and I made them with my head held high. I confronted public opinion and I cannot be faulted in any way".

Hon. members will recall a lot of demagoguery in the recent past around salaries, benefits and pension plans. We all know what the outcome was at the polls. I am convinced that the people of Roberval will respect me and my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois, because we had the courage to speak up and uphold the principles in which we believe.

We support the government, and we will be opposing the amendment, and all amendments, coming from certain opposition parties. We are not trying to score political points with MPs' salaries. It is too important an issue, and if our predecessors had shown more courage, we would not be where we are today.

• (1555)

[English]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Chairman, I have just a brief comment on this.

We do not support this amendment. We feel that the time to deal with this is now. I think we have an obligation to reflect on what the actual consequences of passing this amendment would be. They would be that we would have a debate for the next three and a half years about this salary package. I do not think that would be particularly healthy for the political process.

I think that this kind of thing was done just before an election and I think that is what this kind of measure was at one point intended for. It would make more sense to do it just before an election so that we would not have a three and a half year period in which all of the vicissitudes of politics could enter into the debate. I think it would be ill advised if it passed at this point.

Second, I would just like to say for the hon. member who said this would give constituents a chance to pass judgment that it would not really. They would just get a chance to pass judgment on who would get the new salary. They would not get a chance to pass judgment on whether or not that salary would be paid, so it is a bit of an illusion to suggest that somehow voters would get to render a decision on whether or not the salary package would be accepted. All they would be able to decide is who would receive the salary, not whether or not that was what would be paid.

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Chairman, I have several points of clarification.

I too support the amendment to make this effective after the next election, but more important, I have some questions on what the government House leader suggested are adjustments to salary and so on and so forth.

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There is the provision that basically every member of parliament would have to opt in to this. Would the government House leader or staff mind providing us with what the actual salary would be if members did not opt in? Would it be \$69,100 or \$109,500? That is the first question. Second, what would be the percentage of pension based on that? Would it be 4% or 3% on whichever dollar value? Third, would the non-taxable benefit still exist? I suppose you could answer that by saying whether or not it was \$69,000 or \$109,500. Last, I understand that the original recommended effective date of this was April 2001.

That is all I need. In other words, if members do not opt in, what is their status and where will they go from there?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, I will try to answer the several questions that have been asked. Arguably not all of them were on clause 1, but nonetheless I think they are of considerable interest to members of parliament.

On the issue that some hon. members raise as to what they believe to be an April 1 retroactivity clause in this, it is not in the report. Perhaps the mistake, if I can call it that, has occurred by some misreading that Bill C-12 will come into force retroactive to April 1. Maybe that is where it comes from.

In terms of why the date of January 1 was utilized for this bill, hon. members who were here last time, particularly those who were in House leadership positions and so on, will recall that the last bill took effect the date of the election prior. That is the way it was done before. We could have done exactly the same thing this time. That would have made it retroactive to November 27. It would have given retroactivity of one more month but would have essentially meant adjusting everybody's tax returns for last year. I felt it would be quite a burden, given the small change that it would make. In fact, the tradition would have meant to back it up further, not less than what it is now. That is the reason for that.

• (1600)

Again, I am using the last question first because I did not note and I am only going from memory. How does the bill apply to someone who does not opt in? I will preface my remarks by saying that I hope everyone does opt in, even those who feel obligated for whatever reason to vote against the bill, although I hope there are no one does.

I said that yesterday, I said in media reports and I repeat it again before my colleagues, because I think it is an important consideration. The new bill would not apply for people who did not opt in. In other words, they would remain at where they are now: the old cost of indexation formula, the old salary structure, the old tax free portion, the old accrual rate and everything that exists now.

Right Hon. Joe Clark: So two systems.

Hon. Don Boudria: Yes, if people do not elect the new system, they will have the old system, as the right hon. member said.

Right Hon. Joe Clark: Two classes. Two systems.

Hon. Don Boudria: With respect, Mr. Chairman, I do not think it is appropriate for us to start provoking each other on this. I do not think it is helpful.

First, I hope everyone opts in. If that occurs, there will not be a group of people who will have opted out. The people here are adults and they can do that even though I do not think they should.

The hon. member from Calgary started with the remark that it was disingenuous of me to have made my previous response. I will let colleagues judge on the appropriateness of this. He alleges that the standing orders somehow put us in a conflict of interest if we vote on the bill. The hon. member has now been here for some time and he knows that what he said is not correct. He knows that what the rules reference private bills, the incorporation of companies and so on in which members have private interests.

Speakers have ruled from time immemorial that our voting on estimates, supply and everything else that gives us our salary does not form part of that. We all know that around here. The hon. member I am sure knows that as well.

The hon. member said that we should extricate ourselves from the process. That is exactly what the recommendation of the Lumley Commission wants us to do, and that is exactly what the action of voting for this bill would create.

I could argue with the argument presented by the hon. member to the nth degree to show how inappropriate it was. In fact the mere act of extricating ourselves for another process would constitute a conflict of interest under the rules he has just enunciated. That is why he cannot use that argument. Yes, I am in favour of using objective measures in the future that would make it such that these kinds of votes and debates would become unnecessary. Mr. Lumley spoke extensively about that. However our initiating that process, or our voting on the bill today and all of these measures do not constitute a conflict of interest. That is not correct.

Mr. Randy White: With respect, Mr. Chairman, it is a ridiculous position to put the House of Commons in with two pensions. That is ridiculous.

• (1605)

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Chairman, I rise to support the Conservative amendment as well. The government House leader in rejecting the amendment said that he

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could not possibly support it because it would put off the enactment of the law until after the election. It would do something that had not been done before.

I would like to ask the government House leader whether there has ever in legislation before been an opt in clause?

An hon. member: Unprecedented.

Mr. Leon Benoit: It is unprecedented, Mr. Chairman, and I would like the House leader to respond to that.

The Chairman: I wonder if I might ask member for Lakeland to repeat his question please.

Mr. Leon Benoit: Mr. Chairman, the question is in regard to a comment made by the House leader in explaining why he had to reject the amendment which would put off the implementation of the pay increase until after the next election.

In rejecting it he said it had not been done before and the precedent was not there. I want to ask the government House leader whether the precedent is there for putting in place an opt in clause for legislation? I have never heard of a piece of legislation before which requires an opt in clause.

If it is a common thing, something that has been done, then I want to opt in to our supply day motion which would reduce taxes dramatically. I want in on that one.

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Chairman, I will gladly answer that. I do not know if the member was here between 1993 and 1997. I think he was elected in 1993. I am surprised he would not recall that there was an opt in provision—

Mr. Jason Kenney: An opt out?

Hon. Don Boudria: No, opt in, is the exact terminology. All members were deemed to be opted out of the pension plan. Each one of them had to sign to opt back in.

Mr. Brian Pallister: Two wrongs do not make a right.

Hon. Don Boudria: The hon. member says two wrongs do not make a right. It was not me who asked for that clause. I remember those who asked for that particular provision to exist.

Mr. Brian Pallister: Do you give us everything we ask for over here?

Hon. Don Boudria: Those provisions were asked for.

The Chairman: All questions will be made at the appropriate time when the member has the floor and will be made through the Chair, otherwise we will not facilitate the debate we are engaged in.

Hon. Don Boudria: In addition, I am asked are there any other opting in provisions? Hon. members may not want to consider that example. I recognize that perhaps it was not the best example, and members felt compelled at the time to ask for this for whatever reason and so on. It was a tough one, and I remember it. However there are other examples.

For instance, the Public Service Superannuation Act has opt in provisions. The Canadian Forces Superannuation Act has opt in provisions, and I notice the member is listening attentively, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act also has opt in provisions for the beneficiary of the particular emoluments in question.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Chairman, let me deal first of all with the Lumley report. It is a report, a recommendation to us. It is not a direction to the House. It does not absolve the House of its responsibility to take its own decisions. The government and members of the House cannot hide behind a report. It is nothing more than a report.

On the question that was raised by my colleague from Calgary Southeast, what the Lumley report does with respect to retroactivity is speak with eloquent silence. It gives no authority at all for the action that the government is taking.

If the government is saying that it cannot depart from the Lumley report on other matters, then it is inconsistent in pretending that on a question where the Lumley report is silent, as it is silent on this issue of retroactivity, the government can reward members of parliament for service already performed by adding extra income to each one of us. That is simply wrong. It is illogical. It cannot be defended in the context of the report and it certainly, if I may return to the question of the Lumley report generally, the Lumley report in any event is only a report to the House. It is not a directive that binds us.

We are people here with the opportunity to make our own individual and free decisions, and that is what should be done.

• (1610)

The dilemma we face and are trying to address with this particular amendment has nothing to do with the level of compensation. That is, as everyone knows, a very real problem. We are dealing however with a much more serious issue, which has to do with the sense so alive in the Canadian public that this is an institution with the primary interest of serving its own interests. To take the a very current matter, this is an institution that puts the interests of the pay of members of parliament ahead of the safety of children who might be assaulted by activities on the Internet. That is the concern.

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The issue is not about the level of contribution. The issue is about the degree to which we can win back respect for the House of Commons. The way to avoid the impression of being self-serving is to say that what we pass will not apply to us, that the pay raise we authorize will not apply to us. It will not apply until a later parliament. It is a very simple principle. It is a very strong principle. We should not be self-serving in the House. If we want to deal with and combat the cynicism alive in the land then we have to find a way in which we stop this image instead of reinforcing the image of being a self-serving institution.

Another point is that surely there should be a practice here that when we go to the electorate we should be honest with the people who vote for us. The government House leader did not talk in the last campaign about the salary increase. He did not, nor did I, nor did any one of us indicate that one of the first things we would do in the first six months we were back would be to enrich ourselves through the salary payment.

We have to be honest with the people of the country. To do it this way by bringing in a bill like this so early, giving it such priority and trying to sneak it through at the end of a session, simply undermines the kind of respect that can be won for a House of Commons of this kind.

I was rather surprised by my colleague and friend, the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona, who expressed his concern that there would be debate at the next election campaign. I recall an instance some years ago in which a party leader suggested that election campaigns were not the place to debate national issues. I did not think that was right then and I do not think it is right now. Obviously these issues should be debated in election campaigns. We should not resort to devices that would deny the opportunity for the people of Canada to debate issues which they consider to be of importance to them.

[Translation]

I would like to come back for a few moments to the matter of conflict of interest. I agree there is no conflict of interest in the strict meaning of the word, but as far as an apparent conflict of interest is concerned, there is certainly that. The election was in November. Now we are in June. Six months after the election, one of the first actions of this parliament is to give us way more money. This is guaranteed to be perceived as a major conflict of interest.

[English]

The very real problem we all face is the country's cynicism about public life. Why is that? Because our actions earn cynicism. The action of moving forward now on a salary increase as one of the first priorities of parliament will bound to be seen with cynicism. Is there a way to protect against it? Yes there is. The way to protect against it is to adopt the amendment proposed by my colleague from Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, which would

ensure that we in this parliament do not profit from the salary increase, only parliamentarians in subsequent Houses would profit from that increase.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, I fail to understand the member's logic. I feel that the member is speaking from an advantaged position. There are many of us in the House, and I would include myself as one, who are speaking from an advantaged position. I respect the member's position as the leader of the party.

• (1615)

The leader has a remuneration package, and I respect that package, that is in a different category than those of most other MPs and backbenchers in the House of Commons. I say respectfully, Mr. Chairman, through you to the member, that he should have that package.

I have been saying in the *Hill Times* for three or four years, as the right hon. member knows, that I think members of parliament are not properly remunerated. My constituents know it. I have said it publicly. I come from the private sector and quite frankly I am advantaged too. I say to the hon. member that there are many in the House who have families and who do not have the advantage the right hon. member has. The amount is irrelevant, whatever the advantage. I am not pointing to the amount.

The point I am making is that I do not think people in the House who are advantaged have any right to lead the way for those in the House who have economic challenges to meet in order to feed their children and put them through university and to pay their mortgages. I cannot identify a member in the House who would not, if he or she could, through the joy of working in the House, work for nothing. For the right hon. leader to single out that by having a proper remuneration we are not doing any other public policy initiatives I find a bit unfair.

Right Hon. Joe Clark: Mr. Chairman, I will be very brief.

First I want to point out that there are some part time nurses in the country who are earning less than \$20,000 a year as their total salary, less than the income here. Yes, I am advantaged. Yes, the hon. member is advantaged. Yes, members of parliament who had investments in golf courses are advantaged. Of course there are advantages, but that is not the issue.

