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(HANSARD)

Thursday, November 29, 2001

—
Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 29, 2001

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE

Mr. Gurbax Malhi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) and in accordance with the International Labour Organization's constitution to bring recently adopted conventions and recommendations to the attention of competent authorities, I am pleased to submit two copies, in both official languages, of the Canadian Position with Respect to Conventions and Recommendations adopted at the 87th and 88th sessions of the International Labour Conference, June 1999 and June 2000 in Geneva.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. André Harvey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the Minister of Transport, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table in both official languages, the second report of the Air Travel Complaints Commissioner, Bruce Hood.

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[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 40th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the question of privilege raised on October 15 by the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast concerning Bill C-36, the anti-terrorism act.

PETITIONS

GASOLINE ADDITIVES

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

The use of MMT in gasoline results in significantly higher smog producing hydrocarbon emissions and enhances global warming.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure today to present several hundred petitions from across Saskatchewan drawing attention to the changes to the Employment Insurance Act in the past decade that have transformed the act and brought harsh measures on unemployed individuals.

In Saskatchewan alone the petitioners allege that 30% of those unemployed are now ineligible to collect employment insurance. They call upon the government to re-establish unemployment insurance as an earning replacement program that once again supports unemployed workers, their families and their communities.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

FOREIGN MISSIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ACT

The House resumed from November 27 consideration of the motion that Bill C-35, an act to amend the Foreign Missions and International Organizations Act, be read the third time and passed.

Government Orders

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to begin speaking on third reading of Bill C-35 which amends the Foreign Missions and International Organizations Act. We worked on this in committee and had good discussions and the opportunity to hear from some excellent witnesses, and in so doing better understand the issues.

The bill extends immunities in Canada to non-treaty based international organizations such as G-8 and other meetings that will be held in Canada. It allows for the application of diplomatic immunity to people participating in those meetings, whereas in the past immunities such as those included in the bill could only have been extended to treaty based organizations such as the International Civil Aviation Organization which is in Montreal. Another treaty based organization of course is the United Nations.

In providing for this application in Canada, we are not in any way enhancing the levels of diplomatic immunities. We are only extending them to include persons coming to Canada for the reasons I outlined. Other developed countries, such as the United Kingdom and the United States, have provisions in their law as well to grant privileges and immunities to non-treaty based organizations.

As well, I want to say a word concerning the proposal in the bill to clarify that an order in council for an international organization or meeting excludes the obligation now to issue a minister's permit to allow entry to Canada of persons who fall within the inadmissible classes under the Immigration Act.

The opportunity now to treat the application of such persons on a case by case basis will reside with an order in council, but it moves it within the ambit of the Department of Foreign Affairs. It was the view of some of the top experts who spoke to us that it was exactly where such an action should be located. It provides therein for continuity and keeps all of what is related to persons attending international organizations in Canada within the ambit of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

There has been discussion in the media about this bill. While I can understand some of the discussion related to other bills, I fail to see the hyperbole of some articles recently concerning Bill C-35, as the bill is not about enhancement or enlargement. It is but merely the horizontal application of the diplomatic immunities to include persons falling within the categories I described.

Therefore, I move:

That the question be now put.

• (1010)

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, is the parliamentary secretary aware that over the last five years there have been 76 criminal charges laid, and never mind other offences where there have been no charges, with regard to those who enjoy the status of being a diplomat in Canada?

I know she would love to stick to her talking points and only talk about non-treaty organizations, but there was a terrorist attack on September 11 that left thousands dead. Ahmed Ressam was using Montreal as a base and staging ground for the Mujahedeen cult in the bombing of the World Trade Center before he was caught in Seattle.

The idea that we would allow an extension of diplomatic immunity and diplomatic privileges, particularly at this point in time, disturbs me deeply considering that a number of countries have abused diplomatic privileges in the past. Also, the provision of safe houses, money, travel documents in terms of visas or passports, any of these type of things can and have been used for the advancement of terrorist causes.

How can the parliamentary secretary, having voted in favour of a bill last night that would restrict the freedoms of Canadians in light of the terrorist attacks, stand up in the House today and argue in favour of extending privileges and freedoms to foreigners based in Canada?

• (1015)

Ms. Aileen Carroll: Madam Speaker, let me convey to the hon. member that I do not need talking points. I am more than delighted to speak extemporaneously to address his concerns.

I have heard constantly, as have other members on this side of the House, the opposition focus on the number of criminal charges that have been brought forward against diplomatic persons in Canada. I think the attempt is to convey almost a criminal element that countries across the world apply to be diplomats and that this is the most desired career for anyone who has criminal proclivities.

On the whole, if one compares the percentage, one would realize that the percentage of charges brought against persons in Canada, who are here on a diplomatic or consular level, is far below the percentage within society at large.

Also, the dreadful occurrence and what happened, which again was a major focus of one of the member's colleagues in committee, to Ms. Catherine MacLean and Ms. Catherine Doré was a horror that none of us in any way underestimated. The response to that on the part of the minister and the department was a zero tolerance policy. When new people come to Canada to represent their countries, they are briefed completely on what expectations are in this country as to adherence to the criminal code.

It is important as well that I take advantage of this opportunity to try to convey one more time to some of the members of the House and to members on the standing committee that this is a reciprocal obligation and comes within the Vienna convention. These diplomatic immunities and consular immunities are accorded so people can safely go to countries around the world and conduct the business of diplomacy. We ought to remember exactly what risks our Canadian diplomats take when they go to work in countries that do not extend these same privileges. Canada does extend them and has a very high bar for what the expectations are.

I am appalled at the attempt to continually use hyperbole and take one or two instances so as to smear the entire process. It is disheartening to say the least. It is misinformed, to give the very best analysis to it.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC/DR): Madam Speaker, my question does not pertain to the principles of Bill C-35, but rather to the principles of access to information.

Government Orders

Why will the government not commit to a report to parliament? The government acknowledges that it is necessary, because the minister has said that he agrees to report on the people who apply to make use of a claim for immunity four times a year, but it will not put it in legislation. It seems to me that the minister is saying it is necessary and he will do it, but he wants to keep that flexibility so he can change his mind later on.

This kind of goes along with what is in Bill C-36, with restrictions to access to information. There seems to be a reluctance on behalf of the government to share information with parliament. All we are asking is if the government will provide a list of those people who claim immunity under these very significantly expanded immunity rules.

When I talk to Liberal members individually, they seem to agree that this is a good thing to do. Could the parliamentary secretary indicate if there has been a change of heart? Will the government add an annual report to parliament in the bill?

Ms. Aileen Carroll: Madam Speaker, the suggestion that the hon. member has brought forward has merits, and we have discussed it. As I understand, he is satisfied with the current reporting system; that four times a year those numbers on incidents are available to anyone who wishes to have. There is no requirement to go in under access to information. A copy of those reports will be made available on request.

I hope I am not stepping outside this, but I understand his concern is that this is not included in statute. Again, my understanding is that, although he is content with the policy of the department, he is concerned that when this minister is no longer minister or when this government is no longer in power, there might be another minister who is part of another government who would not continue that policy. I can understand his concern. At the same time, I am of a view that one cannot put everything in statute. One has to accept the government's function, with a combination of legislation, regulation and policy. To date that is the mix the government is proposing.

I certainly have conveyed his views and I understand them, but there is no intention at this time on the part of the government to make that policy a part of this law.

• (1020)

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Madam Speaker, in a previous answer, the parliamentary secretary indicated that the bill was simply a reciprocal arrangement with other countries.

Could she provide the House any examples of a circumstance in which Canada had a problem at an international conference as a result of the absence of this reciprocity arrangement?

Ms. Aileen Carroll: Madam Speaker, no, I could not at this time provide the hon. member with a specific example. I did make mention that the United Kingdom and the United States have similar provisions for the extension beyond non-treaty, that is to say, for the extension of immunities beyond treaty based organizations, similar to what is contained in the bill. However, I am sorry, but I am not able to provide that. I can undertake to do that but it will not be today.

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary responded to my first question

this morning by saying that she had a policy of zero tolerance. Let me ask her about her zero tolerance.

Why is someone who was charged with attempted murder, applied for a waiver of diplomatic immunity, had the waiver granted by the Canadian government, appeared in court and had the case dismissed, still a diplomat in Canada? Where is the zero tolerance on attempted murder?

Ms. Aileen Carroll: Madam Speaker, I am not sure when that incident occurred. I know that the zero tolerance policy and many other reporting policies were triggered by the incident of the Russian diplomat who was involved in the accident that caused a death. However I do not have knowledge of that one and I believe it predates that, but I am not exactly sure.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Jacques Saada (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, discussion, have taken place between all parties, as well as the member for Lakeland, concerning the taking of the division on Motion P-3 scheduled at the conclusion of private members' business later this day.

I believe you would find consent for the following motion. I move:

That, at the conclusion of today's debate on P-3, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put, a recorded division deemed requested and deferred to Tuesday, December 4, 2001, at the expiry of the time provided for government orders.

[*English*]

Mr. Rob Anders: Madam Speaker, rise on a point of order. I have a question with regard to this. I did not hear a mention of Motion P-3 in the member's comments. Does this apply to Motion P-3 or does it apply to the bill that is being debated currently, Bill C-35?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Saada: Madam Speaker, I do not think the member heard the number of the motion in English, because I did say it in French. It is indeed Motion P-3.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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[*English*]

FOREIGN MISSIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-35, an act to amend the Foreign Missions and International Organizations Act, be read the third time and passed, and of the motion that the question be now put.

Government Orders

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I think the last question posed to the parliamentary secretary shed a lot of light on the particular problem which is basically this whole idea of diplomatic immunity. Over the last five years we have had 76 crimes committed in Canada in which diplomats have been charged. We have some pretty egregious examples. I have laid out one.

The parliamentary secretary likes to claim that her government has a policy of zero tolerance on crimes committed by diplomats in Canada. Yet we have all sorts of examples, 76 of them, ranging from impaired driving, where there was a six week interval between two different incidents for the same individual, to sexual assault and interference, invitation to sexual touching, offences in relation to prostitution and criminal harassment. To me there is one that take the cake in terms of the so-called zero tolerance policy of the government, which I would claim does not exist. I think diplomatic immunity is abused. There are 8,000 individuals in Canada right now who enjoy the privilege of diplomatic immunity and over the last five years up to 13,000 people have enjoyed this type of privilege.

Let us look at some of these examples. One of the most egregious ones I can find is that of somebody who was charged with attempted murder in Canada and applied for a waiver of diplomatic immunity. It makes sense, I guess, if somebody is guilty as charged and realizes there is wiggle room to get out. Maybe that person's government allows the person the privilege of applying for diplomatic immunity. However, how can this parliamentary secretary can get up in her place and claim there is zero tolerance when the government grants the immunity? It is one thing for the government of a criminal to ask it but quite another for this government, which loves to claim it has zero tolerance, to grant it.

One might ask, then, what happened? Indeed, the criminal appeared in court and the case was dismissed. What is even more egregious is this policy of zero tolerance. Not only did the government grant the person the waiver of diplomatic immunity, but this person is still in Canada after having been charged with attempted murder and the woman across the way has the gall to stand in the House today and claim with a straight face that she has a zero tolerance policy with regard to criminals and diplomatic immunity. Shame on her.

I will go on to some of the problems I see in the bill. We have a situation where we have just recently had two terrible and tragic terrorist bombings in the United States. It is not as though Canada is immune. When Ahmed Ressam was interviewed by reporters previous to his capture in Seattle he was on his way, from Canada, to bomb the Los Angeles airport, planning what he was doing out of New York, which the Mujahedeen cult, for example, uses as a staging ground. Ahmed Ressam claimed there were 60 individuals like him who were trained in the preparation, delivery, et cetera, of bombs just for his particular proclivities and cause, never mind all the other terrorists that may choose to use Montreal or Canada generally as a base from which to stage operations. This was just for Ahmed Ressam alone. He claimed there were 60 other individuals like him residing in the Montreal area who were in favour of his cause and the government has the gall to extend and expand diplomatic immunity privileges.