The issue here is this: should parliament confer advantages on itself? That is the issue. What this proposal would do is say no, we do not confer advantages on ourselves, we establish a regime that will not apply until after there has been an election. That is the principle. I think the hon. member can understand it. It should be enshrined in the legislation of a parliament that respects its reputation, as much as we all should be defending and respecting the reputation of this parliament in a cynical age.

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Mr. Chairman, my question is for the right hon. member. I generally pass up opportunities to contribute to cynicism about politics because I do not think it does anyone any good, but I have a long memory.

I was here in 1981 when the right hon. member and his party voted for a pay increase that was retroactive. That was in the first year of the parliament and I do not remember any speeches like this at the time. There were only 10 people who voted against that raise and pension plan at that time. I was one of them, so I remember the debate very well.

Perhaps the right hon. gentleman could explain to us the difference between the position he took then and the position he takes now.

Right Hon. Joe Clark: Mr. Chairman, I remember those circumstances very well and I remember the reaction that was ignited in the country. There was a substantial decline in respect for this institution, in part as a result of the sense that we had been self-serving as a country. What we should do in this parliament is learn from past experience.

The public holds parliament on a short leash. The growth of cynicism in this parliament is one of the most serious issues we face. There is no doubt that action on pay contributed to that cynicism then and action on pay will contribute to that cynicism now unless we adopt the motion that has been brought forward by my colleague, which will say that this parliament has the determination and the foresight not to profit from its own acts. That is why we are proposing this amendment.

• (1620)

Mr. Ken Epp: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. I have a real concern. We have a whole pile of amendments and I have a very important one on clause 4. We have now used half of our time or more and we are still on clause 1. I wonder if we could move on.

The Chairman: Respectfully, the order made earlier this week provided that clause 1 would be debated for one hour. I will close that debate at 4.29 p.m. and then we will move to the other clauses subsequently until 5.15 p.m.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Saada (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to speak, but I cannot remain indifferent to the comments by the right hon. leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

When, over the weekend, I spoke in my riding about the increase in members' salaries, reaction was, naturally, a bit tongue in cheek at times, that is to be expected, but generally the people in my riding understand very well that our work deserves recognition.

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The people in the riding also understood very clearly that it was not our intention to underestimate or overestimate our work, and, that to avoid doing so, we asked a commission for recommendations.

When we consider these recommendations, matters of this importance, and I see someone with the experience of the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party trotting out rhetoric, putting the protection of child safety in the balance, when I hear him making digs about owners of golf courses and raising all sorts of questions about honesty, I cannot remain indifferent.

Honesty involves assuming one's responsibilities when one must and not making contradictions such as we have just seen. How can a person argue that there had to be a debate during the election campaign when their colleague is prepared to make a decision now on condition it be binding for those who come after? He has no interest in an election debate. He is interested in rhetoric. That is unacceptable.

I will not go on any longer on the subject. One thing is certain. Up to now, prior to the intervention by the right hon. leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, the level of debates around this table was excellent. I would like to go back to that debate.

[*English*]

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Chairman, I will try to be brief because obviously a lot of my colleagues want to join in the debate. As the member for Elk Island indicated, there are a number of amendments that we would like to get to and have people speak to.

I want to make a couple of points for the hon. government House leader who spoke earlier in defence of the legislation. First, he said, and I believe I would be quoting fairly accurately, that he hopes everyone will opt in and he hopes no one will vote against the legislation. With all due respect, I think there will be a number of people who will vote against it, perhaps not because they do not agree with different parts of the legislation but because they certainly disagree with the process through which this is arrived at.

It is important that the general public understands that a number of people have great difficulty with this process whereby, as a number of people have indicated, we debate, decide on and rush through a bill concerning our own remuneration. I fully expect, with all due respect, that some people will be voting against the process, against what we view as a very seriously flawed process.

Second, I want to briefly address the opt in clause. In responding to the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford, the House leader said something to the effect that if an individual does not opt in basically the entire existing remuneration package will stay in place for that member of parliament.

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I cannot believe that the government would proceed with something that would create an administrative and logistical nightmare for the people who govern and administer the wage and benefit packages for members of parliament. I cannot believe that we would put something in place that would affect not only our wages but our pensions and the rate they accrue at and in which some people would still have a tax free allowance and other people would not. To have individual situations of that nature is absolutely ludicrous. I think the general public needs to be aware of that. It really calls into question why the government would have an opt in clause like this for something as fundamentally altering as legislation dealing not only with wages but with pensions and other benefits.

• (1625)

As to the issue of this amendment, I certainly support the intent of it so that it only applies after the next election, such that, as a number of the Progressive Conservatives who put this forward have indicated, we would not be dealing with stuff for our own benefit unless we actually run in the next election and are re-elected. There would be an understanding among the general public that this would apply at that time.

I would question the right hon. member who just spoke. He should have had those types of concerns when he was a high profile cabinet minister with the Mulroney government. He could have changed it then. If he is so fundamentally opposed to the process, let me say that it could have been changed then, as it can be changed now.

It is absolutely ridiculous that the Prime Minister defends this by saying this is the way it has always been done and therefore it always has to be done that way. As the right hon. gentleman said, and I agree with him on this point, there is nothing preventing us from changing this. At this time we are a law unto ourselves, especially in dealing with issues that benefit ourselves.

There is a last point I would like to make, and then I will turn this over to colleagues who also want to address the bill. I would direct this to the government House leader. We have a different government than we did a year ago, but it is basically the same administration. I think most people understand that. A year ago we dealt with the pension and remuneration package put forward and the government sought to end the opt out or, in other words, to have everyone in the plan. I assume that was because it saw the error in having multiple different schemes for different MPs, with some in and some out.

Yet the reality is that we are perpetuating that error in judgment by having another situation whereby we could have MPs treated differently in regard to whether they opt in or stay out. Why was there a different rule last year where everyone was forced back into the pension plan in order to try to have uniformity when we now have a plan with all these people who could opt out?

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Chairman, in the last point raised by the hon. member he asked why the government forced—I think that is the word he used—people to come back into the pension plan a year ago. There were discussions that went on between people at that time. I said at the time—

An hon. member: I remember you wearing the pigs.

The Chairman: Order, please. We have approximately two minutes left in clause 1. The Chair and the vast majority of members are interested in the final comments in this debate and I would hope those who are taking freely of their time to go across the floor to one another will not be seeking the floor at a later time.

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Chairman, there were commitments made a little over a year ago to colleagues on both sides of the House which I said I would never breach and I will not. Notwithstanding the provocation, I will not breach those commitments. I live by the word I make. Even today, notwithstanding what is being said, I will not breach the commitment that I made to colleagues in the House. I will leave it at that on the score of this particular issue. The hon. member knows perfectly well to what I am referring.

In terms of the acceptability of the amendment, I do not believe this amendment makes the bill better at all. I will summarize what I said in the beginning for the benefit of all hon. members. I urge them to defeat that amendment. There is no such recommendation in the report. It is not in keeping with the tradition under which we have operated in the past. It does not make the bill better. It makes it worse. The bill works perfectly well. As it is now it works even better. This amendment is not progressive. As a matter of fact, in my view it is a step backwards.

• (1630)

[*Translation*]

The Chairman: Order, please. It being 4.29 p.m., pursuant to the order made on Monday, June 4, 2001, the committee of the whole will now proceed to the subsequent clauses of the bill.

[*English*]

The questions on all three amendments to clause 1 and on clause 1 itself will be put at 5.15 p.m.

(On clause 2)

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Canadian Alliance) moved:

That Bill C-28, in clause 2, be amended by replacing line 21 on page 1 with the following:

“commencing April 1, there shall be paid to”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 2, be amended by replacing lines 15 and 20 on page 2 with the following:

“is equal to 44 per cent of the remuneration”

He said: Mr. Chairman, the most significant amendment I have proposes that the salary increase for members of parliament and senators would be restricted to 2% as opposed to 20%. The rationale for that is that is what was proposed to the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

Furthermore, that future increases, which was my amendment to clause 1, would not be tied to the salary of the chief justice but rather would be the aggregate average percentage in the wage increases earned by members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada. This is a fair reasonable approach and something I believe the Canadian Taxpayers Federation has said would be fair and reasonable.

My first question to the minister is, how can he feel that it is justified for members of the House to take a 20% increase in salary when those same members have failed to provide a salary increase to taxpayers in the form of a substantive tax cut? I think taxpayers will find the taking of a 20% salary increase to be offensive based on the fact that they themselves have not been given that type of an increase in the form of a tax cut.

My second question is, because the bill proposes to extend a stipend to chairs and vice-chairs of committees that heretofore has not existed, does the minister not view that as just another extension of the ability of the Prime Minister to exert influence and control over his own members? Of course one of my amendments would be to repeal that stipend.

My third question for the minister deals with the opt in clause. Does he not see that as somewhat political grandstanding? In effect, what that would do is set up a two tier salary system for members of parliament. Does the minister feel that some members of the opposition, who may choose to not opt in, deserve less salary than members of his own caucus? I am thinking in particular of the member who helps his constituents depending on whether or not they vote Liberal and the member who makes up allegations of racism in British Columbia.

Regrettably, my amendment, which dealt with changing the retroactivity to go back only to April 1 as opposed to January 1, was ruled out of order. I had to refer to it in general because there was not a specific clause to refer to. Does the minister not think that the retroactivity is excessive?

Finally, because some members are curious about this, I would like the minister to clarify the opting out provisions. If some members opt out, then seek re-election and are re-elected, would they remain opted out or would they be in? The bill does not seem

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to be clear on that. It states that elected members would be in, but what about members who previously were members?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, I wish to respond to a number of the questions raised by the hon. member.

He is advocating that we base ourselves on other formula for establishing what the salary increase of members of parliament should be. It gives me a good occasion to raise something which I had not before. I draw to the attention of all hon. members page 12 of the Lumley commission report, table 3.1.

• (1635)

The consumer price index between 1991 and 2000 has increased by 21.6%. The average industrial wage increase was 23.6%. The general public wage settlement was 15.2%. The general private wage settlement was 22.4%. The Conference Board survey of wage increases was 31.9%. Members of parliament increases were 6.0%.

I do not know if the hon. member had an opportunity to read that table. If he had, he would know that what he is saying would probably result in a greater increase than the one we have now.

Second, let us look back at a few things historically. I shared some of this with a few colleagues across the way, albeit not all of them but a few. I will give an example, and it is not the be all and end all of examples, but it is certainly one.

In 1963 a judge of the federal court earned \$21,000 a year and an MP earned \$23,700, 12% more. In 1971 a judge was up to \$36,000 and an MP at \$33,000. These are the MP salaries grossed up, assuming that everything would be taxable, so that we can compare apples and apples. In 1980 a judge was at \$70,000 and an MP was at \$66,000. We were still reasonably close. In 1992 a judge was at \$155,000 and an MP was at \$106,000. In 2000 a judge was at \$179,000 and an MP was at \$108,000. From 1992 to 2000 the MP's salary had gone up \$1,900 a year and the judge's salary had gone up \$25,000.

In response to a question from the hon. member from Calgary, I indicated that Bill C-12 was retroactive to April 1, 2001. That is not correct. It is April 1, 2000 that the retroactivity provision of Bill C-12 applies. What that does is it gives a salary now, April 1, 2001, of judges at \$204,600 and MPs at \$109,000. Today an MP earns 45% of the salary of a judge. Even with this so-called generous increase, MPs will still only make 55% of the salary of a judge. That is how far the salary structure had fallen behind.

Yes, we could say that the amount is excessive. We can say all these things. They are easy to say, a lot easier than defending the bill perhaps, but it does not mean they are right. What is proposed in the bill I believe is right. The Lumley commission proposed the

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amount. We did not deviate from the 20%. We did not say that it should be 25% or 30%. Using some of the indices it should have perhaps been higher. Using the index that the hon. member wants to propose perhaps would have been lower, but we used the objective one produced in the report. That is why we used that one.

Why are we offering chairs and vice-chairs greater remuneration than others? They are positions with greater responsibility, as are the positions of the House leaders, the leaders of each party and anyone else who holds some of these offices. It is not a matter of whether the Prime Minister appoints them. I could turn around and ask the member about his leader appointing the vice-chairs, which would be equally silly.

What about the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party then allegedly appointing the chairs and vice-chairs in the Senate, and so on? We could spread that nonsense all over the place. It does not accomplish anything. The fact still remains that a chair and a vice-chair of a committee are positions that are, according to the commission, worthy of further remuneration, which is something that exists at the provincial level in many if not most of the provinces in Canada.