• (1025)

Since the member across the way sees fit to heckle today, I will retort in terms of what he is talking about. I will explain to him why extending diplomatic immunity is bad in cases just like that. He is burrowing his head in his books and so he should.

The reason the diplomatic immunity extension is particularly bad in those cases, if the member happened to be reading about or paying attention to any of these things, is that at least a half dozen if not a dozen countries have misused diplomatic immunity over the last decade or two. They have abused the privileges of safe houses. They have abused the privileges of travel documents, visas and passports. They have abused the privileges with regard to money transfer in the country.

Does the member across the way not happen to remember that his own finance minister had to be accountable for the abuse of money transferring privileges in the country? Now of course someone has left the Chamber. The heat was a little too hot in the kitchen, I think.

It is egregious to consider that the government will go ahead and open up this Pandora's box of diplomatic immunity after it has gone ahead and restricted freedoms on Canadian citizens. Instead of going after the culprits, the ones who dare to actually plan bomb attacks against citizens in North America, no, instead of going after the people who purport these things and the governments who actually fund these activities and train these terrorists in their vicinities, instead of going after the people who come to Canada with allegiances other than our own, the government is going after our own citizens. It makes no sense whatsoever.

The parliamentary secretary across the way, with her elitist out of touch attitude this morning, sits guffawing and wonders why Canadians are upset. She cracks down and votes proudly for those things that would restrict the freedoms of Canadians, but would go ahead and happily and gaily stand up this morning and talk about how she will extend the diplomatic privileges for foreigners in the country when I have given her perfectly good examples of people who have abused diplomatic privileges in the country. Does she not understand? It is egregious.

A number of events will be coming up in our country. In my backyard we are to have the G-8 summit. It will be held in Kananaskis. I hope it goes off without a hitch and I hope the government provides all the necessary resources it is supposed to provide, which it still has not coughed up for Quebec City in terms of the costs of some of the meetings held there. Even though that event will be taking place, what do we have happening? The government wants to extend more diplomatic privileges for people, whether it is for a summit, for example, with diplomats from China, a known human rights abuser, coming to our country, or for an APEC summit, and we all know the Prime Minister's fondness for pepper spray and whether he has it on his plate too and all the rest of the fine quotes that man mumbled with regard to the whole APEC inquiry and the cover up involved with that.

Government Orders

With these meetings coming up we will have a lot of diplomats visiting the country. Instead of trying to limit the amount of immunity given out for potential crimes coming up, and we certainly know there are a whole raft of those as I have a document detailing 76 of them just in the last five years, instead of curtailing that in light of the terrorist attacks, the government, in its top-down wisdom, in its elitist pronouncements, has decided to go ahead and extend diplomatic immunity in this circumstance rather than place restrictions on it.

I will give the House some of the gruesome details because I think it is very important that people know about them. The gruesome details include, for example, that in committee when this came up, and I am hoping the parliamentary secretary was there because I will be able to judge by her face today whether or not she was by her reaction to this, the opposition, not just the Canadian Alliance but indeed all the parties in the opposition, put forward an amendment that would have kept the current reporting procedure in place. The current reporting procedure is that there actually has to be a ministerial permit and every year there has to be an annual report to parliament in terms of accountability.

• (1030)

Under Bill C-35 the Liberals wanted to get rid of it so that it would not be subject to the part of the Immigration Act we are dealing with. Opposition members in all parties put forward an amendment to keep the standard reporting practice in place so that there would have to be a ministerial permit and an annual report. The Liberal members across the way, the governing majority that has had no plan since the terrorist attacks in the United States and that has been coasting on cruise control, voted down an amendment by the opposition parties to keep the ministerial permit requirement in place and to make sure there was an annual report to parliament.

I see a former reporter across the way. I am sure that somewhere deep down it disturbs him that he will be asked by his government to vote for a restriction to the freedom of information given to the press and to people across the country. I ask the member to keep that in mind in terms of his vote. He has approached me personally in the past regarding matters of public record. I wonder how he feels about this matter of public record.

Not only that, there was an amendment that dealt with the entrenchment of the minister's promise in law. I guess the Liberals across the way do not like promises, because they break them and they certainly do not like entrenching them in law, and once again the Liberal majority voted against the provision, against very wise and astute amendments put forward by all opposition parties, I might add for the parliamentary secretary.

The third egregious point in terms of the nitty-gritty details of the bill is that it totally ignores the recommendation of the Hughes report with regard to the independence of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. We well know that Jean Carle, the Prime Minister and some others were involved in trying to tamper, tinker and interfere with the APEC summit. I am not sure why, because frankly some of the henchmen and violators of human rights who came into the country fully deserved some of the protest coming their way. However, our Prime Minister tinkered with that particular process for the APEC meeting and of course an inquiry resulted. Rather than listening to

the Hughes report which was done as a result of the whole APEC situation, they have ignored it.

With what I have seen from the government over my last five years as a member of parliament, I cannot be that surprised. What often happens is that if there is a wrongdoing the government will create an inquiry of some sort, or a royal commission which is even nicer because it has a nice title. It will then shut down the inquiry the minute it gets a little too close to implicating the government with some of the problems and fire a couple of bureaucrats or someone else who had to carry out its orders, perhaps ending the careers of some fine RCMP officers who had to obey their political masters, in this case the Liberal Party of Canada. Conveniently the government will then shelve the report and, just like the parliamentary secretary did today, stand up as proud as a peacock and tell us it is in favour of a bill that will go against the Hughes report. Is that not special? We have another example of that happening here today.

As well, because of the Hughes report there was a third amendment that all opposition parties supported. It would have made political interference in RCMP operations at international conferences an offence. It was pretty clear. The RCMP's duty is to serve and protect the Canadian public. We want the RCMP to carry out that task without political interference from the Prime Minister's Office or any of the other Liberal henchmen across the way, including the parliamentary secretary. Instead of supporting an amendment that was supported by all opposition parties, the Liberal majority on the foreign affairs committee voted it down. Surprise, surprise.

• (1035)

We introduced an amendment for greater accountability that was backed by all opposition parties. The government killed that chance for accountability. We submitted a second proposal for the government to put some accountability back into the bill. It was put forward and proposed by all opposition parties, and again the government voted against accountability.

We did it a third time with regard to the RCMP, the people who are supposed to enforce the law and not the Liberals across the way. A third time we asked for greater accountability according to the Hughes report that the government said it would listen to. What did the government do? A third time in a row, three strikes and you are out, accountability went down again. That is the record.

We have a sad situation today. The government across the way is only too willing to go after websites created by Canadians. The government wants to expunge any of the material there and put Canadians through a laborious appeal process for which they do not get any specifications in terms of timelines. The government is willing to do all these things to restrict the freedom of speech of average Canadians because it is worried about terrorism.

Mr. Philip Mayfield: Jail them secretly.

Mr. Rob Anders: That is right. There are all sorts of nasty things the government is willing to do in the name of anti-terrorism. However on the flip side there are at least half a dozen governments that I could count right off the tip of my fingers which have in one way or another abused diplomatic immunity over the last 20 years.

Government Orders

The government has chosen to open up the gates instead of going after the people who fund terrorist acts and provide travel documents and passports, visas, diplomatic immunity and diplomatic pouches for the transfer of materials. It is not going after those foreign missions, consulates, embassies, diplomats and attendees that come to Canada for various conventions and who are agents of foreign governments that have funded some of these acts.

The government has chosen to open Pandora's box and allow those people greater freedoms and privileges in Canada while restricting those of its own citizens, those people who are native to this land.

I cannot tell the House how frustrating it is to be an opposition member in parliament and watch the government fumble with the whole issue of national security. For years we called on the government to do things for national security.

We called on the government to increase the size of the Canadian armed forces and to secure better equipment for the forces as it was rusting out. We called on the government to look into the matter of people coming to Canada and claiming refugee status when they burn and destroy their own documents. We criticized the lack of detention and enforcement in that regard.

We called for greater police force provisions to have more police out there enforcing the law. We called on all these things ever since we first came to parliament. Even some of my colleagues who were here four years before my time called for these reforms. Yet when it came to the crunch and a terrorist crisis killed thousands of North Americans with evidence of planning and staging in Canada, the government failed us.

The government went ahead and opened the doors to those who would harm us and restricted the freedoms of those who were there to bolster us and help us. It does not make any sense.

•(1040)

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened to the remarks of my colleague across the way with regard to terrorism and the government's lack of effort in this regard. In some ways he is correct and in some ways he is wrong. I have a very simple question for him.

Yesterday an historic vote was held in the House of Commons. I know the member did not vote with the majority of his party. I believe he voted with the Bloc. The NDP voted against the bill because of the egregious errors it would commit upon all Canadians.

The leader of the Canadian Alliance stood in the House time and time again and spoke for well over an hour yesterday complaining about the faults of the bill. He then stood and voted for the bill.

Why did this member's leader and the majority of the party that he represents cry about how bad the bill and the government were and then vote for the legislation? When the rubber hit the road those members stood and voted for the legislation. I cannot believe they did that.

I give this member credit because, true to his word, he voted against it. However the majority of his party overwhelmingly

denounced the bill in committee and in public and then turned around and voted for it. I would like to know why his leader did that.

•(1045)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): It is not the place of the Chair to question the relevance of the question. If the hon. member wishes to answer the question, he may do so.

Mr. Rob Anders: Madam Speaker, the hon. member sits with me on the national defence and veterans affairs committee. I would like to put a plug in for him and say that the government has probably downsized too many bases. I am aware that an issue near and dear to his heart is ensuring that his constituents on the good, fine base at Shearwater have the resources they need to continue their operations. I say save Shearwater.

Now that I have that out of the way I will address the member's question. The Canadian Alliance believes in free votes in this place more so than any other party in the House.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Rob Anders: I hear crying and guffawing coming across the way. I would suggest to those who are real students of democracy, free votes and parliamentary procedure to check the record to see which party of all the parties in this place has the better record in allowing free votes and allowing people to speak their minds and to speak for their constituencies as opposed to their party leaders. Our record will stand up very well.

My constituents were equally torn over this issue so I went with my conscience in terms of the concerns that I heard. Being 50:50 either way for my constituents put me in a position to allow me to do that.

I cherish the fact that the Canadian Alliance, and before it the Reform Party, laid out more concrete measures than any other party in the history of the country. The Alliance talked about allowing free votes and having a formal vote of non-confidence. In that way no government could whip its own members into voting the party line to avoid the government from falling.

There should be a formal vote of non-confidence. We put that down in black and white and ran on it in election campaigns. I wish that more people had seen fit to make that the election issue because, if that were the case, the Alliance would have been the government that truly believed in democratic and representative government.

I am proud of the record the Alliance has stood on. In that way government members would be able to vote against legislation that they did not think was good enough and which needed to be reassessed. Legislation only gets better by doing something like that. It may be a horrible process to watch and engage in for those of us who are the cogs in the wheel, but nonetheless it is a valuable exercise for the people we make laws for. For that reason having free votes and a formal vote of non-confidence so the government cannot whip people on things that should not be votes of confidence provides a good record for the Alliance. That is why I did what I did.

Government Orders

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, the hon. member mentioned what happens in committees. Opposition parties put forward amendments and the government does not seem to listen. I sat on a number of committees and I have almost come to the conclusion that decisions are made before we ever get to committee.

I believe a number of the committees are an absolute total waste of time because government members obviously know before we start in on some of these studies how they are supposed to vote. They are told how to vote and they stand by that. Would the hon. member comment on that?

The hon. member mentioned the Hughes report that was studied by a committee. Did the government pay for the Hughes report? Does the member have any knowledge of the cost?

It is like other reports. We hear the government profess to the public that it is doing a certain study. A study is brought before a committee and we hear no more about it, or we hear it will be addressed in a timely fashion. I am sick and tired of that. I am concerned about the waste of the work committee members do.

The hon. member mentioned people in government such as RCMP officers or people in other areas of government coming forward with some concerns and getting slapped or put down. This is also a real concern. People are coming forward with legitimate concerns. They follow every step by bringing concerns to their superiors. They get slapped, punished, banished and their careers are put on hold. They get fired and have no place to go.

In this day and age, in a country that is supposed to be democratic and free, why is it that we do not have whistleblower protection legislation to protect people when they have legitimate concerns? Nobody in government will listen to them until somebody's butt gets burned, especially officials high up the ladder who are gagged. Does the hon. member not believe it is time we had whistleblower protection?

• (1050)

Mr. Rob Anders: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his questions. I am also frustrated with how our committees work. I sat on committees with you, Madam Speaker, and remember how you were frustrated by your own government members with regard to the Elections Act. I thought it was a wise provision that you were putting in place which would allow for local fundraising without the authorization of the top down control, the Prime Minister in that respect.

That being the case, committees could work in this place. However like all things in the House of Commons they are very partisan beasts. I sometimes look to our neighbours to the south where their congressional committees have the power, and probably then some in comparison to ours, to call before them anybody in the land to give them wisdom and advice on adjudicating and making the laws of the land.

There have been times in the history of our neighbour to the south when particular impressive committee work was done. Even democrats like Robert Kennedy did good work in that regard. People laugh because they know I am probably more sympathetic to the republicans.

That being the case I believe committees could work. However they are not allowed to because of the interference by the parliamentary secretaries, the Prime Minister's Office and the people coming in from the whip's office to carefully count heads and shape things.

The hon. member wanted me to comment on the Hughes report. I do not know the actual cost. However I am sure that taxpayers, if they look into it, would know that millions of dollars were wasted by the government to put forward that report. Yet it has not followed through on its recommendations so it was a tax and spend scenario to fund something that was never used.

With regard to the RCMP or soldiers I know some of my colleagues talked with people with regard to Kananaskis or other things in their ridings. It is a shame when we do not listen to officers on the frontline. I talked to customs officials who told me they wanted more sniffer dogs and vehicle lifts so they could look underneath vehicles. They told me they needed more staff and other practical things. Yet when we asked the ministers across the way they totally denied it. I do not know how that works. They did not want to recognize there was a problem.

I believe in whistleblower protection. If somebody in the administration of the government finds a way to save money I would even give them a percentage of the money they saved as an incentive for them to find ways to save taxpayer dollars.

• (1055)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Unfortunately the time has expired for questions and comments but I would ask the House if there is unanimous consent for one question and a quick answer because I did not see the hon. member. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Madam Speaker, these are the games that get played around here. I am pleased to rise today to speak in opposition to Bill C-35. This is a bill that purports to amend the Foreign Missions and International Organizations Act and to modernize the privileges and immunities regime. It is supposed to allow Canada to comply with its existing commitments under international treaties and to respond to recent developments in international law.

We are told its enactment would correct the deficiency in the existing statutory definition of international organization and provide the RCMP with primary responsibility to ensure security for the proper functioning of intergovernmental conferences. We are told this clear statutory authority would support security provisions taken by Canadian police in fulfilling the country's obligations to protect persons who have privileges and immunities under the act.

Before I get into the substance of my remarks I will comment a bit on the bill's diplomatic immunity provisions and the reference made by the member for the Alliance to the tragic incident of last January that involved Catherine MacLean and Catherine Doré.

Government Orders

I have never had a chance to speak in the House about this issue, but I consider myself a close personal friend of John Fryer who was the partner of Catherine MacLean. I worked with Philippe Doré who is the husband of Catherine Doré. What happened on that occasion was absolutely tragic. John Fryer and the children of Catherine MacLean know they have the full support, sympathy and understanding of myself and the members of the New Democratic Party caucus.

The fundamentals of Bill C-35 are not to protect the immorality, wrongdoing and drunken driving that happened in January last year. We ought to be primarily concerned about officials who come to Canada and receive diplomatic immunity, not about preventing protesters from getting close enough to make their case against them.

I will make reference specifically to what has happened since September 11. The government seems to be, as Naomi Klein pointed out in yesterday's *Globe and Mail*, ditching laws to avoid the messy street protests that started to occur in Canada in Vancouver in November 1997 and continued in Quebec City last year.

As Klein points out, civil libertarians and politicians have been duking it out over Bill C-36 since October 15. The justice minister who is responsible for the bill says the law is designed to target terrorists and terrorist groups. She insists it is not a crackdown on legitimate political activism and protest.

I welcome members to Bill C-35. It has been making its way through parliament while being downplayed by the parliamentary secretary as a housekeeping measure. On the surface all the bill does is expand the definition of an internationally protected person, those foreign dignitaries who are granted diplomatic immunity when they come to the country.

The concerns about protected persons tell only part of the story. The rest is revealed when Bill C-35 is cross referenced with several clauses in Bill C-36 that classify many actions taken against protected persons as terrorist activities. Together Bill C-35 and Bill C-36 form a one two punch that would knock out the right to protest outside international meetings that take place in Canada.

• (1100)

It would work like this. Bill C-35 defines internationally protected persons as "representatives of a foreign state that is a member of or participates in an international organization". The principle is taken from the UN convention granting diplomatic immunity to politicians attending international conventions.

Members will recall that before the APEC conference in Vancouver the then Canadian foreign affairs minister Lloyd Axworthy apologized to the prime minister of Indonesia for the campaign in Canada to portray Indonesia's brutal dictator, President Suharto, as a criminal. His picture appeared on a wanted poster.

Mr. Axworthy wrote at the time that it was outrageous and excessive and not the way Canadians behaved. He assured the Indonesian prime minister that General Suharto would not suffer the indignity of being in close proximity to any protest. The subsequent RCMP crackdown on peaceful dissent at APEC led to the Hughes report which we were discussing earlier today.

The excessive use of pepper spray and rubber bullets against protesters at the free trade agreement of the Americas meeting in Quebec City in April this year further demonstrated that the RCMP can treat Canadian protesters as criminals to protect foreign officials, even officials who preside over security forces that systematically arrest, torture and kill their own protesters back home.

Our concern is that Bill C-35 would help entrench some unjust contradictions into Canadian law. The Suhartos and Pinochets of the world would be more confident than ever when deciding whether to attend international events in Canada. Bill C-35 would allow them to feel totally secure during their visits because they would know two things. First, the law would exempt them from prosecution for their crimes. Second, it would mandate the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to protect them from protesters who oppose their regimes.

Because they control their domestic security and legal systems the world's state terrorists have immunity from their own country's laws. I am concerned Bill C-35 would extend that immunity to their visits to Canada.

Ironically Bill C-35 comes at a time when the government is publicly pushing Bill C-36. We passed it yesterday and it is now in the other place. It contains sweeping new powers that may threaten the civil liberties of innocent Canadians. While giving much attention to the upcoming anti-terrorism law it seems there have been far too few references in the media to Bill C-35 that will be used to offer protection to foreign state terrorists during official visits.

I asked the parliamentary secretary if she could give examples where reciprocity had been used. One of the explanations of the need for Bill C-35 was that we needed reciprocal arrangements with other countries. The parliamentary secretary said she was unable to provide examples at the moment but would send us some.

She will have difficulty doing so. There have been no incidents in the past where Canadians were unable to attend international conferences because we did not have a law such as the one being proposed today.

I will focus a little of my remaining time on clause 5 of the bill. My colleague from Burnaby—Douglas did a thorough review of the clause in an earlier presentation at second reading of the bill. Clause 5 is a new clause that would extend unprecedented sweeping powers to the RCMP with respect to security at international meetings in Canada.

• (1105)

The government has told us it is only codifying existing laws. If that is the case the question is obvious: Why do we need the statute at all if would not broaden the powers but simply codify existing powers?

Government Orders

The hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas pointed out that the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade reviewed the bill as an extraordinary step. He said Canadians have a right to know how concerned all members at the committee including government members were about provisions of the legislation.

The report the committee submitted to the House stated that expert legal testimony it had heard:

—raised serious concerns about the adequacy and interpretive clarity of the existing language in Article 5, notably in regard to the provisions regarding the primary responsibility of the RCMP for taking measures, including the establishment of security perimeters, that are appropriate and reasonable in the circumstances—

The report also stated:

Whereas, notwithstanding the existing authority of peace officers under the common law, of the RCMP under the *RCMP Act* and under other statutory authority pertaining to the security of internationally protected persons, Article 5 will for the first time in statute give the RCMP explicit powers to establish security perimeters for certain conferences of an international nature;

Whereas these codified RCMP powers may affect the rights and privileges of Canadian citizens in relation to such conferences;

Whereas the testimony heard by the Committee strongly pointed towards the desirability of a broader review of the statutory authorities governing police powers in respect of future situations within Canada where security perimeters may be warranted;

The Committee urges the Government to take into account the legitimate concerns which have been expressed in regard to the drafting of Article 5 of the Bill.

As the member for Burnaby—Douglas pointed out at the time, this was a strong signal from the foreign affairs committee that clause 5 which is in many respects the heart of Bill C-35 is unacceptable.

A unanimous report from the committee said to look out because it had real reservations about the clause. The government should have listened to the committee and voted to change the bill by amending or preferably deleting the clause. Instead of doing that and sending the issue back to the House, government members stood and voted against their own colleagues on the foreign affairs committee who had voiced caution about the clause. That is a significant point.

I am concerned that the two bills taken together would give the RCMP more powers than it ever dreamed it could acquire. This could have a significant negative effect on the right of people to protest peacefully. We are on the verge of criminalizing dissent in Canada.

I will quote Alan Borovoy, a long time head of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. Mr. Borovoy pointed out:

—to be minimally effective, a demonstration must be able to create an atmosphere of political and social tension for those whose decisions it is trying to influence. While it is appropriate to keep protestors far enough away so that they cannot physically intimidate, they must be sufficiently close in order to politically castigate.

Bill C-35 would leave wide open the question of whether that would be the case. We in the NDP caucus are opposed to the bill. The citizens of Canada need to look at Bill C-35 and Bill C-36 together. The government says it is a relatively small housekeeping amendment and not terribly significant. The proof will be in the pudding next summer when protestors go to Kananaskis to protest the G-8. At that time we will see whether peaceful protestors are able to object to what is happening with globalization or whether the

security perimeter around Kananaskis will make it impossible for protestors to have their voices heard as world leaders head into the summit. That will be the test.

• (1110)

I think the legislation, once it is passed, as it will be by the majority, will prove that dissent is very much circumscribed in the country. I also believe that civil libertarians and people of goodwill, many of whom believe we have a very good record on civil and human rights and the ability to speak out and protest peacefully, will see those rights diminished a great deal as a result of Bills C-36 and C-35.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC/DR): Madam Speaker, I have one little question. The member mentioned reciprocal agreements with other countries. The parliamentary secretary also mentioned that as justification for the bill. It was explained that since other countries give us this reciprocal consideration we should give it to them.

Could the member tell me how many countries now qualify under this Canadian expanded immunity and how many countries grant us the same immunity? The member probably cannot. I had wanted to ask the parliamentary secretary but I did not have time so I thought I would ask the member as he had mentioned it earlier.

Mr. Dick Proctor: Madam Speaker, the member for Cumberland—Colchester is absolutely right, I cannot answer it. However I think the record will show that the parliamentary secretary was unable to answer that question earlier when I asked if she could give examples. I did not ask for specific numbers but I did ask for examples of countries where Canada had been unable to attend an international conference because we did not have this reciprocal arrangement.