In terms of the opt in clause, hon. member wants to know if that means that some members are not deserving of the salary? No. I think all colleagues in the House deserve the salary. That is why I said a while ago, and I do not know whether the member was in attendance when I said it, that I hope everyone will opt in. I also hope that all members will vote for the bill. However, I repeat that even if they vote against it I hope that they opt in anyway because in my view they are still worth the salary.

• (1640)

On the retroactivity, the hon. member asked why we used that date. I answered that in a previous question. It goes back to January 1 because in past reports it went back to the date of the last election. I did not go quite that far back because it was only a few days prior to the beginning of the calendar year and it caused probably greater aggravation than it was worth. So I stopped after January 1.

This report is about the present parliament which started after the last election. That is why that date was used.

Finally, if members do not opt in, they remain opted out. It does not change after the next election.

Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Chairman, I welcome the opportunity to add my comments to those made thus far on this bill.

I begin from the position that there is room for principle on all sides of this debate. I begin from the position that every member of the House will use what principles they have to make their decision on this bill. However, we were not born with principles, and some

would argue that the very fact we are debating the bill is evidence that we have do not them. I do not take that position either. I take the position that I have principles, so as a principle based member of the House I will try to use those principles to make my decision on how I vote on the bill.

I begin by sharing with the members of the House some of the experiences I have had which have developed those principles in me. One fundamental principle I have is that I believe very strongly in equal pay for equal work. I believe that is a fundamental principle that we should all stand for in the House and that we should support wholeheartedly with every ounce of strength we have.

In my first occupation I was given the opportunity to work as a school teacher. We did not receive pay differentiated on the basis of our sex, race, creed, colour or any other factors. We received equal pay for equal work based on our training and educational background. That was a fundamental principle of my experience as a school teacher. Then I entered the private sector.

As a person who started a small business from scratch, I employed people on the basis of the fundamental principle, which should apply in the private sector and unfortunately sometimes does not, that people should be paid equally on the basis of their work regardless of any other factor. When replacing a position for example, one should compensate that person similarly or identically based on his or her equal ability to offer work and skill to a small business venture.

In the public sector such a principle is well understood. We abide by this principle in the public sector in every respect. We must support the principle of equal pay for equal work. That principle is something I believe is very important to all of us.

The question then becomes what principles are greater than that one? What principles are more important to us in the House than that one? If there are principles of more significance to us as members of the House, then let us speak to them through this bill.

The bill contains a clause which allows members to opt in. What that does is create two classes of members not differentiated on the basis of skill, work ethic, what they offer to the House or to the members of their constituencies, but solely on the basis of how they choose to listen to their principles and whether feel that the bill is in keeping with their fundamental beliefs.

If members of the House feel very strongly that the bill is contrary and contradictory to their fundamental principles, they must vote against it and must therefore opt out.

Let us examine why they must opt out. Because it is in the bill. Only for that reason must members be put in the position of having to make the choice as to whether they do or do not receive the benefits that other members do. In other words, what we are doing is debating a bill which penalizes those of principle.

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• (1645)

It fundamentally detracts from the compensation of some members of the House based on one factor and one factor only: their personal principles, and that is wrong. It is wrong to debate a bill which contains a clause which creates two classes of members of parliament. That sends the wrong message to the people of the country.

As a member of our local chamber of commerce and as a participant in the national chamber of commerce, I know that small businesses in the private sector united together and initiated, through tremendous effort from their collective members, the idea of promoting equal pay for equal work across Canada. I understand how much work is involved in that. I understand the collective sacrifices made by volunteers to try to create a level playing field and provide an opportunity for all Canadians to share the benefits they deserve to receive from their work.

I understand what this opt in, opt out situation does and so should the members opposite. It sends a completely flawed message to the people of Canada. It says that there can be two different classes of members of parliament based on their fundamental principles. That is wrong.

The government House leader has repeatedly said that he hoped everyone would opt in. He said it with a palpable sense of guilt because he knows, as thinking members of the House must know, that this opt in clause is fundamentally flawed. I invite the House leader to explain if it is not flawed, why it is legitimate and valid. I invite him to tell us what the purpose of it is beyond the fact that it will simply allow members of principle to be punished financially for expressing their views on this bill.

Is there some fundamental greater principle to be served when we do not have the option in the House to opt out of any other piece of legislation? He uses the example of superannuation, but he knows full well that benefits are received in another form if not going into superannuation. That is not a legitimate example.

Is there a fundamental principle served by the presence of the opt in clause in the legislation? I ask him to address that question.

I believe that this particular clause in the bill sends the message that opposition has its price. It is too cute by half. It will be seen by Canadians to be a ploy to suppress opposition rather than encourage debate on principle. For that reason it is a sham and a shame. It creates a crisis of principle because it forces individual members of parliament to participate in what is essentially a game that none of us can win. It is a game which creates two classes of members of parliament for no legitimate reason whatsoever.

With the absence of this clause there would be opportunity for fundamental debate that could take place on significant principles on the differences we have, which are honest and legitimate. The

reality is that this clause creates a phony debate. It is a diversionary tactic.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Stand by your choice. It is a personal choice.

Mr. Brian Pallister: Mr. Chairman, the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism may want to add some comments. I believe if she were in the private sector she would have been fired long ago. I believe she would have been fired, dismissed, sacked and gone. If she would like to add—

The Chairman: May I remind colleagues that in Committee of the Whole members are given less flexibility when it comes to relevance. In the short time left, I am sure members will want to speak to the debate on clause 2.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 2, be amended by replacing line 20 on page 2 with the following:

“is equal to 45.8 per cent of the remuneration”.

He said: Mr. Chairman, it is certainly a rare occasion for me to find myself in agreement with the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt. This day will go down in infamy.

Our party has an amendment which is similar, not numerically similar but in the same ballpark, and it would have the effect of reducing the raise from 20% to 10%. We do this because we feel that this is the kind of raise that could be justified given certain indicators.

• (1650)

We do not understand the rationale for a 20% increase. We think a lot of Canadians feel likewise. We understand the rationale in a technical sense because the government has paid the Prime Minister a certain amount equal to the chief justice, then it has worked its way down in terms of percentages and arrived at a certain number, and that number is a 20% increase over what members are now making. We understand how it got there, but we share the feeling of a lot of Canadians that a 20% raise is incomprehensible to them when they know what kind of percentage increases they are being offered at the bargaining table. It is for this reason we signal our intention that we would be much happier with a 10% raise, and feel much more comfortable with it than a 20% raise.

In doing this we are acting in a way that is somewhat contradictory in a sense, but I think we are acting in that contradictory way because a lot of us have said we need to have this taken out of our hands and have someone else make the recommendation. We have a commission before us and all of us here have moved amendments to change the recommendations that have been made by this independent body, so we are all a bit guilty of this.

The government has not brought in a bill that is identical to what Mr. Lumley and the hon. member for Elk Island recommended. There are Alliance amendments, Conservative amendments and NDP amendments. All of us want to tinker with this independent

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recommendation, each in our own way. For me it just points out the reason why the part of the bill that takes it out of our hands forever is a good part of the bill, because we are setting up a mechanism now with which we will not be able to tinker in the future.

The fact of the matter is that it does not matter how independent a report it is and how well written it is, when it gets to the floor of the House we will all have our opinions on what should be changed in it. Therefore, it becomes politicized no matter how hard we try not to politicize it.

I say this by way of wanting to put on the record one more time the fact that we support the way in which the bill finally does what the NDP has been asking for for many years, and on the basis of which sometimes in the past we have voted against salary increases because we have said that this does not remove it from us, and it means that we would have to go through this again. Finally, this time we have a process by which we will not have to go through this again.

I would warn members that if the independent commission that settles judges salaries and if judges salaries start to go through the roof, there will be politics again, because we always have the possibility of changing the mechanism. In other words, we never completely evade responsibility for this. However, I think we go some way toward creating a situation in which we will not have to have this kind of tension again. Hopefully we will not have the kind of silliness that the member for Portage—Lisgar refers to. I and my party agree with him and others who have criticized the government for bringing in this opting in clause.

I just wanted to put on the record that all of us are tinkering with the commission report. We are very good at pointing out when the government does it or when somebody else does it. However, the Conservatives have disagreed with the provision to pay chairs and they have brought in amendments on that score. The Alliance has other concerns about the report. We are all guilty of tinkering with the report.

We have the ability to change the report. The government has the ability to change it by virtue of using its majority. We all have the ability to change it by agreeing with each other. I would urge members to consider the wisdom of having a 10% increase as opposed to a 20% increase.

(Progress reported)

* * *

• (1655)

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Acadie—

Bathurst, Fisheries; the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River, Immigration; the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, Employment Insurance.

* * *

PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

The House resumed consideration in committee of the whole of Bill C-28, an act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act, the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act and the Salaries Act, Mr. Kilger in the chair.

Mrs. Betty Hinton (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Chairman, I listened very carefully today and I read the report thoroughly. There are parts of that report that I can agree with wholeheartedly. I agree completely with the abolition of the tax free portion of it. I agree with the independent body making the decision.

What I am having severe trouble with, and what was just confirmed by the House leader, is that if we choose to opt out because this is unpalatable to us, then we remain out forever more. That is ridiculous and is an unfair position to put anyone in.

I take exception to some of the things that were quoted today as well because they were inaccurate. One thing I take exception to is the fact that I can stand here and say in all honesty that I had no idea that this was coming forward. I have not been an MP for six years prior, and I did not know there had not been a raise in the last six years. It is reasonable to assume that if there has not been one in the last six years, it would come forward this year.

We also have the problem that by law it would be reviewed within the first six months of parliament. This does not come as a huge surprise to people who have been here before, but it does come as a huge surprise to myself.

I would also like to point out that some of the arguments which have been made regarding reducing it are valid arguments. I would accept a reduction. I have no difficulty with that at all. However, I do like to deal in realities and some of the things reported in the report stated that the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, a unionized group, paid \$100,084 for the president, and that the director of Canadian affairs of the Sheet Metal Workers' International Association received \$161,000 a year. Therefore, in terms of putting us on level with working people, these are working people.

I would like to see today a resolution to this that is fair, and I do not see that forthcoming. If we are going to leave people in a position where they have to make a choice between accepting this forever more, in the hope that they are going to serve for 10 or 15 more years, or opting out is a very unfair way of doing things. I really resent the way the legislation is being put forward.

Government Orders

If I was assured that opting out of this pay raise would allow me to opt out of other legislation, I could name them on my fingers in five seconds. My constituency would opt out of the gun legislation, the things that are sitting in front of us today about cruelty to animals and employment equity. I come from a ranching area and branding is an everyday part of life there, as is castration for animals. If I have the option, by opting out of this and I am allowed to opt out of other legislation, I will do so today.

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, a few members have spoken, so perhaps I could respond to some of the concerns that they have raised.

The hon. member from Manitoba who spoke some while ago, talked extensively of this business of equal pay for equal work. It goes a lot further than that. It also goes to equal pay for work of equal value. My colleagues on this side of the House believe in both those propositions, not just the first.

However, opting not to take a benefit personally does not constitute unequal treatment under the law. Everyone knows that. Opting to give one's personal funds to a charity does not mean that someone becomes disadvantaged under the law, because one has voluntarily given up that money. The hon. member asked "When did I ever become a charity?" That is an excellent question.

For example, if one opted then to give money back to the public treasury, which certainly one has the opportunity of doing, does not mean that person has suffered mistreatment by the government as a result of that.

• (1700)

That is not an appropriate proposition. The member is really mixing up propositions. Accepting or not accepting a benefit does not constitute inequity.

I refer to the fact that the bill is structured in essentially the same way as the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act, the amendments thereto, which were designed after the 1993 election at the request of members of the House. Not to put too fine a point on it, the members who made that request were not sitting on this side of the House. It was structured in the same way. There was an opting in provision where everyone was deemed to have been opted out and one had to opt in in order to be part of the pension. It is exactly the same principle.

Second, on the Public Service Superannuation Act, the hon. member said it is not the same because one would get the benefit another way. No, it is not so. A person would get their own contributions another way but not the employer's contributions. The employer's contributions are provided by virtue of adhering to the package. One does not get all the benefits another way by not participating in that. Of course I also gave other examples, such as

the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act and so on. I am sure there are several others as well.

The hon. member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys said that there had been no salary increase over the last six years. That is not what I said, with respect. I said that the salary increase for members of parliament over the last 11 years had been a total of 6%. That is where the number six came in, not that there had been no increase over the last six years.

How did the salary get to be this way? Perhaps we should take a minute and discuss that so members will understand why the salary structure got off kilter the way it did. I do not think there is any doubt that it did, otherwise members would not see a situation like we have now, where I as a minister am not only paid much less than my own deputy minister but an assistant deputy minister has now caught up with a minister. It has become that off kilter over the years. I am talking about public servants and not about people in the private sector, to use the example raised by the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt.

It got that way because of two reasons. First, there were two freezes, one of them around 1985 or so and the second one in the late eighties. That combination meant that the salary was frozen for something like six out of eight years.

Second, when the legislation was designed in the late seventies there was a rather curious clause in it, which said that every year there would be a cost of living adjustment minus 1%. Therefore, in years where there was no government imposed freeze, members got an increase in the cost of living minus 1%.

Members had the combination of those two factors acting one in tandem with the other, which caused what we have now. For example, if the inflation rate was 10%, a member got back 9% and recovered 90% of the inflation. When there was an inflation rate of 2% and there was a recovery of 1%, members lost 50% of the inflation.

All of these things have occurred progressively. Many of them occurred even before I came here. Heaven knows I have been here a long time, but some of them even predate my arrival, namely, the structure and how members got to the cost of living formula that we have there. That is how it got so off kilter over so many years and I do not think anyone would deny that it is.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to make a few remarks in committee of the whole on Bill C-28 concerning the salaries of the members of the House of Commons. This bill will allow elected members to decide whether or not to receive the salary increase.

Government Orders

No member of this House should be able to say he is against this bill and then laugh all the way to the bank to cash his paycheque once the government party, with the support of the Bloc, has passed Bill C-28.

Members will remember that during the 35th parliament, Reform members boasted that they would not be joining the members pension plan because they thought it was way too generous. At the time, all the members who were under the leadership of the Leader of the Opposition rejected the pension plan for members.

• (1705)

After the 36th parliament, and now in the 37th parliament, Alliance members have all adhered to the members' pension plan, one after the other. The bill before us basically says "If you agree, you sign the form and you will get it".

The problem with the Canadian Alliance Party is that its caucus remains very divided. Half of its members want the raise, but because of the party line or because of a directive from the party, caucus members are stuck with the instructions that were issued.

This is evidenced by the fact that yesterday, at second reading, the Alliance members who left the caucus—and are now sitting along the curtains—voted in favour of Bill C-28, because they are not bound by a decision made by the leadership of the caucus.

Again, I tell Canadian Alliance members "Be honest, be transparent. If you vote against the raise, I hope that later you will not sign the form and cash your cheque at the bank".

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Carleton, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Chairman, my congratulations to you for your remarkable ability to remember everyone when we are sitting in different seats.

I want to return to what the government House leader was saying earlier. He expressed concern about the fact that he now earns less than his assistant deputy minister. Obviously Canadians' hearts will bleed at the thought that the minister would be earning less than one of the highest paid civil servants in the country.

I want to point out that it is not a unique situation. We find junior officers in the Canadian military who earn less than chief warrant officers, based on the fact that the non-commissioned officer has some form of superior expertise.

I would like to ask the government House leader some questions which relate to opting out. First, am I to understand that the extra stipends paid to MPs who serve in some post or capacity other than as members of parliament, for example as chair or vice chair of a committee or as a party leader or a House leader, can opt out of one of those or are they mandatory without an opting out clause?

The second question relates to opting out permanently. I gather it would mean that in the next election should someone on this side opt out, the voters would know that the Liberal candidate opposing him or her, for example, would be paid more following the election than that incumbent MP, and that in future elections that difference would grow over time.

Does the inflation rate clause mentioned in his previous comments apply in perpetuity as well for those who opt out? Can we assume that over time the differential will grow and grow?

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Chairman, I believe that enthusiasm is growing in the Chamber. The hon. member asked a few interesting questions. I will forget about the editorial comment at the beginning.

This is a very important clause and it is important for the House to have the information. The bill is structured in such a way that if members do not opt in, they do not opt in to anything. They are opted out of extra emolument for the chair, vice chair, extra pay for anything, grossing up the increased part of salary and so on and so forth. If one opts out, one opts out of everything.

The hon. member asked if all of the provisions of the existing package continue. The answer is yes. For instance, if the cost of living increase was 2% next year and an hon. member did not participate in the program, the hon. member would get 2% less 1% or a 1% increase.

• (1710)

The hon. member is right in saying that the disparity could grow. Of course that really depends on the size of the inflation rate. The irony is that if the inflation rate is higher proportionately the member would lose less than if the inflation rate is lower.

Mr. Ken Epp: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. I believe it is very important for members to make informed decisions. In view of the fact that after the vote is called I will not be able to rise on a point of order, I would like to ask that when the votes are called on the amendments there be a brief statement of what the amendment actually does. Otherwise I believe members will be voting from a base of ignorance.

The Chairman: With respect to my colleague from Elk Island, we are under an order of the House. Unless the House chooses to do otherwise, I will not be complying with his wishes.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Chairman, I see my friends across the way think that ignorance is bliss and that those who have been very attentive in the debate have suddenly arrived. That is nice to see.

I have a couple of questions for the government House leader. First, did the minister himself not publicly say just a few days ago that he was opposed to inserting an opting out provision in the bill?

Government Orders

Now he is here defending it. I wonder what changed his thinking in this respect.

Second, with respect to the apparent perpetuity of such a decision, how would that work in the next parliament if there is to be another compensation commission and legislation is passed at that time? Or would there be changes that track judicial salaries? Would they apply to people who opt out at this point? Or again is that in perpetuity?

Colleagues opposite are saying to read the bill. The bill has been on the table for about two days and we have a couple of hours in committee, which is not a normal opportunity to read the bill and get expert external advice.

The bill is silent on this matter and this is committee of the whole where we have an opportunity to ask substantive questions.

I would also like to ask the government House leader about the accrual rate for the pension plan. My understanding was that chairman Lumley verbally suggested that the benefit accrual rate be 2.5% in order for the value of the pensions to be neutral given the increase in the pensionable salary. Could the minister confirm that? If that indeed was the intention of the commission, why does the bill propose a benefit accrual rate of 3%?

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Chairman, I will try to respond rather rapidly. I will start with the last point on the accrual rate.

The accrual rate is reduced from 4% to 3%. Furthermore, the number of years necessary in order to arrive at the maximum contribution is increased from 19 to 25. What we have proposed is certainly no more generous than what officials are generally offered in the private sector. What we are offering here is a condition. In the present House of Commons there is a grand total of 5 members who have 25 years of service, so the chance that someone would actually get a maximum pension is 5 over 301 under the proposal we have made here. This does not make for an overly generous pension scheme.

Second, given that the amount is taken on the larger structure, in order to get a pension MPs will in fact now have to contribute \$2,900 more per year in premiums from here on in. In terms of government dollars spent for pension dollars out, this reduces the output proportionately considerably, because it is going more and more in that direction with the private sector.

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

The Chairman: It being 5.15 p.m., pursuant to order made on Monday, June 4, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and to

put forthwith all questions necessary to dispose of the committee of the whole stage of the bill.

• (1720)

[*English*]

Shall Amendment No. PC-1 in the name of the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Ken Epp: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. Since voting on this stuff is such a charade, I suggest that all motions to amend that have a G in front of them simply be deemed passed and all others defeated and then it is done.

The Chairman: Respectfully, that is not a point of order.

Is it agreed that I deem Amendment No. PC-1 negated on division?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Chairman: Then we will have a division.

• (1725)

(Yeas, 52; Nays, 194)

The Chairman: I declare the amendment lost.

We will now proceed to the amendment of the hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt, identified as Amendment No. CA-2.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Chairman: The committee will now proceed to the taking of the vote.

• (1730)

(Yeas, 5; Nays, 65)

The Chairman: I declare the amendment lost.

The next question is on Amendment No. CA-2.1. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Amendment No. CA-2.1 negated)

The Chairman: Shall Clause 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Government Orders

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 1 agreed to)

The Chairman: The next question is on Amendment No. CA-3. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Amendment No. CA-3 negated)

The Chairman: The next question is on Amendment No. CA-4. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Chairman: The committee will now proceed to the taking of the vote.

(Yeas, 8; Nays 30)

The Chairman: I declare the amendment lost.

• (1735)

The next question is on Amendment No. NDP-1. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: On division.

The Chairman: The committee will now proceed to the taking of the vote.

(Yeas, 46; Nays, 89)

The Chairman: I declare the amendment lost.

Shall clause 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 2 agreed to)

The Chairman: Shall clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 3 agreed to)

• (1740)

(On clause 4)

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Canadian Alliance) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 39 on page 2 with the following:

“(a) the Speaker of the Senate, 15 per cent;”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 44 on page 2 with the following:

“20.4 per cent;”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 2 on page 3 with the following:

“Commons, 10.7 per cent;”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing lines 4 and 5 on page 3 with the following:

“the Whole House of Commons, 4.3 per cent; and”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 8 on page 3 with the following:

“mons, 4.3 per cent;”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by deleting lines 9 to 24 on page 3.

He said: Mr. Chairman, I do not know whether it is within your ability to do this but of all my amendments to clause 4 there is only one on that I wish a recorded vote. If you wish to group the others and are able to do that it may expedite the process.

The Chairman: Would the hon. member indicate on which amendment under his name he would seek a recorded division?

Mr. Jim Pankiw: Amendment No. CA-10.

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to negative on division the following amendments in the name of the hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt: Amendment No. CA-5, reference 12825; Amendment No. CA-6, reference 12826; Amendment No. CA-7, reference 12827; Amendment No. CA-8, reference 12815; and Amendment No. CA-9, reference 12829?

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Amendments Nos. CA-5 to CA-9 inclusive negated)

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Canadian Alliance): moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 11 on page 3 with the following:

“Senate or of the House of Commons who has been elected by secret ballot (other”

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Government Orders

The Chairman: The committee will now proceed to the taking of the vote.

• (1745)

(Yeas, 64; Nays, 109)

The Chairman: I declare the amendment lost.

We will now proceed to Amendment No. CA-10. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Chairman: The committee will now proceed to the taking of the vote.

(Yeas, 21; Nays, 70)

The Chairman: I declare the amendment lost.

• (1750)

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by deleting lines 9 to 16 on page 3.

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Amendment No. PC-2 negatived)

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, on page 3, be amended by deleting lines 9 to 24.

He said: Mr. Speaker, since we have already voted on identical wording twice I suggest we just let it go on division.

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Amendment No. CA-10.1 negatived)

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Canadian Alliance) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 19 on page 3 with the following:

“Senate or of the House of Commons who has been elected by (other)”

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Amendment No. CA-10.2 negatived)

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by deleting lines 17 to 24 on page 3.

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Chairman: The committee will now proceed to the taking of the vote.

(Yeas, 20; Nays, 55)

The Chairman: I declare the amendment lost.

If I understood the earlier intervention by the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt, under whose name the following amendments stand, he would not seek a division. Would it be agreeable to the committee to negative on division Amendments Nos. CA-11 to CA-23 inclusive?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Canadian Alliance) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 29 on page 3 with the following:

“multiplied by 4.3 per cent.”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 39 on page 3 with the following:

“of a salary under the Salaries Act, 19.4 per”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 43 on page 3 with the following:

“Senate, 9.8 per cent;”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 46 on page 3 with the following:

“ment in the Senate 6.2 per cent;”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 3 on page 4 with the following:

“tion in the Senate, 6.2 per cent;”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 6 on page 4 with the following:

“3.1 per cent;”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 9 on page 4 with the following:

“1.9 per cent;”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 12 on page 4 with the following:

“Commons, 20.4 per cent;”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 19 on page 4 with the following:

“the House, 12.2 per cent;”

Government Orders

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 23 on page 4 with the following:

“Commons, 5.4 per cent;”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 29 on page 4 with the following:

“the House of Commons, 3.1 per cent;”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 32 on page 4 with the following:

“Commons, 10 per cent; and”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 36 on page 4 with the following:

“sons in the House of Commons, 4.2 per”

(Amendments Nos. CA-11 to CA-23 inclusive negated)

● (1755)

The Chairman: Shall clause 4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division

(Clause 4 agreed to)

The Chairman: Shall clause 5 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 5 agreed to)

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. There being no amendments for clauses 6 to 10, would it be the will of the committee to adopt those on division?

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt clauses 6 to 10?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clauses 6 to 10 inclusive agreed to)

(On clause 11)

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Canadian Alliance) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 11, be amended by adding after line 22 on page 7 the following:

“(6) A copy of each regulation proposed to be made under subsection (4) shall be laid before each House of Parliament before it is made.”

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Chairman: The committee will now proceed to the taking of the vote.

(Yeas, 16; Nays, 46)

The Chairman: I declare the amendment lost.