I am afraid I cannot answer the member's question at this time because it has not been given to me by the government side.

Ms. Aileen Carroll: Madam Speaker, I better understand the question that was asked by both members of the opposition.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have an answer?

Ms. Aileen Carroll: Madam Speaker, with the patience and perseverance of the member for Wild Rose, I want to say that my understanding was that the member was querying as to whether there was reciprocity. Now I understand the question to be whether a Canadian member of a delegation has ever been turned away from a conference in another country.

While I cannot give the member an answer, yes, this particular person was, nor can I—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Unfortunately, that is not a point of order. It is a point of debate. We are in questions and comments. If the hon. parliamentary secretary wants to get up on questions and comments I will recognize her.

However, I will recognize another member. The hon. member for Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot.

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Bills C-36 and C-35 say nothing about security perimeters. However, what they indeed do is define additional powers, as the member who spoke just said, to the RCMP.

Government Orders

I would submit to that member that what choice do we have? These are not peaceful protests we are dealing with. We are dealing with violent protests and it becomes increasingly dangerous to have any kind of international conference. Only last week, just 100 yards from my very office on Parliament Hill, peaceful protesters wearing masks smashed through the windows of a McDonald's restaurant. My staff were scared and they phoned me up.

So, Madam Speaker, I submit to the member that as long as protesters are allowed to wear masks, as long as they use violence and as long as there is a chance that terrorists may be infiltrating such protesters wearing masks, I do not know what choice we have but to give the RCMP reasonable powers to bring peace to protests.

• (1115)

Mr. Dick Proctor: Madam Speaker, there is no one in our caucus who supports the kind of activities the member described of smashing windows. At the same time I think the member is only telling half of the story.

What happened on the day subsequent, as I understand it, and I was not at that demonstration, was that some 41 people who were not wearing masks were arrested and detained by police.

As we read in the media, the police went into the crowd and picked out certain individuals who were dressed in black because it is an arresting colour, as was pointed out. We saw television images of police dogs biting protestors who were on the ground. A complaint was filed by a CBC reporter who was clubbed by a baton.

What the individual is asking is, what choice do we have? The answer is that Canadians will have no choice. Peaceful protestors will be far away from Kananaskis. They will be lucky if they are in Calgary because of the security perimeter that will be enforced by the RCMP next summer.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, maybe the hon. member who just spoke could clear my head about something that has really been bothering me about that particular party.

I understand what he is saying with regard to the bill. I believe in being able to protest peacefully as much as possible. Part of Kananaskis is in my riding and when we hear about fires being started and the damage and trashing that can happen, we become afraid. I think the member finds any police force a little offensive.

However, what really bothers me about that particular party is that while it condemns the efforts and methods used to stop certain activities from taking place, why was it and that member so supportive of the wheat board handcuffing farmers, hauling them off in chains and throwing them in jail? Do not tell me this did not happen because I was there to witness it. Farmers were charged and arrested for trying to sell their own crops while trying to make a point. That party absolutely supported these people being arrested and charged and yet members of that party are doers of all good. I do not understand where the party is coming from.

Mr. Dick Proctor: Madam Speaker, with respect to the member for Wild Rose, I think the member would look in vain to find any criticism, support, succour or comfort that we ever gave to the Government of Canada for arresting and putting in jail the farmers

for justice. That does not mean we are not strong supporters of the Canadian Wheat Board.

I recall speaking in the House less than two weeks ago to the private member's bill put forward by the member for Yorkton—Melville where I specifically said that while we support the Canadian Wheat Board, we certainly never supported the idea that people who were taking grain across the line into the United States should be handcuffed, put in leg irons, put in jail and all the rest of it. The member for Wild Rose should know that is on the record.

• (1120)

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Madam Speaker, we watched in horror what the RCMP did to protestors at the APEC conference. We heard Mr. Stewart say “All right, folks, my job is to clear out of it.” Without giving people a chance to get off their feet and move, he very quickly peppered sprayed them with about eight seconds' notice.

Mr. John Bryden: What about the jerks with crowbars who smashed the windows at McDonald's?

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Nobody supports anyone smashing windows at McDonald's. It is utter nonsense to say that the majority of peaceful protestors are breaking windows at McDonald's—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I know how passionate it can get in the Chamber but would the hon. member put his question? We only have half a minute left.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Madam Speaker, my question is quite simple. Will the bill not give even greater powers to the RCMP than it has now in acting on steroids when it comes to something of that nature?

Mr. Dick Proctor: Madam Speaker, it was not just APEC in Vancouver. It was also Quebec City last spring. Many protestors who were simply sitting on the ground were arrested. They were not doing anything violent at the time. Many of them were detained. Several cases are still before the courts and have not been resolved. There were three in the riding I represent in Saskatchewan. Those things ought to be of concern to all of us, especially the member from Flamborough.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC/DR): Madam Speaker, I wish to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the very distinguished member for Prince George—Peace River.

I think this is the fourth time I have spoken to the bill and I did not think I had a lot to add, or at least that is what I thought when I made my notes. However, the more I hear of it and the more I put it into relevance with everything else that is going on around us, the more I see that the overall approach here is an attempt by the government to take over everything. It is an attempt to exclude parliamentarians, to prevent us from doing our jobs in any meaningful way and to concentrate the decision making process in a very small circle.

Government Orders

Bill C-35 amends the Foreign Missions and International Organizations Act to expand immunity to a lot of people and a lot of foreigners who have never had it before. It involves a lot of changes in procedure. It was presented as a housekeeping bill but the more we get into it, the more we see how profound and important it is. It changes the way we do many things and is a contradiction in many ways to the parallel bill, Bill C-36, which was passed last night.

Bill C-36 restricts Canadians, imposes new laws, new punishments and restricts civil liberties, while Bill C-35 expands immunity against all of our laws to a group of people that is not even named or identified. The system is not even named or identified to my satisfaction. To me it is a contradiction that we are expanding immunity to these unknown people who are going to come to Canada, while for Canadians we are creating new laws with new restrictions and taking away civil rights from people in order to deal with terrorism.

It is a complicated issue. I know Canadians want us to deal with terrorism and that is why Bill C-36 was passed last night, but there are things in Bill C-36 that make many of us feel uncomfortable.

One thing that really stands out in Bill C-35, and I have spoken about it many times, is the simple reluctance by the government to report to parliament who makes claims under the new expanded immunity regulations. I do not understand why there is reluctance to put this into legislation.

The minister says he will report four times a year on who files claims against immunity but he will not put it into legislation. The only conclusion I can come to is he will not put it into legislation because he wants to be able to change it, or a subsequent minister to be able to change the rules, or whatever and deny parliament and Canadians access to this information. There is a contradiction because under Bill C-36 the government just put in an amendment to include annual reporting for certain aspects of it.

The parliamentary secretary says we cannot put everything into legislation on Bill C-35 but the government put it in Bill C-36. The arguments do not wash; they are contradictory and do not make sense. The government for some reason does not want annual reporting. It does not want parliament to know what is going on or what is happening under this new expanded regime of immunity.

Another argument that comes up even more now than before is the argument that we have to do this because it is part of the Vienna Convention and we have reciprocal agreements. I do not believe that all the countries we deal with, or even very many of them, have reciprocal agreements. There are probably only a very few countries that have reciprocal agreements that are as wide ranging and broad as this bill is in coverage for diplomats and visitors to foreign nations.

I have asked that question. I hope I will get an answer from the parliamentary secretary. I did not get a chance to ask her directly but she knows the question is out there. I would like to know exactly how many countries qualify for the Canadian expanded immunity and how many countries give us the same immunity. I want to know exactly which countries give exactly the same immunity. My feeling is it is not going to be very many.

There are two other aspects of the bill I wish to touch on. The catalyst that generated the bill was the Hughes report on the convention in Vancouver, but it does not follow the Hughes report.

• (1125)

There is nothing in the bill that prevents politicians from interfering with the actions of the RCMP. It identifies the RCMP as the responsible police force in any case where there are more than two countries' citizens involved or meetings that involve more than two countries. That is a good thing. It makes it a lot simpler and a lot quicker to determine who is responsible, but there is nothing in it that says politicians are restricted from interfering with the RCMP which was a very clear message in the Hughes report.

On one hand the government says it is following the Hughes report and on the other it does not when it is convenient for the government, and as long as the government can retain power. A key part of all the bills is that the government either retains power or acquires more power in an ever lessening circle of people.

The other question I have had over and over again is how we determine what people qualify for the expanded immunity. I am not at all satisfied with the answers. One foreign affairs official said that if we give diplomatic privileges and immunities for a meeting, then all participants that we let in for that meeting will get it.

What kind of a broad based blanket immunity is that? In the past we did it one on one. Every participant was examined. There was a file on every person who applied for diplomatic immunity. We knew what we were doing. In this case the officials are saying that if there is a meeting and it is decided it will be subject to diplomatic immunity, then everybody will get diplomatic immunity. I certainly disagree with that philosophy. I do not know who will make the final decision. I am not satisfied with who will make the decision on what meetings qualify but it sounds like they will try to include every meeting and every person who is even remotely involved with the meetings.

It was very disappointing to see some of the amendments that were moved not only by my party but other opposition parties, refused, turned down or defeated by the government. I do not understand why the government has a policy of blanket turndowns even though the amendments make sense, whether they are from my party or another party. The government just does it on principle. It turns them down even when they will help make the bill better for Canadians.

We will not be supporting the bill. Unfortunately at the start we thought we would be supporting it but it is clear that the government is intransigent on changes, amendments or even common sense proposals. It will not make the minor changes for which we and other parties have asked so we will be voting against the bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC/DR): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague who has been keeping us informed of the problems relating to this bill for several weeks now.

Government Orders

Essentially, this is a bill to promote diplomatic tourism. Perhaps the minister responsible for Canadian tourism should have been the one to introduce it.

What it is saying is “Come to our country. Our dollar is at an all-time low. Also, there is very little risk as well of your having any trouble with the Canadian justice system, because you will have immunity. So come on over. At the airport they will give you a guide to our Canadian mountains, the way to get to Mont-Tremblant. On top of that, you will get visitor's papers and immunity”.

I do not know whether diplomatic tourism is part of the strategy, but there is a probable link with the lack of Canadian leadership on the international scene. Instead of showing some leadership internationally, instead of contacting other countries to convince them of the position that should be taken for the good of the people we represent, instead of trying to act as a credible mediator in certain international conflicts, our message is this: “Because Canada has lost a bit of its edge as far as international leadership is concerned, we are going to become the country most visited by those with diplomatic immunity”.

I would like to know what my hon. colleague thinks of this bill entitled “Diplomatic Tourism: Canada is Open for Business”.

• (1130)

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Casey: Madam Speaker, that is a good way to look at it, as diplomatic tourism, but the bill is not about tourism; it is about security for Canadians. The bill dramatically reduces security for Canadians in our opinion by allowing people to come to Canada knowing they can contravene our laws and they will not be held accountable.

The strange thing is there has been no need presented by the government to justify the bill. No one has ever told us that they refused to come to Canada because we did not give them the right to break our laws. No one has ever refused to come. There has never been a problem with this. We have never had a Canadian in another land wanting expanded immunity. It has never happened. Whether they were tourists or diplomats, no one has every refused to come.

There is no need for the bill, other than the government wants to restrict reporting to parliament, which it has done, and concentrate power.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments by my colleague for Cumberland—Colchester, on which I would like him to elaborate.

The Liberals claim to be the defender of Canadian values. There has to be an absolute reason that the Liberal government is bringing in one of the most regressive pieces of legislation to hit the House of Commons in a long time. The Liberals did it with Bill C-36 and now they are doing it with what I call the son of Sam legislation, Bill C-35.