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Chairman, the following amendments are in the government’s name: Amendments Nos. G-1 to G-7 inclusive. They are technical or editorial amendments, in general correcting the French or correcting references to other acts or bringing sections into agreement with each other. They apply to clauses 11, 14, 16, 19, 21 and 23 of the bill.

If it is the will of the committee, the government would be satisfied if Amendments Nos. G-1 to G-7 inclusive were adopted on division. Then we might also consider adopting clauses 11 to 23 inclusive on division.

The Chairman: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

● (1800)

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 11, be amended by replacing, in the French version, line 40 on page 6 with the following:

pour tenir compte des modifications apportées

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Amendment No. G-1 agreed to)

The Chairman: Shall clause 11, as amended, carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 11, as amended, agreed to)

(On clause 14)

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 14, be amended

(a) by replacing, in the French version, line 4 on page 8 with the following:

sur les allocations de retraite des parlemen-

(b) by replacing, in the French version, line 22 on page 8 with the following:

(2) L’alinéa a) de la définition de «indemni-

Government Orders

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Amendment No. G-2 agreed to)

The Chairman: Shall clause 14, as amended, carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 14, as amended, agreed to)

(On clause 16)

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 16, be amended by replacing, in the English version, line 1 on page 9 with the following:

Contributions

9. (1) Commencing on January 1, 2001, a member shall, by reservation from

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Amendment No. G-3 agreed to)

The Chairman: Shall clause 16, as amended, carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 16, as amended, agreed to)

(On clause 19)

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 19, be amended by replacing lines 29 to 42 on page 11 with the following:

respect of time spent as a member

(a) on or after January 1, 1992 and before January 1, 2001, or any period of pensionable service in respect of which an election under section 10 has been made during that period, a person is, on ceasing to be a member, deemed to have one year of pensionable service to the credit of that person for each amount, equal to four per cent of the sessional indemnity payable to a member of the House of Commons during any calendar year, that the person has, during that calendar year, contributed pursuant to subsection 9(2) or elected to contribute pursuant to clause 11(1)(a)(i)(B), as it read before the coming into force of this paragraph, or pursuant to clause 11(1)(a.1)(i)(B); and

(b) on or after January 1, 2001, or any period of pensionable service in respect of which an election under section 10 has been made on or after that date, a person is, on ceasing to be a member, deemed to have one year of pensionable service to the credit

of that person for each amount, equal to four per cent of the sessional indemnity payable to the person as a member of the Senate or the House of Commons, as the case may be, during any calendar year, that the person has, during that calendar year, contributed pursuant to subsection 9(2) or elected to contribute pursuant to subparagraph 11(1)(a)(i).

Exception

(4.1) Subsection (4), as it read before the coming into force of this subsection, applies in respect of a period of pensionable service to a member's credit pursuant to an election referred to in subsection 36(4).

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Amendment No. G-4 agreed to)

The Chairman: Shall clause 19, as amended, carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 19, as amended, agreed to)

(On clause 21)

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 21, be amended by replacing, in the French version, line 21 on page 12 with the following:

se terminant le 31 décembre 2000, par retenue

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Amendment No. G-5 agreed to)

The Chairman: Shall clause 21, as amended, carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 21, as amended, agreed to)

(On clause 23)

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 23, be amended

(a) by replacing, in the French version, lines 26 and 27 on page 13 with the following:

(2) Le passage de l'alinéa 33(1)a.1) de la même loi précédant le sous-alinéa (i) est

(b) by replacing, in the French version, line 4 on page 14 with the following:

le 13 juillet 1995 ou par la suite

Government Orders

That Bill C-28, in Clause 23, be amended by replacing, in the English version, line 2 on page 15 with the following:

English version of the Act before paragraph (a) is replaced by the

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendments?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Amendments Nos. G-6 and G-7 agreed to)

The Chairman: Shall clause 23, as amended, carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 23, as amended, agreed to)

(On clause 24)

The Chairman: Shall clause 24 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 24 agreed to)

(On Clause 25)

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 25, be amended by replacing line 36 on page 16 with the following:

“(C) 0.025 for the years or portions of”

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Chairman: The committee will now proceed to the taking of the vote.

(Yeas, 41; Nays, 85)

The Chairman: I declare the amendment lost.

Mr. John Reynolds: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. The rest of the amendments in my name are basically just consequential and could all be passed on division, if you so wish.

The Chairman: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

• (1805)

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 25, be amended by replacing line 1 on page 17 with the following:

“(A) 0.025 for the years or portions of”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 25, be amended by replacing line 46 on page 17 with the following:

“0.025 for the years or portions of years of”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 25, be amended by replacing line 11 on page 18 with the following:

“0.025 for the years or portions of years of”

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendments?

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Amendments Nos. CA-25.2 to CA-25.4 inclusive negated)

The Chairman: Shall clause 25 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 25 agreed to)

(On clause 26)

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 26, be amended by replacing line 1 on page 20 with the following:

“(C) 0.025 for the years or portions of”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 26, be amended by replacing line 12 on page 20 with the following:

“(A) 0.025 for the years or portions of”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 26, be amended by replacing line 9 on page 21 with the following:

“0.025 for the years or portions of years of”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 26, be amended by replacing line 35 on page 21 with the following:

“(iii) 0.025 for the years of pensionable”

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendments?

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: On division.

Government Orders

(Amendments Nos. CA-25.5 to CA-25.8 inclusive negative)

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 26, be amended by replacing lines 22 to 29 on page 22 with the following:

the sessional indemnity payable to the person as a member of the Senate or the House of Commons, as the case may be, during any calendar year, that the person has, on or after January 1, 2001, contributed or elected to contribute under subsection 31(3) or (4) or 33(4), other than amounts paid under subsection 33(4) in respect of sessional indemnity or as interest.

That Bill C-28, in Clause 26, be amended by replacing, in the English version, line 38 on page 22 with the following:

before January 1, 2001.

That Bill C-28, in Clause 26, be amended by replacing, in the French version, line 30 on page 23 with the following:

(2) a) (i) (C) et (ii) (C), les sous-alinéas (2) a) (iv)

She said: Mr. Chairman, Amendments Nos. G-8 to G-10 inclusive to clause 26 are again technical editorial amendments or corrections of minor language. Therefore we would be quite happy to have those adopted on division and to have the clause treated in the same way.

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt Amendments Nos. G-8 to G-10 inclusive?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Amendments Nos. G-8 to G-10 inclusive agreed to)

The Chairman: Shall clause 26, as amended, carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 26, as amended, agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Chairman: Shall clause 27 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 27 agreed to)

The Chairman: Shall clause 28 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 28 agreed to)

[*English*]

(On clause 29)

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Canadian Alliance) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 29, be amended by replacing line 30 on page 24 with the following:

“multiplied by 29.1 per cent.”

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Chairman: The committee will now proceed to the taking of the vote.

● (1810)

[*Translation*]

(Yeas, 8; Nays, 34)

(Amendment No. CA-26 negatived)

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 29, be amended by deleting lines 37 to 43 on page 25.

[*English*]

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Amendment No. PC-4 negatived)

The Chairman: Shall clause 29 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 29 agreed to)

(On clause 30)

Mr. Jim Pankiw: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. We could lump this one with reference no. 12820, because they affect the same thing and I would like a recorded vote.

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to deal with both amendments?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Canadian Alliance) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 30, be amended by replacing lines 4 to 11 on page 26 with the following:

Government Orders

“Act, as amended by this Act, apply to any person who becomes a member”

That Bill C-28, in Clause 30, be amended by deleting lines 15 to 27 on page 26.

The Chairman: The committee will now proceed to the taking of the vote.

(Yeas, 54; Nays, 75)

(Amendments Nos. CA-27 and CA-28 negatived)

The Chairman: Shall clause 30 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 30 agreed to)

• (1815)

(On clause 31)

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance) moved:

That Bill C-28, in Clause 31, be amended by replacing lines 31 to 33 on page 26 with the following:

“force on the first day of the 38th Parliament.”

The Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Chairman: The committee will now proceed to the taking of the vote.

(Yeas, 53; Nays, 148)

(Amendment No. CA-29 negatived)

The Chairman: Shall clause 31 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 31 agreed to)

Mr. Ken Epp: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. I cannot resist saying that my prediction of an hour ago came true.

The Chairman: At the same time it is still not a point of order.

Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Title agreed to and bill reported)

• (1820)

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

The Speaker: 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.

• (1825)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 126*)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allard	Anderson (Victoria)
Assadourian	Asselin
Augustine	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bagnell
Baker	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélair
Bélanger	Bellehumeur
Bellemare	Bennett
Bergeron	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bigras
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Boudria	Bourgeois
Bradshaw	Brien
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Byrne
Caccia	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carroll	Casey
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Chrétien
Coderre	Collenette
Comuzzi	Copps
Cotler	Crête
Cullen	Cummins
Cuzner	Dalphond-Guiral
Desrochers	DeVillers
Dion	Doyle

Dromisky
 Dubé
 Duhamel
 Easter
 Farrah
 Folco
 Forseth
 Fry
 Gagnon (Québec)
 Gauthier
 Godfrey
 Graham
 Grewal
 Guarnieri
 Guimond
 Harvard
 Hinton
 Ianno
 Jennings
 Jordan
 Keddy (South Shore)
 Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
 Kraft Sloan
 Laliberte
 Lastewka
 Lebel
 Lee
 Lincoln
 Loubier
 Macklin
 Malhi
 Marceau
 Marleau
 Mayfield
 McCormick
 McKay (Scarborough East)
 McTeague
 Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
 Mitchell
 Nault
 Normand
 Obhrai
 Pagtakhan
 Paradis
 Patry
 Perron
 Pettigrew
 Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
 Plamondon
 Price
 Provenzano
 Reed (Halton)
 Richardson
 Rocheleau
 Saada
 Schmidt
 Sgro
 Speller
 St-Hilaire
 St-Julien
 Stewart
 Telegdi
 Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
 Tobin
 Torsney
 Ur
 Vanclief
 Wappel
 White (North Vancouver)
 Wood—197

Drouin
 Duceppe
 Duplain
 Eyking
 Finlay
 Fontana
 Fournier
 Gagnon (Champlain)
 Gallaway
 Girard-Bujold
 Goodale
 Gray (Windsor West)
 Grose
 Guay
 Harb
 Harvey
 Hubbard
 Jackson
 Johnston
 Karetak-Lindell
 Keyes
 Knutsen
 Laframboise
 Lanctôt
 Lavigne
 LeBlanc
 Leung
 Longfield
 MacAulay
 Mahoney
 Manley
 Marcil
 Matthews
 McCallum
 McGuire
 McLellan
 Ménard
 Minna
 Murphy
 Neville
 O'Reilly
 Owen
 Paquette
 Parrish
 Peric
 Peschisolido
 Phinney
 Pillitteri
 Pratt
 Proulx
 Redman
 Regan
 Robillard
 Rock
 Scherrer
 Scott
 Shepherd
 St. Denis
 St-Jacques
 Steckle
 Szabo
 Thibault (West Nova)
 Tirabassi
 Tonks
 Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)
 Valeri
 Volpe
 Whelan
 Wilfert

NAYS

Members

Anders
 Benoit
 Borotsik
 Brison
 Cadman
 Comartin
 Day
 Duncan
 Fitzpatrick
 Godin
 Harris
 Herron
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
 McKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
 Martin (Winnipeg Centre)

Bailey
 Blaikie
 Breitzkreuz
 Burton
 Chatters
 Davies
 Desjarlais
 Epp
 Gallant
 Goldring
 Hearn
 Jaffer
 Lill
 Mark
 McDonough

Private Members' Business

Merrifield
 Moore
 Pallister
 Proctor
 Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
 Ritz
 Skelton
 Spencer
 Stoffer
 Vellacott
 Wayne
 Yelich—53

Mills (Red Deer)
 Nystrom
 Penson
 Rajotte
 Reynolds
 Robinson
 Sorenson
 Stinson
 Toews
 Wasylcia-Leis
 White (Langley—Abbotsford)

PAIRED MEMBERS

*Nil/aucun

The Chairman: I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

Pursuant to order made on Monday, June 4, 2001, the bill shall be read the third time at the next sitting of the House.

It being 6.30 p.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT

The House resumed from May 7 consideration of the motion that Bill C-287, an act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (genetically modified food), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted by the existence of Bill C-287, which concerns genetically modified food. I congratulate the member for Davenport for introducing it into the House.

Much more than a matter of labelling, this bill represents the ability of each individual to make a personal choice on the essence of life within an open and democratic society.

In each area that touches our life, we make choices, and we have the right to do so. We choose our children's schools, a doctor, where we will live, where we will build our home, a type of car or of clothing, and so on.

However, when it comes to the food we eat—the simplest and most vital element in our lives—we cannot make a reasonable and intelligent choice.

Private Members' Business

[English]

If I prefer to eat a natural fish rather than a fish from aquaculture or fish farming, I cannot make that choice because no information in the stores differentiates one from the other. In the same way, when it concerns genetically modified foods, no labelling at all distinguishes them from non-modified foods.

● (1835)

Yet if this information were available, I believe that the great majority of people would most definitely opt for non-modified foods. I certainly would.

I realize that proponents of genetically modified foods will adamantly advance the idea that their products are totally safe and present no dangers to our health. Certainly this has been the pitch that the big proponent of genetically modified foods and seeds, Monsanto, has been advancing for several years, now that it has staked its future on genetically modified seeds and crops.

My colleague's objectives in presenting the bill are simple. First, it gives citizens a choice through labelling. This is the fundamental case in his bill. If there is labelling, as he suggests there must be, then obviously citizens are faced with a normal choice. They choose GM foods if they want to or they leave them aside and choose natural foods.

There is a second objective in his bill. Even if science regarding genetically modified foods is not conclusive, we should use the precautionary principle so that we are put in a position where we use caution and the benefit of the doubt in advising people that there may be a potential danger. When science is not conclusive, the precautionary principle, which our country adopted during UNCED at Rio, clearly states that we should use caution regarding any danger or any potential danger to health and environment.

How can we exercise this caution? How can we be preventive? Without labelling, how can we be cautionary and precautionary if we do not know whether the food is of a certain type or not?

As the bill reminds us, Canada has embarked on various international engagements regarding the potential labelling of food. Both the Codex Alimentarius Commission guidelines of 2000 and more recently the biosafety protocol always point toward caution and toward labelling. Bill C-287 would provide a stringent monitoring and recording of all stages of production of genetically modified foods, which would enable correct labelling to be achieved.

Opponents of labelling have been saying for years that we cannot label genetically modified foods because it is almost impossible to separate them from other foodstuffs because they are an intrinsic

part of all foodstuff. Yet if the bill were followed, if there were strict monitoring of all stages of creation and production, of food growing, of recording of all the stages, then we would be able to label foods to a sufficiently clear and reasonable degree such that people could make a choice.

In presenting the bill, in having it made votable before the House, and in us having a chance to debate the very issue of labelling, I think Bill C-287 is doing our country a great favour, because so far all the steps we have taken have been voluntary steps. In fact, we are doing Canada a big favour economically because, more and more, various countries will refuse to accept any food exports from us which may be genetically modified.

I urge all colleagues to strongly support the bill to ensure that labelling becomes a legal reality. Certainly in labelling our foods, we will benefit not only the health and the environment of our society but we will help our exports in the long run. I urge all colleagues to back Bill C-287 and vote in favour of it at second reading.

● (1840)

Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, before I start I would like to ask for the consent of the House to split my time with the member for Yorkton—Melville?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to split his time?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Rob Merrifield: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on Bill C-287, regarding the labelling of genetically modified foods.

I come from two perspectives. First, I am a member of the health committee. As the deputy health critic in this whole area of genetically modified foods, I believe it is important to see it from a health perspective.

Second, I have quite a bit of firsthand experience in dealing with genetically modified foods. I farm and have grown genetically modified foods for a number of years. I know a little bit of the science and know what actually happens at the farm gate and in the farmer's fields when growing these genetically modified foods.

Some of the confusion for consumers when they look at the whole area of genetically modified foods is whether it is really important. They ask questions such as what is a genetically modified food and is it safe? The whole idea of genetically modified foods is that it is sort of a Frankenstein food.

We need to have a good debate about that before we get into the idea of whether or not we should label it. Once we ask those questions and answer them, we will have a better discernment of exactly what we are trying to label.

We must first understand the degree to which genetically modified foods are being grown in the world today. Some 33 million acres of genetically modified crops, which represents 10% of the world's supply, is actually being grown right now. That is a tremendous number. However, we have yet to see any harmful repercussions from the usage of genetically modified foods.

We should take a look at the long term effects because people are saying our foods maybe become eroded and may not have the same nutritional values that they used to, yet the statistics show a different picture. The statistics show we are living longer and have more active and healthier lives now than ever before. If our food sources were to become polluted or dangerous, the opposite of that would actually take place.

Opponents of this would suggest that is yet to come. It is something we should be cautious of in the future. I would suggest that if that is true, then we should do it on a scientific basis. We should look at genetically modified foods from a scientific perspective as to whether we should label them or not.

The population of the world is exploding. There are more than six billion people right now. How many hungry mouths would we have if we did not grow genetically modified foods? The projections are that we will grow to nine billion people very soon and it will continue to escalate. The technologies that we develop are very important.

Genetically modified foods, depending on how we see them and how we discern what a genetically modified food is, have been around from the beginning of time. We have modified foods for a number of years. Today we have 600 million hectares of wheat grown worldwide. If we were using the same technology that we used in 1965, we would need another 850 million hectares of land to grow that same amount of wheat.

We have hybridized and genetically modified foods for many years. It has now become a bit of a phobia because of what our European neighbours have been doing with regard to genetically modified foods, and suggesting that there is something dangerous and sinister about using them.

● (1845)

If they were honest with the world and with their own people they would be more realistic. They would say they were using opposition to GM foods as a marketing tool. I do not argue that they should not do that. I just argue that they are maybe not being straight up with their population. In Canada we use modified foods and have for a number of years. I think we have proven them to be very safe.

To get a genetically modified food in place, one needs to do a number of things. First, it takes seven years to get it on the shelf. We do not just snap our fingers and make it happen. Seven years of

Private Members' Business

work goes into it. Members must realize that GM foods do not go straight from Monsanto's labs onto the market.

I oppose labelling because the science shows nothing to support it. On that basis, I think we should stay with the science and we will not go wrong.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to speak to Bill C-287 put forward by the member for Davenport. The member's bill calls for mandatory labelling of foods that contain genetically modified organisms.

I represent a constituency that has agriculture as its main industry. It seems to me that the bill would hurt the farming sector in a very negative way. I have received many letters from agricultural groups that have serious concerns with the legislation.

Mr. Roy Button, president of the Saskatchewan Canola Development Commission, stated in a letter to my office that if mandatory labelling of genetically modified foods is established for some concerned customers then "the cost of food production for all consumers will be increased and there will be no improvement in food safety". These costs would then be passed on to the producer, resulting in lower commodity prices.

Mr. Ray Hilderman, president of the Saskatchewan Canola Growers Association which represents 40,000 Saskatchewan canola producers, states that a recent study by the Canola Council of Canada showed that canola producers were saving \$5.80 an acre by growing transgenic canola. The study said transgenic canola resulted in higher yields, lower dockage for foreign markets, better returns, less field tillage, less use of pesticides and less consumption of fuel, which not only saves the producer money but benefits the environment as well.

He also states that there would be a problem with the labelling of canola oil. As the bill stands now, products derived from genetically modified plants must be labelled. However tests conducted on canola oil cannot differentiate between genetically modified and non-genetically modified canola.

The Ontario Corn Producers' Association, which represents 21,000 corn growers in Ontario, stated in a letter to the member for Davenport that it has found most farmers to be supportive of biotechnology as a means of improving their product. The benefits of biotech include reduced pesticide use and improved pest control, which also benefits the environment.

The OCPA also pointed out that the intention of the bill to abandon the novel crop and food regulations, against which all new crops and foods must be tested, could introduce "new corn varieties made using wide crosses with bananas or barnyard grasses, for example, or soybeans with peanuts, with no requirement for testing".

Private Members' Business

The National Dairy Council of Canada states in a letter from its vice-president, Mr. Pierre Nadeau, that the bill raises complex scientific and technical questions. First, what is meant by traditional breeding? What techniques would be classified as biotechnology? Second, how would the 1% threshold be calculated? Would it be calculated on the amount in the food, the per serving amount? Would it be calculated by volume? Would it be calculated by weight?

It appears to me that the legislation is very reactionary. Currently the Canadian General Standards Board is developing a voluntary labelling program for genetically modified foods. With help from over 60 concerned industry and consumer groups, the CGSB is ensuring a labelling standard that is informative, understandable and supportable.

Consumers are demanding that products they buy in stores be properly labelled so they can make wise and informed choices. Government should not interfere in something consumer demand can rectify.

● (1850)

As Mr. Nadeau of the National Dairy Council of Canada stated in his letter:

There is no question that mandatory labelling at this time is driven in large part by perception. People are always afraid of what they do not understand. The question becomes: should legislation be implemented in response to public perception at a particular point in time, or should legislation be the result of enlightened governance?

It seems clear that the legislation was not drafted in an informed light. Why should we force something down the throats of food processors that they themselves have been working on for the last couple of years?

In conclusion I will say that there is a much better way to go on this issue. We should treat it the same way we treat organic foods. Organic foods are labelled on a voluntary basis. That is much more sensible and it is the only practical approach.

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the bill today.

One of the problems I found when doing research on the topic was that there was confusion with regard to safety versus information. I assure every member of the House and all Canadians that safety is an issue with the inspection of food in Canada. Food safety falls under the Department of Health and the inspection process is important to agriculture as well. We have mandatory labelling wherever safety is an issue.

We could talk about safety as it relates to allergies. There is no one in Canada who would not support that. The debate is not about safety. It is about public information. We must make that clear.

My second point is that there is tremendous concern about approving mandatory labelling before all the research is in. Organizations like the Consumers' Association of Canada, the chambers of commerce, the food manufacturers' groups, distributors' groups and processors' groups, many groups in the agricultural sector, the boards that relate to our grains, and the commodity organizations all have great concern with the issue. There is a wide variety of concerns with regard to the effect the bill will have.

There is another concern that because of the research and work going on, and there is tremendous study going on at this time, it is important to wait before a final verdict is made.

Those are the three points I will talk about in the few moments I have.

Food labelling falls under the Department of Health, and food safety is an issue. There can be no compromise with food safety and labelling in Canada. The Department of Health makes sure that anything with a safety condition is labelled. All other food labelling is controlled by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and it is its responsibility to ensure labels are done properly. In regard to health, such as allergy products or anything else of that nature, mandatory labelling is in place in Canada and will continue to be.

There are also rules for labelling genetically modified foods on a voluntary basis. Voluntary means a food does or does not contain genetically modified products. A volunteer labelling system affects all consumers, but it is clear that not all organizations dealing with the issue have set out the rules in a clear or concise way.

The *Wall Street Journal* on April 24, 2000 suggested there were real problems with genetic labelling.

● (1855)

They tested all kinds of products that were labelled genetic free. The results of the tests showed that some materials in the American public which contained 40% genetically modified products were labelled genetic free. Many products were not labelled in an accurate and clear way. That could become a major problem for everyone in Canada.

If we are to go through a labelling process, the process must be clear. It must be able to be confirmed. It must be accurate and not deceptive to anyone. The rules must be set out by the experts: people involved in food processing, governments that have a vested interest in making sure the consumer gets accurate information, chambers of commerce and others.

At this point in time the CGSB, the Canadian General Standards Board, is working with 132 participants. Some of the participants include the Consumers' Association of Canada, the National Institute of Nutrition, the National Research Council, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, AgriCorp, Ontario Corn Producers, the

National Dairy Council, the governments of the provinces and territories, and the departments of health, agriculture, justice, industry and international trade in the Government of Canada.

It is a very broad spectrum. These groups are working as closely as they can with all stakeholders and everyone who wishes to get involved in setting much needed standards for the Canadian public. The results are to be reported within a few months.

It is the obligation of all members of parliament to make certain that proper information comes back so that all groups that have been doing studies for a long time can report, make clear to the Canadian public what information should be reported and labelled, and set out the process in a proper way.

One must wonder why we are moving so quickly at this point in time with a private member's bill when we realize the work that has been done by so many organizations to make certain that Canadians get proper information and that proper standards are set.

The Royal Society of Canada was asked to look into biotechnology and the regulations Canada would need in the future. The society formed an independent panel of science experts and asked them to study biotechnology labelling. They arrived at three conclusions. They endorsed the mandatory labelling system now in place in Canada and said that where health and safety are important proper labelling must be mandatory.

However there are no clear grounds or rules to develop a general mandatory labelling regime. The Royal Society of Canada, which is doing a great deal of study, strongly supports a voluntary labelling system. It does not believe in a mandatory system that would be without rules, clarity or form.

Where do we go from this point? There is no doubt that consumers should have access to information that enables them to make informed decisions about the food they eat. That information must be accurate, understandable, informative, verifiable and not misleading.

Canada's policy for labelling food has served Canadians very well in the health and safety field. The stringent safety requirements upheld by Health Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Environment Canada have long protected the health of Canadians.