The hon. member is a learned and experienced parliamentarian. Why does he think the Liberals are doing this?

Mr. Bill Casey: Madam Speaker, the Liberals come up with an issue that is of great concern to Canadians, such as terrorism. Then

they say they will pass a bill that will satisfy the concerns about terrorism, but they will bake in a whole lot of other things that will force members, both in the Liberal Party and opposition, to agree with it.

In order to achieve some of their goals, the Liberals take advantage of the great concern by Canadians. The goals are to concentrate power with the government. The Liberals give the power of more and more decisions to a smaller group of people on the government side and eliminate access to information and prevent members of parliament from having the information and tools to work with.

It is not only Bill C-35 and Bill C-36. It is many bills. The next one to come along will be Bill C-42 which is going to do exactly the same thing. Bill C-42 will restrict civil liberties. It will concentrate power in a very small circle on the government benches. It is exactly the same thing.

To answer the member's question, the excuse may be the concerns of Canadians but the real driving force is to concentrate power.

• (1135)

Ms. Aileen Carroll: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Bill C-35 predates September 11. I know all of you want to connect every dot and that is what you alleged. I grow tired of this constant fixation to attach it to something—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The hon. parliamentary secretary should address her point of order through the Chair. Also, on the point of order, there can be clarification of a date.

Does the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester wish to continue on questions and comments?

Mr. Bill Casey: Madam Speaker, I never once in my speech mentioned September 11. It has nothing to do with September 11. This is an overall strategy of the government to concentrate power.

I agree with the parliamentary secretary. This effort to concentrate power and prevent us from doing our job and prevent access to information by Canadians, the media and the public goes back far before September 11 and it will continue in the future.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm.

Mr. Jay Hill: Madam Speaker, we are splitting our time.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Did the hon. member ask to split his time?

Mr. Jay Hill: Yes, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Considering the fact that the Chair did not hear the hon. member ask to split his time, is there consent to allow the member to split his time?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Government Orders

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, PC/DR): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for clearing up that confusing situation. I am sure when hon. colleagues from all parties have an opportunity to check *Hansard* they will see that indeed my colleague from Cumberland—Colchester clearly stated that he wished to split his time with the distinguished member, as I understand he put it. We even have confirmation from the government side of the House. I would like to thank all colleagues from all parties in the House who are present for allowing that to happen and allowing me to say a few words on Bill C-35.

At the outset I ask what Bill C-35, an act to amend the Foreign Missions and International Organizations Act, does, just so that people watching in the real world, if anyone is watching the debate today, might be better able to understand it. Its purpose is to broaden the scope of the Foreign Missions and International Organizations Act. It expands and further defines the privileges and immunities granted to international organizations. It defines the capacity of the RCMP to provide security for intergovernmental conferences which are held in Canada.

Very clearly, as is often the case with legislation presented in the House by the government, the opposition parties and indeed I think government members from time to time are torn because of conflict contained within legislation. Some of it is good. Some of it is not so good. In some cases some of it is bloody awful, I would suggest. That is the case here.

My colleague, our critic for foreign affairs, the member for Cumberland—Colchester, stood in the House and repeatedly spoke to Bill C-35, laying out our concerns and those parts of the bill that we support. Clearly we recognize there is a need to more clearly identify and clarify the role of the RCMP in providing security for these conferences which are increasingly held on Canadian soil.

He has also spoken on a number of occasions about what we perceive could be a problem in the future with extending the diplomatic immunity to other individuals and to a large extent to who knows whom. Very clearly he presented an amendment at committee that would have become part of the legislation and constricted the government or held the government more accountable as to who is accessing the immunity so that Canadians would know when someone was using this new loophole to circumvent the laws of Canada. I think that is of great concern.

The real irony is that it is simply quite unbelievable and in fact quite galling that the government on one hand would pass Bill C-35 through this place. Presumably it will be enacted into law once it passes through the Senate and receives royal assent. This will extend the immunity to who knows whom. We are not allowed to even know. It will not be put into law to force the government to always reveal the names and organizations accessing this immunity.

At the same time the government is very clearly moving with Bill C-36 to restrict the rights and civil liberties of Canadians. It is quite unbelievable why the government cannot see the contradiction in that.

On the issue of the closure of the debate after one day of debate the government tried to say there was more than one day of debate on Bill C-36, the anti-terrorist legislation. Somewhere in the

neighbourhood of 100 amendments to that legislation were brought forward. Most of them were from the government. It came forward on Monday of this week and the government used time allocation to ram it through the House.

● (1140)

Given the seriousness of what has taken place this week in parliament on the one year anniversary of the last election when unfortunately the Liberal government was yet again elected with a majority government, basically we have the same situation as the past two parliaments with an elected dictatorship.

A fellow by the name of Andrew Coyne wrote a column in the *National Post* yesterday entitled “The Death of Parliament”. I want to read into the record some of his comments, given the seriousness of this situation. Referring to Bill C-36 he wrote:

—this is a much different bill than it was. The Commons justice committee adopted more than 100 amendments—themselves rammed through in the space of an evening. Ordinary members of parliament, unless they were around over the weekend, would barely have seen a copy of the committee's report. And any chance they might have had to propose amendments of their own expired with the Saturday evening deadline. Not that it matters, I suppose. They'd never have passed.

He continued:

Closure and party-line voting are objectionable at the best of times. But to apply these parliamentary tourniquets to legislation such as this—hasty in drafting but permanent in effect, with all manner of implications for the rights of citizens and all sorts of potential for abuse—is simply beyond belief.

Further in the column he wrote:

If ever there were a time in which the legislature ought to play a leading role in the making of law—to air concerns, suggest improvements, and shape a consensus—it is now. And if ever there were any doubt that parliament has ceased to play that role, there is no more. As a watchdog on the executive, as a guardian of the public purse, as a house of deliberation, it is, as the constitutional scholars say, a dead letter.

I wish I had the time to read the remainder of the column into the record because it is incredibly appropriate. On the front page of today's *Ottawa Citizen* there is an article by Susan Delacourt. In it she also points to the problems inherent in legislation that the government is intent on ramming through the House. She wrote in part:

—there's always a reason for this Liberal government to find parliament inconvenient. Closure is more of a parliamentary rule than an exception now. It's the opposition's fault. It's obstructionism. It's our international obligations. It's just the way things are.

The use of closure on this bill, though, is particularly galling. For six weeks the most senior ministers of the Prime Minister's government assured critics and even their own Liberal MPs that parliament would be a check on any excesses within Bill C-36.

Further in the column she continued:

“Trust-us justice,” the critics called it, and now, with the use of closure, their skepticism seems appropriate.

These are just two articles that have been printed in the last 24 hours about the use of closure and ramming through Bill C-36. As I said, the debate on Bill C-36 unfortunately is over. Although many of us would have liked to have continued the debate on Bill C-36 and on the amendments, some of which never got to be aired—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The hon. Secretary of State for Amateur Sport.

Government Orders

•(1145)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Denis Coderre: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would simply like to remind the House that the debate is on Bill C-35. There was a very long debate on Bill C-36. There was 82 hours of debate. I would like to know the members thoughts on Bill C-35, and I have already read this morning's papers.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The secretary of state raises a relevant point, but I will allow the member for Prince George—Peace River to continue. He has less than one minute.

Mr. Jay Hill: Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate that I have less than a minute. I am sure you allowed for the time that the hon. secretary of state used up. For a member of the government to rise to question relevance on the very relevancy of parliament indeed points to the problem in this place these days.

Whether we are debating Bill C-35, Bill C-36 or any other legislation, if parliament is not allowed to do its work appropriately then one has to question, as these journalists and as Canadians from coast to coast are increasingly doing, the very relevance of this institution.

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I regret actually that the member opposite did wander off the topic of Bill C-35. I would like to bring him back to Bill C-35 with a question.

The member for Palliser would have had us believe earlier in the debate that security perimeters should be as close as possible to the international meetings, that the RCMP should have limited powers because peaceful protesters are the only thing to be worried about; but is it not true that we have a problem now where there are violent protesters infiltrated within peaceful protesters and that there is the possibility that there are terrorists inside those masked violent protesters?

Is this not an imperative that we must address in Bill C-35 by giving or defining additional powers to the RCMP? Can we allow a situation to continue to occur where international protests occurring in Canada are dangerous and there is a chance that somebody could be killed and somebody from a foreign land could be killed?

Mr. Jay Hill: Madam Speaker, I am sure the hon. member was listening intently to my remarks. At the outset I said that members were torn, as is often the case with legislation in the House, and it happened on Bill C-36 the other night. We were given the choice between being seen to be opposed to terrorism and the parts of the bill directed at that and being in support of civil liberties and civil rights and the parts of the bill directed at that.

That is often the case when the government brings forward omnibus bills that have both good and bad in them. Unfortunately all members regardless of party are subjected to making that choice.

In this case, as I said at the start of my remarks, we support clarification of the role of the RCMP in providing security for these international conferences. That is a good part of the bill. Clarification is necessary, but it does not make up for the bad part of the bill which would extend a blanket immunity to who knows whom at future

conferences. I would ask the hon. member on the government side to consider that when he is deciding how to vote on Bill C-35.

•(1150)

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC/DR): Madam Speaker, the member mentioned closure several times in his speech. He was taking exception to the Liberal government's excessive use of closure. I want to remind him that I was here in an earlier life in the late eighties. At that time we were in government and the Liberals—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): We are certainly having a lot of points of order on questions and comments. The hon. member for Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot.

Mr. John Bryden: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We are debating Bill C-35, not Bill C-36. Could the member please concentrate his remarks on the debate at hand?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Again the question of relevance has been raised. The hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester.

Mr. Bill Casey: Madam Speaker, I can understand why the Liberals are a little sensitive when we raise the subject of closure. They used to whine and snivel about us using it and now they have used it twice as much. I can understand why the member would not want me to talk about closure and he would want me to focus on Bill C-35.

However it was raised by the member. He was talking about the significant and profound use of closure by the Liberals and how they do not hesitate to use closure to shut down parliament.

Would the member consider that approach to legislation along the lines of the Liberals renegeing on their promises regarding GST and free trade and now changing their position on closure? Would he consider that a deceptive way to do politics?

Mr. Jay Hill: Madam Speaker, obviously Canadians are becoming increasingly concerned. The two articles from which I quoted clearly show that journalists are waking up to the dictatorial manner in which the government is governing our country.

Is there a need for some of the legislation the government is bringing forward and passing? Of course there is. That is why from time to time we find ourselves supporting the legislation. All opposition parties are working quite hard to improve the legislation. I find it quite astounding that when we are working to improve legislation and trying to work with the government it constantly says that we are stonewalling. That was the argument used by the Minister of Justice when she brought in closure on Bill C-36.

Fortunately they have not moved to bring in closure on Bill C-35. Perhaps we should have put up more speakers and actually stonewalled on the legislation so that they could have at least had an excuse to ram it though. They certainly did not have that excuse with Bill C-36 yesterday. Canadians have awakened to that fact and are rightly appalled by the dictatorial manner in which the government continues to govern.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I was not planning on speaking to Bill C-35 this morning, because the hon. member for Mercier, the Bloc critic, has worked so well on this issue that the Bloc's position has been very clear.

Given that the government has once again, through means at its disposal, prevented the opposition from doing its job on issues as important as this one, I feel compelled to rise to both speak to this bill and denounce it at the same time.

I do not completely agree, in fact, I would say that I completely disagree, with the government members who say that there is no link between bills C-35, C-36 and C-42. I think that we need to look at the big picture. It is very relevant to discuss this. It is so relevant to discuss this that the government has gagged debated on Bill C-36 in order to rush it through, so as to prevent us from having all of the legislative pieces in hand to discuss them as a whole.