● (1900)

More detail is needed if labelling is to be accurate and useful to consumers. That is why the Government of Canada has put in place a process to develop a set of national standards with voluntary labelling to make sure that this issue is handled appropriately.

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We should not pre-empt all the study that is being done by the experts and organizations that have been very intensely involved in food production and safety for many years and cause potential trade problems for all of us.

I come from a riding that is very rural and agricultural and that has the Heinz corporation, one of the major corporations in Canada. I ask members to consider the evidence of experts before supporting the bill.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to address Bill C-287, an act to amend the Food and Drugs Act specifically concerning genetically modified food.

This is a very simple piece of legislation. New section 7.1(1) states:

7.1(1) No person shall sell—a food that contains more than one per cent of a genetically modified food, unless it is labelled with a statement

(a) that it is or contains an ingredient that is genetically modified, and

(b) which food or ingredient is derived from genetic modification.

Earlier, the member for Lac-Saint-Louis told us that it was very important to know what we eat. I think it is a fundamental individual right to know what we eat. But to know it is, this information must be provided on the label of the product that we buy at the store.

The member who spoke before me suggested that we consult all the experts, take into account their point of view and look at the findings of the research done before supporting this bill.

If we have to wait for all scientists to agree on the effects of genetically modified foods, and for all the scientific results of the impact of these foods, a lot of water will go under the bridge before we take any action at all.

I think that it is important that labelling be made mandatory. Already, almost 88% of farmers say they are ready to label. Why should we have to have pressure put on us by lobbyists?

Very often I hear members speak who are themselves farmers, and who do not always mention that they are judge and jury in this process.

We are here to pass laws to improve the health of the public. The Canadian Alliance speaker said that he was on the Standing Committee on Health and that he was going to ask, on the committee's behalf, that the bill not be supported.

I hope that it is. If the public is to remain healthy, I would hope that we could at least know what sort of junk we are eating, in order to be able to decide whether or not to buy it. If we do not know what we are eating, it is fairly obvious that the impacts can be horrendous.

Private Members' Business

Consider what is going on in our society, what we are eating, and in what kind of environment we are living, that there are as many cancers as there are today. We have to wonder. Why are there more and more people being born with all sorts of disabilities, and with much more severe ones? Naturally, people are living longer, and we know more about diseases.

• (1905)

Surely there is something that explains what is going on right now in our world. I think it is important that we support this bill. We must start somewhere. Recently, we did much worse for young offenders than what this bill wants to do with the food we eat.

It seems to me that we could take a first step. If ever this turns out to be completely ridiculous or impossible, it will always be possible to turn around and say that we made a mistake. Then we can change our minds and take a different approach.

I wanted to talk about something that is going on right now. We want this to be done on a voluntary basis. A brewery called Unibroue asked the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to issue a certificate officially guaranteeing that its beer was free of genetically modified organisms.

It was a long process that started on June 22, 2000 and ended around April 24, 2001. Finally, just a month ago, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency issued a certificate guaranteeing that the beer produced by Unibroue was GMO-free. Unibroue needed this certificate to launch a major marketing campaign on the European market, which it did.

What happened next is somewhat catastrophic. When the Canadian Food Inspection Agency saw that Unibroue was using this certificate for marketing purposes and to sell its product, its beer, it decided to withdraw the certificate. It told the company that it could no longer use the certificate, that it was taking it away. The company was told by the agency that it had no right to use the certificate for marketing purposes.

The agency issued the certificate on April 24, 2001, only to withdraw it in June of 2001. It is totally ridiculous. This kind of thing should not happen. It makes no sense.

I am very happy to think that such a bill could be passed. I will certainly recommend that my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois support this bill, even though we are free to vote as we please on private members' bills.

[*English*]

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will start this evening by recognizing all the hard work that the hon. member for Davenport has put into the bill. It is an extremely important piece of legislation and the work he has put into it

reflects the quality of the representation that he brings into the House.

The bill deserves the support of all political parties in the House. The New Democratic Party is fully in support of the legislation. It has been reflected in our policy for some time and was adopted overwhelmingly in our convention in 1999.

I also want to take this opportunity to recognize the work that my colleague from Winnipeg North Centre has put into this area. She has done much to promote the labelling of genetically modified organisms. In addition to this private member's bill, she also has a private member's bill on the same issue.

• (1910)

It is important to reflect on what has happened in the country in terms of this type of legislation. In that regard I will quote a couple of statistics. More than 80 groups have joined in support of the bill. They have educated the Canadian public about the importance of implementing a mandatory labelling scheme so that the public is made aware of genetically engineered foods before consuming them.

In addition, more than 35 countries around the world have adopted or are in the process of adopting mandatory labelling. The interesting part about that, and maybe the scary part about it, is that Canada is seen now as having fallen significantly behind these other countries. I believe it was my friend on the Liberal side of the House who made a point that I want to echo. As a result of falling behind we face the possibility as a country of losing access to international markets.

Our farming industry is not in great shape, as we all know, and adding to its problems is the last thing the government and the House should be doing. Support for labelling is important from that perspective.

I want to note some of the countries that have adopted or are in the process of adopting standardized mandatory labelling. The United Kingdom, Japan, China, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, and at least 14 of the European Union countries have gone down this road, much in advance of us.

Bill C-287 would also assist us in complying with our international responsibilities. We have adopted the Cartagena protocol on biosafety. We met internationally. We have debated the issue. We have accepted that protocol. We have to follow through on it. In that regard the bill would allow for the labelling of food or food ingredients that contain genetic material obtained through the use of modern biotechnology. That is right in the definition section of the bill.

When one looks at the details of the bill it is important to note, and again this is some praise to the hon. member for Davenport, that it traces genetically modified organisms that are added to food

through all stages of production, distribution, manufacture, packaging and sale. It is extremely important that it is detailed to that degree.

Again I echo the importance, as has been indicated more eloquently by other members, of the basic right of all Canadians to know what is in the food they are consuming. It seems to me that right of the consumer is ingrained in all sorts of legislation. It reflects the consumer movement that has been alive and healthy for a good number of years. In that respect every public opinion poll shows that the vast majority of Canadians believe they have the right to know what is in their food.

Coming back to the 80 groups that have lobbied around the country and have educated the public, they have moved that consciousness in the Canadian public quite significantly over the last five years or six years. We now see that 70%, 80% and sometimes 90% of respondents in these surveys indicate that they believe they have a right to know what is in the food they are consuming.

Some argue that the industry should do it itself, that we should go to voluntary labelling. We have seen in any number of areas that simply does not work. We strongly supports that part of the bill which makes labelling mandatory.

• (1915)

It is interesting to note the excellent work that ended in the report of the Royal Society of Canada earlier this year, in February, I believe. In that report there was a very damning condemnation of the practices of this government as far as food safety is concerned. The society was critical of the government, saying that in fact Canadians do not know enough about genetically modified foods, about what is safe and what is not. The society argued quite strenuously in that report that this is because the process itself is so flawed, so problematic, that governments approve food for human consumption using a methodology that just simply is no longer acceptable.

The precautionary principle should be applicable here. To a significant degree it is reflected in the clauses of this bill. In this situation, that precautionary principle would ensure that if we are not sure about the safety of GM food we do not allow it on the market. If scientists cannot tell us whether it is safe, not only in the short term but in the long term, then it does not go into a product that is sold for human consumption. It is simply not allowed in the marketplace.

It is time for the bill. It is time that we get in line with the international community and with a great deal of our trading partners. It is time to catch up to them. It is time to bring in the bill and pass it in the House so that our society has that protection.

It is a unique opportunity for the House to reflect on the work that has been done by the member for Davenport. We should send this over to committee, let it do its review, then bring it back to this House once it comes out of committee and pass it into law.

Private Members' Business

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would ask for permission from the House to resume. I did speak to the bill earlier. There was some confusion about me sharing the time with the hon. member. Therefore, with permission of the House, I am asking for agreement to speak again on this issue. I am just looking for the five minutes I missed the last time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I fully understand the hon. member's problem. He is a new member, so in the spirit of co-operation does he have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. James Lunney: Mr. Speaker, I thank you and all members in the House for indulging me in this matter.

In the last opportunity I had to address the issue I laid the foundation for the remarks that I will pick up on and continue with. The issue we are considering as we consider this bill is this: are GM foods safe? I believe the public does need some reassurance in this matter. What is the science behind it? We have heard a number of members address this issue. What are the long term effects of GM foods on humans and in the environment? Frankly, nobody really knows.

The argument that has been put forward as Health Canada's primary justification for the safety of these products is a substantial equivalence argument, that is, the gene inserted is one that is known and it produces a certain protein, that protein is available in other products and no evidence of harm in those products has been demonstrated, so therefore it should be acceptable. Frankly, the argument of substantial equivalence does not stand up to scientific scrutiny.

I would ask the hon. members in the House to consider that this argument of substantial equivalence was recently used in a reverse sense by the scientists who developed the oncomouse. We might remember that the oncomouse, developed by Harvard scientists, is a mouse that breeds cancer in all of its offspring, which is very useful for research. I am sure the mouse and its offspring, by the way, are very grateful to the scientists for introducing this.

The change was a very small change, 99.9% the same, but the difference to the mouse and its offspring was quite significant, I would suggest. On the one hand, in order to argue that this mouse was different and to get patenting rights the Harvard scientists argued that this mouse was substantially different. We hear scientists arguing both sides of this equation using the same argument, in one case to say that it is the same and in another case to say it is different enough that a mouse and its progeny can inherit cancer.

• (1920)

I am saying that the substantial equivalents argument does not stand up to the scientific precautionary principle. I am reflecting the recommendations of the Royal Society of Canada that recently

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reported to the health ministry on this matter wherein 14 distinguished Canadian scientists stated that the precautionary principle is not honoured by substantial equivalents.

I would like to mention that scorpion venom is being used in a baculovirus. Here is a virus being introduced not for food consumption per se but as a pesticide. It was found that the baculovirus slows insect growth, but by inserting a scorpion venom gene the kill rate was very high and effective.

Interestingly enough, another group of scientists are using the baculovirus for liver modification because they find that this virus has access to human liver and brain cells. The two scientists do not seem to be considering that if virus A with scorpion venom should breed with virus B, a very close relative, the consequences for humans could be catastrophic. We need some science to reassure us that these things, which are very stable in the environment but very unstable when they reproduce, are not setting the stage for catastrophic consequences.

The scientific alarm bells are ringing. We cannot ignore the alarm bells. Need we remind ourselves of tainted blood, AIDS, or hepatitis C, believing that our blood system was safe. We might look at the Walkerton water system where officials had been drinking the water for years because they trusted their system was safe but failed to notice that something had changed.

The Prime Minister went to Europe and said that we had been eating these foods for years and that we were healthy. He said "Look at me, do I look sick"? However, that test fails the scientific principle in terms of best science practices.

If Health Canada and the CFIA wants to assure Canadians that these products are safe, we need to employ better science to satisfy Canadians. We need to use best science practices and that minimal risk is involved as was advocated by the royal society. We have an obligation to respect the right of Canadians to choose what they are consuming and give them a choice until the risk from these products is considered reduced.

Health Canada, in assuring these products are safe under present testing, is also exposing the taxpayers to extreme liability as well as potentially risking their health. We need better science around these products to assure Canadians that they are safe. We also need to consider what options are available, including the labelling issue, in order to satisfy Canadians until the scientific principle is better satisfied to reduce the risk of these products.

Mr. Larry McCormick (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to acknowledge that the bill comes from one of the deans of the House who I respect very much. He has always been a committed member and a great driving force in everything he believes in.

It must be the season for compliments, Mr. Speaker, but you are a very wise person to allow as many people as possible to speak on the bill. That is a nice way to do it for members in the House.

Let me remind the House that Canada is recognized worldwide as having one of the safest food systems in the world. The responsibility for food safety is shared at the federal level between Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Health Canada's responsibility regarding food is to establish science based policies and standards to ensure that all foods are safe and nutritious.

Several years ago Health Canada recognized the application of new techniques either to genetically modified micro-organisms and plants in order to produce new food or to simply to produce common, everyday foods another way. It was also recognized that the safety of such foods should be assessed and that the existing regulatory framework of the Food and Drugs Act was the suitable tool to establish a clear and stringent process for evaluating the safety of biotechnology derived foods.

As we all know, a variety of novel foods are being developed and introduced into the Canadian marketplace. These novel foods include foods derived from biotechnology.

Health Canada believes that foods that have not previously been used as foods, or foods that have been modified from their traditional composition as well as foods that have been produced using new technology, including biotechnology, should be assessed prior to being allowed on the market. I think we all agree with that and I respect the people in Health Canada for that.