There is one complaint that the Bloc Québécois wants to make to the government regarding the September 11 events. Yes, September 11 is an extremely sad and tragic date. We all know the clichés such as “Nothing will ever be the same after September 11”. If the government had any political courage, it would have presented to us all the bills, its global vision, all at once, so that we could see how it plans to strengthen security—assuming it needs to be strengthened—and, as it says, fight terrorism.

But instead, the government is using a piecemeal approach. It resorted to closure with Bill C-36. As for Bill C-42, we learned yesterday that, because of a lack of political guts, the government has decided to split this legislation in two. As regards the very controversial part, it says “We will shove it down their throat later, when we get back from the Christmas break. Since all the other parts of the controversial bills will already have been adopted, there will only be this small part left and we will deal with it later”.

Today, in relation to Bill C-35, we heard another falsehood from members opposite. Bill C-35—unless I do not know how to read—was introduced on October 1, 2001. That was after September 11, 2001. Therefore, it reflects what the government intended to do following the September 11 events. Whether the bill was previously debated in committee or wherever, the fact remains that we have been here since November 2000 and the government had ample time to introduce this legislation, had it wanted to.

But probably because of a lack of political will, it waited for the events of September 11, and now it is in a great big hurry to see all its wildest dreams realized. It is passing bills. It is giving itself all sorts of powers to intervene, to ignore the information commissioner, a superior court judge, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is full steam ahead because of the events of September 11. The government is going to give itself so much power that, at some point, the criminal code will be affected. It will head in the direction of the Canadian Alliance, in the direction of the Canadian right, even if it means abandoning principles which have been years in the making and which are part of the criminal code. Not to worry. It is going to give itself far-reaching powers and it is going to use them.

This is absurd. That is why I wish to speak to Bill C-35. The preamble to the bill says that this will be a clearer piece of legislation and that it will also correct the deficiency in the existing statutory definition of international organization. When we examine this bill, we find that some of its provisions are even retroactive.

In Law 101, one of the most important considerations when examining a bill has to do with the retroactive effects, because this is contrary to many principles of Canadian law. There are even portions that are retroactive. On close examination, the provisions in clause 5 are absurd.

● (1155)

Under the guise of protecting our diplomats and people from outside the country, the government is preparing to give the police vast powers. Everything that is done currently will be set aside in order to tidy up and make things safer.

Let us have a look at clause 5. I understand that, because of the government's earlier motion, we can no longer introduce amendments at third reading. This is another way to gag the opposition. It is another way to ignore democracy in Canada.

It is rather strange that the government, which says it passes laws to protect democracy, is in fact ignoring democracy in order to get these laws passed. It is ignoring the elected representatives of the people, those with something to say to properly represent their constituents. They are ignoring all of these people in order to protect democracy, as they say. This is no doubt their democracy, their view of the things that, in terms of democracy, they want to protect.

Clause 5 of the bill amends the act by adding a new section. I think it is worth reading it. We are at third reading, and I think people have to understand what is happening. The amendment reads:

10.1(1) The Royal Canadian Mounted Police has the primary responsibility to ensure the security for the proper functioning of any intergovernmental conference in which two or more states participate, that is attended by persons granted privileges and immunities under this Act and to which an order made or continued under this Act applies.

Subclause (2) reads:

For the purpose of carrying out its responsibility under subsection (1), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police may take appropriate measures, including controlling, limiting or prohibiting access to any area to the extent and in a manner that is reasonable in the circumstances.

Subclause (3) reads:

The powers referred to in subsection (2) are set out for greater certainty and shall not be read as affecting the powers that peace officers possess at common law or by virtue of any other federal or provincial Act or regulation.

Is this clear? Has the proper legal terminology been used to give the clarity that is so greatly desired? If I answer this, I will be accused of petty politicking, and since it comes from the government, and the opposition has always criticized the government, it is certain that I will be told it is not true.

The bill was discussed in committee. People appeared before the committee, people who were not politicians, not evil separatists, as some may well think. Nor were they members of the Alliance, the NDP, the Progressive Conservatives, or anything else such as that coalition of members over there in the corner. No, they were specialists, people who had examined the issue.

Government Orders

What did these people have to say? They said that this amendment is either unnecessary to the extent that it purports simply to codify a status quo or, in the event that it's not unnecessary, it's woefully incomplete.

Those were the words used by a lawyer who came before the committee on November 6.

William Sloan, president of the American Association of Jurists, told the committee "You have 'appropriate measures' and then you have 'to the extent and in a manner that is reasonable in the circumstances'. These are so many undefined terms; they are all terms the courts have found to be terms that confer discretion".

He is right. When the courts interpret this, they will understand it to be a discretionary power given to the RCMP, or the Mounties, as the Prime Minister calls them. That is how they are going to interpret it.

Does giving discretionary power to police clarify the situation? I think not. The lawyers my colleague heard in committee—I was not a member but I am aware of certain facts—all said that it was not precise, not clear.

• (1200)

Wesley Pue, from the University of British Columbia, said that RCMP officers also need clarity. Ultimately, they are the ones who will face disciplinary measures, civil suits, investigations and possible criminal proceedings. The police deserves to have clear legislative guidelines.

This B.C. lawyer is surely not a Bloc Quebecois supporter. He said that, in order to protect police officers, the act has to be clear, because they are the ones who may be held liable by the courts if they go too far. Obviously, these officers, who deserve an appropriate framework to enforce Bill C-35, do not have the tools to interpret it correctly. They do not have legislative guidelines to do a good job. In opposing clause 5, we are also thinking about police officers.

As regards powers, if we want to change a situation, it is because there is a problem. What is the problem? How does the RCMP currently work? What are its powers? This is what we must look at if we want to properly assess clause 5 in Bill C-35.

Currently, there is no act that provides for the establishment of security zones. The RCMP's argument is based on a series of powers and judicial precedents.

So when the government tells us that we must stick to Bill C-35 and not look at other legislation, it is because it does not understand the bill. In its section on security zones, Bill C-35 refers to Bill C-42, which is now before the House. This is in the context of terrorism. We must also keep in mind the entire thrust of Bill C-36.

I can understand that it does not want us to look at all of them together, because the powers are truly excessive when lined up one beside the other. Canada is looking more and more like a police state. In any event, that seems to be the objective of the Prime Minister, who claims to be the father of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. With bills like these, the child, which is the charter, must be renouncing its father right now.

So what powers does the RCMP's have right now? Does it have the legislative tools it needs? There is the Security Offences Act, section 2.3 of which provides that the RCMP has primary responsibility for ensuring the safety of individuals when, in paragraph (b):

the victim of the alleged offence is an internationally protected person within the meaning of section 2 of the Criminal Code

The entire first part of clause 5 of Bill C-35 is therefore unnecessary because there is already an enactment identifying very clearly those individuals the legislator wishes to protect.

Add to this the powers conferred to the RCMP under its incorporating act, which specifies, at section 18—and I will read it since clearly there are some government members who either cannot read, do not want to read, or do not take the time to read the existing legislation before wanting to amend it. Section 18 reads as follows:

It is the duty of members who are peace officers, subject to the orders of the Commissioner,

(a) to perform all duties that are assigned to peace officers in relation to the preservation of the peace, the prevention of crime and of offences against the laws of Canada and the laws in force in any province in which they may be employed, and the apprehension of criminals and offenders and others who may be lawfully taken into custody;

(b) to execute all warrants, and perform all duties and services in relation thereto, that may, under this Act or the laws of Canada or the laws in force in any province, be lawfully executed and performed by peace officers;

(c) to perform all duties that may be lawfully performed by peace officers in relation to the escort and conveyance of convicts and other persons in custody to or from any courts, places of punishment or confinement, asylums or other places; and

That is quite a few powers that the RCMP can already exercise:

(d) to perform such other duties and functions as are prescribed by the Governor in Council or the Commissioner.

• (1205)

This means the RCMP has the powers of peace officers, which powers are described and set out by the supreme court. It has spoken with respect to these powers over the years. It has established limits which we are looking for and which a number of international lawyers have said are absent from this legislation. The supreme court has set perfectly good guidelines for preserving the peace, preventing crime and protecting life and property.

Currently, before it intervenes in a situation, the RCMP considers the approach it will take based on existing case law in Canada. However, it takes years for case law, real case law reflecting supreme court decisions, to be incorporated in legislation—and it is worth remembering this, because the government members seem to have forgotten it as well, or actually did not know it.

There are certain principles of law that the supreme court has spent 20 or 30 years considering before establishing specific guidelines. In the matter before us this morning, the supreme court took some 20 years before clearly establishing the powers of the RCMP, what it can and cannot do, again in accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which was clarified over the years, obviously since its passage. Why change it?

Government Orders

Let us look at the most recent events, for example, the summit in Quebec City. Did it provide evidence of a glaring legislative failing? Was it shown that we failed, in legislative terms, in Canada, and thus in my beautiful Quebec? Did we not have what it takes to face the music, as they say?

I think things went well at the Quebec City summit. There were demonstrations, it is true, but this is a free and democratic country and we are proud of that fact. There have to be such things. Yes, the demonstrations got a bit out of hand. Yes, some went too far, but there is the criminal code. Those who acted improperly should be taken to court for it. For those who plotted reprehensible acts, there is a whole section on plots in the criminal code.

We must not change something that is working. This is illogical. As I have just said, the events of September 11 are being used to justify exorbitant powers. This situation, dreadful as I admit it was, is being used to change the rules of the game in a number of different Canadian statutes. What I find the most alarming is that, when amendments are made and incorporated into the criminal code or some other related piece of legislation, this is going to influence courts trying criminal cases.

As we know, one of the principles in Canada and in Upper Canada—this will be my final point—is that a law is interpreted according to its legislative text. When questions arise, however, similarities are sought, either in the criminal code or in specific statutes. When this is done and an interpretation of the changes arising out of Bills C-36, C-42 or C-35, the bill before us at the present time, is sought, individual and group rights will be restricted, which is extremely worrisome.

• (1210)

I will close by saying that, had clause 5 of the bill been eliminated, we would have supported it, and we have been straightforward about this. Given the government's lack of courage in the way it is proceeding, however, by putting such powers into the bill, we will be voting against it. We are proud to oppose it, in the interest of individual and group rights.

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not rise at third reading to address this important bill, as I did at the other stages.

As the hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm just did so brilliantly and eloquently, I too will explain that we agree with the main purpose of this bill, which is to amend the Foreign Missions and International Organizations Act. However, we are totally opposed to the three paragraphs in clause 5 that seek to give new, unrecognized powers to the RCMP.

I know that Liberal members agree with this statement. These three paragraphs in clause 5 give to the RCMP new powers that go against individual and collective rights.

The Bloc Québécois supported the bill at second reading, but with some reservations. The research done and the evidence heard in committee convinced us that these three paragraphs should not be included in Bill C-35, because they give new powers to the RCMP, because they change the relations with other peace officers, and because they change the RCMP's relations with other provincial and municipal administrations during international conferences.

Now that Bill C-36 will become law and that Bill C-42 is before us, we are all the more concerned about these three paragraphs in Bill C-35.

Briefly, I want to say that the rest of the bill seeks to modernize the Foreign Missions and International Organizations Act and that, contrary to some other parties in the House, we agree with that change. We think that the increase in multilateral international relations over the past 10 years requires us to have more flexible mechanisms to guarantee full protection to those come here to represent their country at various international conferences.

However, as all the witnesses heard by the committee said, clause 5 is unnecessary. As my colleague showed, the powers of the RCMP are already clearly established elsewhere. They are established because they were defined by the supreme court, since common law differs from civil law—but as members know this is not my forte—in that the law is the result of the whole jurisprudence.

This bill, which authorizes the RCMP to establish the perimeters that it deems reasonable, without any further guidelines, gives a new power to that police force.

• (1215)

The minister said “This is a codification”. I am sorry to report that witnesses said this was a new power being conferred on the RCMP. It is not to be found elsewhere. And incidentally, it is not clear whether or not the supreme court would allow the RCMP to establish perimeters based on what it believes is reasonable.

What is the impact of this power being given to the RCMP? There are consequences for the police themselves, and serious consequences when it comes to the rights of citizens. Regarding the police, witnesses who appeared before the committee testified that it was not wise to allow police—who have neither the time, nor the resources to decide at any given moment when they are on duty, what they are permitted to do based on jurisprudence—to make this type of decision, for which they will be held accountable, this decision to determine the perimeter that is required and how to then manage the fact that numerous rights are being violated.

Which rights would be violated? I am quoting from Wesley Pue, professor of law and incumbent of the Nemetz Chair in legal history at the University of British Columbia. He states:

—the right of free movement within Canada, the right of assembly, the right of free expression, the right to enjoyment of your property—because the erection of a security perimeter to limit a private area amounts to an expropriation, limited though it may be in time—the right to work, if one's business is located within the security perimeter, and limited by the existence of the perimeter, without being interrupted or harassed by the police.

We could add to that, subject to tear gas, as many people experienced during the Quebec City summit.

A security perimeter compromises all of these rights and raises a number of questions. How long before and after an event can it be erected? What kinds of solutions can be offered to those whose rights are violated? Will there be compensation or recourse for them? Will there be security passes? Who will be admitted?

I could go on for quite a while but I realize that I am running out of time. As Mr. Pue put it:

These are serious questions.

Government Orders

He adds:

It can of course be assumed that most RCMP agents will conduct themselves as responsible policemen. But their desire to act in a responsible way will not be enough to protect the public anymore than the imposition of an obligation that is brutal but sufficient in police terms. According to the rule of law, the law must specify as clearly as possible the conditions in which these violations of fundamental rights are foreseen.

None of this is in the bill. When we asked whether a simple amendment could be made to these three paragraphs so that they reflect citizens' rights, the answer was no. It is unacceptable that the government has continued to allow these three paragraphs to spoil the rest of the bill.

In fact, many Liberal members of the committee were extremely troubled by the evidence given and tried to get these paragraphs withdrawn. I give them credit for that. They know that this is not where we should be headed. They felt so strongly that they presented a motion in the House, part of which I will read:

Whereas the codified powers of the RCMP could affect the rights and privileges of Canadian citizens during conferences—

Just that is enough. The Liberal members submitted a motion to the committee, which adopted it unanimously. This motion said that the government should review clause 5 in order to ensure that citizens' rights and freedoms were not being violated. We know that our colleagues opposite rarely run the risk of rebelling. This is confirmation which we did not need, but of which we are proud, that we absolutely had to oppose this bill.

• (1220)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The question is on the motion that the question be now put. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

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

[Translation]

And the bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The deputy government whip is asking for leave for the division to be deferred to the end of the period provided for House business this coming Monday.

• (1225)

Mr. Jacques Saada: Mr. Speaker, discussions have taken place between all parties and there is an agreement, pursuant to Standing Order 45(7), to further defer the recorded division requested on Bill C-35 until the end of government orders on Tuesday, December 4, 2001.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

NUCLEAR WASTE ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-27, an act respecting the long-term management of nuclear fuel waste, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The Chair will first proceed with a ruling concerning Bill C-27, an act respecting the long term management of nuclear fuel waste.

There are eight motions in amendment on the order paper relating to the report stage of Bill C-27.

Motions Nos. 1, 4, 5 and 7 will not be selected because of their similarity to motions proposed in committee.

The other motions have also been examined and it is the opinion of the Chair that they meet the criteria of the note to paragraph 76.1 (5) of the Standing Orders concerning the selection of motions in amendment at report stage.

[English]

Motions Nos. 2, 3, 6 and 8 will be grouped for debate and voted upon separately.

[Translation]

I shall now put Motions Nos. 2, 3, 6 and 8 to the House.

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-27, in Clause 6, be amended by replacing line 35 on page 2 with the following:

“6. (1) The Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the appropriate standing committee of the House of Commons, shall”

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-27, in Clause 6, be amended by replacing lines 4 to 7 on page 3 with the following:

“(2) No nuclear energy corporation may be a member or shareholder of the waste management organization.”

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-27, in Clause 14, be amended by replacing lines 18 to 21 on page 8 with the following:

“14. (1) The Minister shall engage in such consultations with the general public on the approaches set out in the study as may be necessary.”

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-27, in Clause 32, be amended by replacing lines 33 and 34 on page 15 with the following:

“32. This Act comes into force on January 1, 2003.”

Government Orders

Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ): Mr. Speaker, like most of my colleagues usually say at the beginning of their speeches, I am pleased to rise on this issue. But it is not always obvious.

In dealing with a bill like this one, some analysis was required and we had to consider the amendments tabled in committee, all of which were received about the same way by the government, the governing party. The government categorically rejected every amendment that was moved.

During the clause by clause study of the bill in committee, some 75 amendments were introduced, and rejected. We succeeded in having a few of them adopted, as you indicated earlier, namely Motions Nos. 2, 3, 6 and 8.

It would be appropriate to go back in time. We know that in February 1999, the Senate held a debate on the management of nuclear fuel waste, at which time they took a look back on the report of the Seaborn Commission. The Minister of Natural Resources of Canada also referred to that commission. He said that its work lasted for ten years and that a totally impartial environmental assessment had been conducted. That commission made very important recommendations dealing with the membership of a committee responsible for long term waste management.

The bill was introduced by the minister on April 25, 2001. As early as May 18, I spoke to the bill. At about the same time, the Minister of Finance tabled his budget and talked about the debt that had to be paid off, because future generations should not inherit such a burden and, for all intents and purposes, we were the ones responsible for that debt.

I had draw a parallel with nuclear waste management. Today, we are taking a decision on the management of nuclear waste that will last for hundreds, even thousands of years. The issue will last just as long.

On May 18, 2001, the emphasis was put on what is almost an anticipated reimbursement of the debt, while we were trying to manage nuclear fuel waste that will last for hundreds of years. Since I have my doubts about the efficiency of the government's management over a span of a few years, how could I not have doubts about its management of nuclear fuel waste over hundreds of years?

Incidentally, this bill provides for the establishment of a waste management organization. Its members will include the companies that are using nuclear energy and produce nuclear fuel waste, and Atomic Energy of Canada, which already has responsibilities concerning the development of systems and waste management. From now on, this organization will recommend to the government ways to manage nuclear waste over the long term.

It is quite simple. We have an obvious conflict of interests here. I did support the principle of the bill, because nuclear fuel waste management is important, after all. As a matter of principle, we agree that we should have a nuclear fuel waste management program. But we cannot agree on who will manage nuclear fuel waste and how it will be done. We cannot rely on those who produce nuclear waste to develop a management program. We should consider that important sums of money are involved. The natural resources department was talking about a \$12 billion program over 70 to 100 years.

• (1230)

This is a very costly program. People dealing with problems related to nuclear waste could be tempted to go for, perhaps, simpler systems to the detriment of efficiency.

Another key element of this bill relates to the public. The Seaborn Commission said that some of Atomic Energy of Canada's projects barely passed the technical assessment test, but clearly indicated that they could not stand the test of public perception with regard to nuclear waste management.

Where, in this legislation, is the public provided with an input? Of course, we heard evidence in committee. On this, I indicated that I was somewhat disappointed with the way things went on. The clause by clause study of the bill had already been planned for a specific time and date, and half an hour before that we were still hearing witnesses.

It became obvious that our consultation process was bogus. If it was bogus at the development stage of the legislation, just imagine what it will be when the time comes to develop waste management systems.

The bill nevertheless provides, without really stressing the point, that emphasis will be put on consultation. So just imagine that, when faced with such difficult issues, people who rally to voice their concerns about nuclear waste management could very well do so also to voice their dissatisfaction with the process once the government has decided how it will proceed.

Therefore, in the whole development process for this system involving the major producers of nuclear waste, there will be a need to get the public on board so that the government's approach can have some credibility.

For all intents and purposes, in presenting our amendments, we also touched upon the way the House does things, since the decisions made about a specific nuclear waste management program were never brought back to the House.

As we know, in due course, MPs, those elected by the people of Canada, will be held to account to the people on how nuclear waste was managed. This is after all an issue of grave concern to most, if not all, Canadians. Nuclear waste will last almost forever, since we are talking about hundreds, or even thousands of years.

Most of the facilities—there are some 22 producing nuclear waste across Canada—are located in Ontario. Also, most of the electricity in Ontario is generated by nuclear plants. Ontario is therefore a province with a vested interest in the management of nuclear waste.

Government Orders

In Quebec, we often talk about the Canadian Shield as offering a possible solution for the disposal of nuclear waste. We know that a large portion of it is located in Quebec.

• (1235)

Perhaps we should revert to the principle whereby everyone is responsible for the waste they produce. Each person or company who produces waste should be accountable. However, we should ensure that the people have a say regarding these projects.

[*English*]

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is good to be able to add my comments to the report stage of Bill C-27. Although my party did not introduce any amendments at this stage of the bill, we still have mixed feelings about it, as well as with some of the amendments that the Bloc submitted.

Clearly we support the concept of the bill. An important principle is being established here in the nuclear industry which is past due. That is the principle of polluter pay and that the industry itself be made directly responsible for the costs of cleaning up and disposing of the waste it creates.

Most other resource industries have had that responsibility for a long time already. For a long time the mining industry and the oil and gas industry have had to post bonds to guarantee that the cost of the liability of the cleanup and disposal of hazardous waste is taken care of. The bill would establish that same principle within the nuclear industry. However it does not go far enough in that it only relates directly to the cost of disposal of high level nuclear waste. It should have gone further. The trust fund should also have been included and have been adequate enough to guarantee the cost of decommissioning of nuclear plants and disposal sites.

I do not think anybody has any idea what that cost would be. The minister has told us that the cost is somehow included in the electricity rates that are charged. With the kind of debt incurred in the Ontario industry mainly because of the nuclear plants, it gives me little confidence that Ontario Hydro has the resources put aside, or is prepared to put aside, to cover the cost of decommissioning of any of the reactor sites. While it is a beginning, the bill certainly does not go far enough.

I have another issue with the bill. Although some of our concerns were addressed at clause by clause in committee, it became clear that while the bill requires the establishment of a waste management organization made up of the producers of nuclear waste and the creation of a trust fund to cover the cost of disposal of that waste and it requires the waste management organization to produce a study and make recommendations to the minister on the best way to dispose of nuclear waste, it goes no further than that. Once the organization fulfills those obligations under the bill and makes a report to the minister, there is no timeline or requirement to implement the plan.

The bill would allow the waste management organization to fill the responsibility within the bill. However, nothing would really happen in the form of implementing a plan and disposing of nuclear waste in the country for another 20 years. We have been working for 20 years to try to figure out a way of what to do with nuclear waste up to now. The government and governments before it, and Atomic

Energy of Canada Ltd. which is doing the research around the issue, have been working on it for 15 or 20 years and have not been able to come up with a solution. I am really not sure how the waste management organization created in the bill would come up with a solution when others could not, that would have the confidence of the Canadian public to proceed.

• (1240)

That is the key to this bill. That is basically the subject of some of the amendments the Bloc has put forward and many of the amendments that were put in at committee stage. The aim was simply to try to change the bill in a way that would allow the waste management organization, because of transparency, openness and accountability, to gain the confidence of the Canadian public that it was doing the right thing, that it was safe, and that it was addressing all of the social and economic issues around this.

There are still some real weaknesses in the bill. In my opinion it will not give the Canadian public the kind of confidence needed to make it a success.