● (1925)

To this end the federal government has enacted novel foods regulations which define what a novel food is. It makes it mandatory for a company to notify Health Canada before a novel food can be sold in Canada. This pre-market notification ensures that the safety of each novel food, including genetically modified food, is assessed and verified before it can enter the Canadian marketplace. In addition, the definition of novel foods is well tailored to the mandate of Health Canada, ensuring that all foods are safe and nutritious.

The safety assessment undertaken in relation to these regulations is conducted according to scientific principles developed through expert consultation with international authorities such as the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

The approach used in Canada is also followed by regulatory agencies in the European Union, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the United States. Health Canada's guidelines for the safety assessment of novel foods outline the safety assessment approach.

These guidelines have benefited from detailed consultations with stakeholders in Canada and continue to be available for review and critique.

As in the case for approval of most products by regulatory agencies around the world, companies or proponents of biotechnology derived foods are required to submit a set of data which must be of sufficiently high calibre and meet the criteria specified in the guidelines. This information is reviewed by a team of scientific evaluators representing expertise in molecular biology, toxicology, chemistry, nutritional sciences and microbiology.

The scientific validity of study protocols used, as well as the raw data submitted, are critically analyzed. If any part of the information provided is insufficient, including if long term studies are warranted, further studies will be required from that company. The food will not be approved and the food company or proponent will be obligated to carry out those studies and report on the results before any further consideration of the submission.

Concerning food labelling policies in Canada, Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency share accountability under the Food and Drugs Act. Health Canada's responsibilities derive from its mandate for health and safety issues, while the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is responsible for protecting consumers from misrepresentation and fraud with respect to food labelling, packaging and advertising and for prescribing basic food labelling and advertising standards.

It is important to note that the development of the interim position on labelling is based upon previous public consultations. Since 1993 there have been three public consultations in Canada on the issue of labelling foods derived through genetic modification.

The public consultation process was used to bring together a group of stakeholders, including industry and industry associations, consumer groups and individuals to determine Canadian views on the subject.

This position calls for mandatory labelling to address health and safety issues. We do that to identify composition or nutritional changes. In these situations labelling is required to alert consumers or susceptible groups in the population at large. Additionally, food producers and manufacturers may voluntarily label foods derived from biotechnology, provided that the label is truthful and not misleading.

Recently labelling of foods derived from the application of biotechnology has become a key issue of public attention. It is important to note that the primary issue related to labelling has been one of consumer choice and the right to know. To examine the broad considerations related to biotechnology, the federal government has created the Canadian biotechnology advisory committee as part of its renewed biotechnology strategy.

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In addition, there are several initiatives underway in order to determine the most appropriate mechanisms for providing consumers with information that will assist them to better understand the nature of their food choices.

Health Canada continues to work with colleagues at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and with other stakeholders, including health professionals, consumer groups and industry associations, in order to develop mechanisms to provide information in the most effective manner regarding foods derived from biotechnology, mechanisms that are consistent with international approaches.

I look forward to further debate on this issue but I think we have to clarify a few more things before we can support the bill.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The hour provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

● (1930)

[*Translation*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

FISHERIES

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to come back to a question I asked on May 29. My question dealt with the fact that this year the fishing industry in the Acadian Peninsula is what can be called, I guess, a total disaster.

For instance, in the Caraquet area, lobstermen have caught only 6,000 pounds of lobster. On some days, lobstermen in the Petit-Shippagan area have come back home with only 15 and 38 pounds of lobster. That is unheard of.

Also, crab quotas have been cut, which means that less fish or crab have been caught. Fish plants have closed down after only three weeks for lack of fish.

I asked in the House of Commons what the government would do to provide relief to these plant workers?

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With all due respect, let me remind the House of what the parliamentary secretary told me at the time “When the licences of an enterprise are sold, it is the responsibility of the enterprise owner to deal with the crew members”.

But I was not talking about crew members; I was talking about plant workers. I am anxious to hear what his answer will be this evening. I hope he will not mention crew members again.

Let us be clear that the fish plants closed after three weeks. Workers in these plants will have trouble making their 420 hours. They will be obliged to take part in projects, and this will be divided by the wonderful 14 week formula. And the gap about which I have spoken so often in the House of Commons will begin in December.

The question I asked on May 29 had to do with what the federal government would do to help New Brunswick cope with this disaster, this crisis in the fishery, which will affect thousands of people.

That was my question. I think that there was some confusion that day. I hope that, now that the question is clearer this evening, the parliamentary secretary who will shortly be replying will be able to answer it.

Second, the federal government bought crab fishers' boats in order to give them to the aboriginals on the Burnt Church reserve. But the aboriginals do not want them. There is no agreement in this regard. It is not good enough that quotas are lower. No one is fishing these quotas. These are resources that are therefore not reaching the fish plants.

What will the government do so that these quotas can be distributed to someone else, to other fishers, so that the fish and seafood quotas are used and people can go to work?

It makes no sense that the government spent over \$10 million to close the fishery. There is nothing to show for it. People have no work.

I know that I am getting to the end of my four minutes, so I am going to ask a clear question of the government.

What is the federal government going to do to help the fish plant workers in the Acadian peninsula, who have had only three weeks work? These people could not get work this year because of the crisis we are still having with the crab fishery. What will the federal government do to help the province of New Brunswick set up a partnership in order to help these workers?

I believe my question is clear. This is what I would like to have an answer from the parliamentary secretary on. In other words, I would like to have a reply to the question I asked him on May 29.

[English]

Mr. Bill Matthews (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me say at the outset that I sympathize with the hon. member. I understand his question very well.

Representing pretty much a total fishing riding, I know the difficulties that the lack of resources can cause, not only for the harvesters but particularly for fish plant workers who do not have enough resources to process in their plants to provide meaningful work.

● (1935)

Having said that, the 1996 crab season was marked by riots and demonstrations by traditional crab fishery workers in northeastern New Brunswick. To provide temporary sharing of a very lucrative resource with non-traditional participants meant that these workers would see their weeks of work decline with reduced quotas for the traditional crab fleet.

As a result the traditional crab industry proposed a solidarity fund to assist plant workers and displaced crew members to adjust to declining employment. The solidarity fund has always been an industry led initiative with contributions from all crab harvesters each year.

The province of New Brunswick has also made contributions over the years, including a contribution of \$1 million this year. The New Brunswick portion of the fund currently includes about \$130,000 remaining from last year, plus contributions made this year by temporary participants in the fishery. The issue of contributions to the fund is one that must be resolved between crab fishers and plant workers.

In addition, under the Employment Insurance Act there are a number of HRDC benefits designed to aid unemployed Canadians. To further address the issue of the shortage of work for crab fishery workers in New Brunswick, officials of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans are currently co-operating with HRDC and the province of New Brunswick to try to find some solution for this problem.

The plant workers have asked the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to allocate crab to them. To do so would be contrary to a long established policy.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, let me begin by complimenting the parliamentary secretary on his commitment to the work of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration and the co-operative spirit he always offers in the committee.

I reiterate the question I asked of the minister during question period regarding what he had said publicly in the newspapers:

—the minister of has said that the Sklarzyk family are queue jumpers, but the fact is that the family has been ordered deported due to a technical error. Meanwhile a suspected assassin, Rudy Pacificador, has been allowed to stay in the country for 14 years and still has not been deported.

Where are the fairness and compassion in her system when it allows a suspected assassin to be treated better than a family who has behaved in an exemplary fashion?

The bad news is that the family was deported back to Poland a couple of weekends ago. My role tonight is not to be their legal advocate. My role is to raise questions about the system and why the system operates the way it does.

First, why do we protect criminals over lawful citizens even though they do not have status as permanent residents but are certainly visitors to this country? Second, why is it that we create these problems for ourselves?

Let us examine the Sklarzyk case. They came here in 1994 with two children who had been born in Poland. The irony is that they came under a visitor's visa, but the fact is their visitor's visa was renewed three times. One would think this would give the Sklarzyks the wrong message about staying around here. After three renewals they disappeared. Ironically they disappeared to start a business and raise another family. They had two more children in this country.

After seven years all of a sudden the government takes an interest in thinking that they should be removed. For what cause? Was it because they were \$50 short on their application fee? Their lawyer says they actually paid the application fee twice.

Meanwhile 15,000 people have written warrants for their deportation and we cannot even find them because we do not know where they are. However we knew where the poor Sklarzyk family was. They were in a business and raising their family like other immigrants who have come here for centuries.

Why do we pick on people like the Sklarzyks? Certainly they are a good example of the error we made in encouraging them to stay here. At the same time it shows that this county is not compassionate.

• (1940)

My question for the parliamentary secretary is this: why do we do what we do? It is a poor example to the world when Canada is supposed to be seen as a country that shows compassion.

Mr. Mark Assad (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to say that the member for Dauphin—Swan River showed that he is a very open minded individual during deliberations in committee. On many occasions his contributions were very liberal,

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if I may use the term. It was greatly appreciated. In fact, that goes for every member of the committee. There was co-operation and there were heartfelt and compassionate discussions on the best possible policy for immigration for our country.

In response to the question, the key role of our immigration policy is to strike a balance between enforcement and facilitation. It is always difficult to tell people that they have to leave Canada. I can imagine that it is very dramatic. I can assure the member that in the case of the Sklarzyk family, reported by the media, the file has been reviewed and there was no administrative error. That is a fabrication of the media.

[*Translation*]

In Canada, we apply the law in keeping with the rules. Before a person is expelled, he or she is entitled to application of the law in keeping with the rules.

I can guarantee the hon. member that no one is expelled because of administrative error. There is a clear order of priority governing expulsions: criminals, rejected refugee claimants, and visitors whose visas have expired.

[*English*]

In 1999, as reported in the media, the family overstayed the limits of their visitor's visa. At that point they had already been granted extensions and were advised to submit an application for permanent residence if their intention was to stay in Canada. No application was submitted, but the family did claim refugee status. Further, the Immigration and Refugee Board determined that the family members were not refugees. Subsequently, the family has now exhausted all avenues of appeal.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on April 5 I brought to the attention of the House the wonderful news that women and part time workers had just won an important victory, with a federal judge deciding that Canada's employment insurance rules violate their constitutional rights.

Kelly Lesiuk from Winnipeg brought forward the first charter challenge that the Employment Insurance Act treats women and part time workers unfairly. Kelly, as a part time nurse, was unable to claim EI benefits because she fell 33 hours short of qualifying. Problems with her pregnancy had forced her to stop work at five months. To make ends meet she had to return to work six weeks after undergoing a Caesarean section and the family had to deplete its savings and borrow money.

Justice Roger Salhany found that the current eligibility rules which require workers to accumulate 700 hours of employment to qualify for benefits are discriminatory. He stated:

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—the eligibility requirements demean the essential human dignity of women who predominate in the part-time labour force because they must work for longer periods than full-time workers in order to demonstrate their labour force attachment.

This makes it almost impossible for them to collect benefits. His ruling is clear. The Employment Insurance Act discriminated against women and part time workers. Women make up 70% of the part time workforce and carry most of the responsibility for raising children. This decision recognizes the juggling act of working mothers and indicates that they should not be penalized.

Because women continue to serve as primary caregivers they have fewer hours available for paid work outside the home. Consequently they end up working fewer hours, often in part time employment and, like Kelly Lesiuk, they fail to qualify for benefits.

Unbelievably the government decided to appeal this decision, with the minister saying that she needed to seek clarity. How much more clarity does the government need? An inequality is staring them in the face. Kelly Lesiuk and other women are forced to wait for the outcome of this appeal. Over 60 cases are also waiting to be heard. The government must act to recognize the real circumstances of women in the workforce.

• (1945)

Why has the government chosen to postpone justice for Canadian workers? What is the government prepared to do to address this situation? Will the government change eligibility requirements to remove the barriers creating these inequalities.

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question is an important one for part time workers, particularly as the member opposite mentioned, because such a large number of part time workers are women.

The Canada Employment Insurance Commission unanimously agreed to seek a judicial review of Justice Salhany's decision by the Federal Court of Appeal. However the scope of the umpire's ruling went beyond Ms. Lesiuk's case. Therefore, the commission felt that it was important to seek clarification with respect to a number of the aspects of this ruling.

Justice Salhany did not invalidate the employment insurance provisions at issue. The existing qualifying requirements for both regular and maternity employment insurance benefits continue to apply.

It is now up to the Federal Court of Appeal to determine the outcome of the application. As this issue is now before the courts, it is impossible for me to comment specifically about the case.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.47 p.m.)

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