Some of the amendments the Bloc has produced, specifically Motions Nos. 2 and 3, were an attempt to change the bill to comply more fully with the Seaborn recommendations in moving the whole issue away from the industry, from the producers of the waste. I do not support that.

I like the idea of the producer pay principle. If it is going to put up the money to cover the cost, then it is reasonable that it be the one to create and manage the organization that actually does it. I would certainly feel no more comfortable in having the government, through AECL or any other government created agency, responsible for implementing and coming up with the plan than I do with the industry. The industry has produced the waste and it is paying for the disposal of the waste. As long as it is properly regulated and there is proper oversight, then that is the form it should take. I do not support Motions Nos. 2 and 3.

Motion No. 6 is an attempt to bring more clarity to the issue of public consultation, transparency and accountability. We heard at committee that everyone wanted to see that in place. The industry itself clearly stated in testimony that this process could only be successful if there was absolute transparency, openness and accountability to the public so that the public could have confidence in the process that was taking place.

Motion No. 8 is another amendment which I support. There is no legislative requirement in the bill that would have the waste management organization move to implement its chosen form of disposal, to get busy and start taking care of some of this stuff. All it has to do is report to the minister. The minister could sit on it for years and years and we would be not much further ahead than we have been for some time. Motion No. 8 specifies a date when the act comes into force. Maybe it does not answer every aspect of the issue but at least it brings some certainty to the requirement that the bill be brought into force and that we proceed with it.

Government Orders

Some good concerns have been brought forward and, as you said when you grouped the amendments, Mr. Speaker, reflect some of the concerns that were also addressed in committee. There again the government would have been wise to take note and perhaps to have accepted some of the amendments that were made in committee to make the bill more accountable and transparent and to give the public confidence that the industries that are producing nuclear waste in the country are thinking on the broader picture of the public interest and public good, and not simply of their own economic interests and other interests.

With that, I will save my other comments for third reading debate on the bill.

• (1245)

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with your permission I would like to add a couple of items to the discussion on this very important bill which deals with the long term management of nuclear fuel waste. It seems to me that it would be desirable in the discussion, if it cannot be done within the framework of the bill because it is already at report stage and I missed intervening—

• (1250)

Mr. Darrel Stinson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not see a tie on the hon. member.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I think the hon. member for Davenport has had occasion to face this situation before. The rules clearly say that indeed you need a tie in the House of Commons.

Hon. Charles Caccia: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the intervention from the hon. member reminding me of the rule. The explanation I would offer is that I was only notified a few moments ago that this debate was on and I rushed to the House without going to my office. I can assure the House that I will do better the next time.

The discussion on the bill must include two considerations which are, at least in my opinion, of some importance. I would have liked to have put them on the record at second reading but hearings of the standing committee on Bill C-5, the endangered species legislation, prevented me from doing so.

One consideration is the fact that nuclear energy corporations, wherever they may be, have followed practices which, from an accounting procedure, leave much to be desired. They do not calculate in their balance sheet and appropriately report the cost of decommissioning a plant. As is the case with a number of nuclear plants in Canada, which are now reaching a certain age, it becomes evident that the cost of decommissioning a nuclear plant, which is very high, ought to be included in the calculation of the operation of that particular corporation and also included in the cost of the electricity generated and used by the consumer. It is a hidden cost that ought to be brought to the surface and included in the charge for that particular service.

As the auditor general has repeatedly insisted in a number of reports, the most recent one, if I remember correctly, in 1997, if they were to be included the price of electricity, of course, would be more realistically close to what it should be, namely, it would be higher. There is nothing wrong with that. The cost of energy is an important factor and ought to be one that could and should lead us to more careful consumption and to higher and better levels of conservation, particularly in relation to what we are attempting to do at the present

time, namely, to meet our commitments through the Kyoto agreement in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Obviously if the cost of electricity is a realistic one, we would be more careful in the consumption of it and therefore the emissions would accordingly be reduced by a certain percentage.

That is the first point that needs to be stressed and I am addressing Ontario Power Generation, Hydro-Québec and New Brunswick Power Corporation. All these have been identified by the auditor general in his report. Over the last 50 years they have ignored the cost of nuclear waste disposal, as well as the decommissioning of the plants.

This brings me to my second point which is of interest to our electors and to many members of the House who come from a region where nuclear waste is being disposed or stored. The cost of this storage also needs to be accounted for. Here again we see a pattern identified by the auditor general of not taking into account the cost of this particular disposition of nuclear waste discharge or the nuclear waste that the particular plant is producing.

• (1255)

We must find ways of disciplining these corporations in a way that they will set aside for the decommissioning of nuclear plants the amount that is required, which means anticipating the cost and including it in the calculation of the product, namely the electricity that they make available to the consumer. If this is not done we would in a way disguise the true cost of nuclear power generation to the consumer. The cost of nuclear energy production should be paid through the electricity rates charged to the consumers from the building of the plant to its operation, its maintenance, the disposal of the nuclear waste and finally, as the fifth step in the evolution, the decommissioning of the nuclear plant. If every nuclear energy corporation were to internalize these costs, the price per kilowatt hour of nuclear power would be higher than it is currently. This would yield significantly different public policy choices with regard to the generation of electricity. Now it is kept artificially low because these costs are hidden from the consumer.

As a society, we continue to think that nuclear power generation is cheap but this is only because the true costs are not reflected in the electricity rates. As legislators and policy advisers, we continue—

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I appreciate that the hon. member wants some intervention on the bill and would like to speak to the bill in parliament, but he has had other opportunities to do that. This course of action that we are setting upon today is to speak to the amendments brought in by the member for Sherbrooke and I have not yet heard the hon. member speak to any of the amendments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): In the two minutes that the hon. member for Davenport has left I am sure he will tie up his previous remarks to the group of amendments that we are debating at the moment.

Hon. Charles Caccia: Mr. Speaker, that was a fair comment on the part of my colleague. What I am doing is addressing the amendments which are missing at the report stage and which, in my view, ought to be included. Therefore I am speaking within the relevance of the debate.

Government Orders

We must also keep in mind the fact that over the decades the Government of Canada has provided subsidies to Atomic Energy of Canada Limited that reach close to \$6 billion. The last subsidy, which was last year, amounted to \$110 million, bringing the total of subsidies given to AECL over the years close to \$6 billion. Despite this dependence on government grants and repeated urging, Atomic Energy of Canada Limited does not seem to be able to come to grips with the necessity of including in its accounting the cost of decommissioning plants in Canada nor the cost of radioactive waste disposal. In other words, what we are facing is a certain degree of indifference to public opinion and to the reports published by AECL's own auditors.

● (1300)

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to participate in the debate today on amendments brought forth by the member for Sherbrooke to Bill C-27, the nuclear fuel waste act.

I agree with the member for Athabasca. The bill is not transparent enough, there is not enough accountability and it does contain too much ministerial and privy council discretion. That has been the position of the PC/DR coalition from the very beginning.

I want to speak specifically to the amendments. Several were put forth and a few were not allowed at this stage. I would have preferred to speak to all the amendments because I believe all amendments were very good. Although there are a couple of amendments that I will not support, they were put forth in a manner and a tone that was meant to improve the bill and to bring more accountability and transparency to the process.

I think it would benefit everyone if I were to review the bill and what it establishes. Bill C-27 would see the establishment of an independent waste management organization, or WMO, which has been referred to by other members, and would require the WMO to provide recommendations to the minister on long term nuclear waste storage possibilities. Some of those possibilities could be and are expected to be deep geological disposals somewhere in the Canadian shield.

The reports, statements and studies done by the WMO would be made public, and that is important. We fought diligently to make sure that occurred. The bill should ensure that Canadian taxpayers are not liable for the long term management of nuclear fuel waste, which again is extremely important. It is important to note that the industry players who fund the WMO, Ontario Hydro, Hydro-Québec and New Brunswick Power Corporation, would not only put funding in place but they would have some say in what happens. These rates, however, would be arbitrarily established by the minister, which I do not think any industry player or any corporation in Canada would be comfortable with.

I think what needs to be said and what I will say again at third reading is that the bill does not preclude foreign waste from being deposited or disposed of in Canada. The bill does not require aboriginal, environmental or municipal representation on the advisory council. It speaks in a very general way that it would be nice and warm and fuzzy if there were representation from the aboriginal community, the municipal players and the environmentalists but it does not make that an absolute. The bill does not

establish the WMO at arm's length from industry. I have some qualms about that. Industry is funding this so I think it needs some control in the process but the Seaborn panel did recommend that it be at arm's length from industry.

One of the really serious failings of the bill is that it would continue to place power in the hands of the minister and the governor in council, and provides little role for parliament in decisions on the long term management of nuclear fuel waste.

● (1305)

There could have been a number of things that would have improved this particular piece of legislation and I will speak to some of those amendments now.

Amendment No. 1, which was amendment No. 3, would prevent nuclear energy corporations, including Ontario Power Generation, Hydro-Québec and New Brunswick Power Corporation, from being members on the waste management organization. As the bill currently reads, the nuclear energy corporation shall not only be members of the WMO but always remain members of the organization. It would allow one of the recommendations made by the Seaborn panel when it studied the issue of nuclear waste disposal. That was the arm's length relationship which I have already mentioned.

The PC/DR coalition will not be supporting this amendment, although we would have considered supporting it had it provided for some nuclear energy corporations to be members of the waste management organization. When the power companies appeared before committee, they were clear about the need for active involvement in the WMO, given that they were the ones supplying the hundreds of millions of dollars for the management of nuclear fuel waste. The coalition supports industry on that point and cannot agree with this amendment.

The other question becomes one of liability. If industry could, and I expect it will, have some liability in this process, for example contamination of ground water, then it should be more directly involved in the process. Maybe the process could be nuanced so that industry would not have all the members, but it should certainly have some representation.

We totally agree with amendment No. 2, which was previously amendment No. 6. The amendment would require the minister to engage in public consultations on the disposal method recommended by the waste management organization. That is quite a bizarre thought I am sure for the government to engage upon. However it would be a nice way to give Canadians a Christmas present that does not cost them anything, by letting them know that it is looking at the bill, that it wants to make the bill more accountable and that it wants to involve and allow Canadians to participate in decisions that will concern them. Therefore, members of the PC/DR coalition support this. We supported a similar amendment at committee and we continue to support it now.

Government Orders

The last amendment would see the act come into force on January 1, 2003, instead of a day to be fixed by order of the governor in council. I think the amendment is meant to allow a little more time in the process and I understand why the member for Sherbrooke put it in, but it is not an amendment that I would tend to support. There has been enough time, studies and work on this. The bill is delinquent in a number of areas, but I do not see the day that the act would actually come into force as being one of those areas. This would not be an amendment that we would support.

However, I commend the Bloc member for Sherbrooke for his participation at committee and involvement in the bill. He, like many of us on the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development and Natural Resources, has really quite serious doubts and problems with this specific piece of legislation, not the least of which is the fact that the legislation is just plain and simply poorly crafted, not unlike other legislation that has been gone through the House as of late. There has not been enough input from the parliamentary process and certainly not enough input from committee.

• (1310)

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I also want to commend my colleague from the Bloc for moving these amendments. I wish others also had got through the screening process. However before I address them specifically, there is a general pattern in the amendments here which address the major concerns that I believe all opposition parties have to the way the bill has been drafted.

The reason we all share that concern I think is because of the recommendations of the Seaborn panel contained in the Seaborn report as it is referred to. Underlying the report were the findings it made about how the general public did not trust the process that had been undertaken up to that point and the manner with which nuclear waste would be dealt.

As drafted, the bill would nothing to increase the Canadian public's sense of well-being in how nuclear waste would be dealt with. The comfort level, if anything, will deteriorate because the bill as drafted would not deal with a number of the points that are dealt with in these amendments. It would not allow for significant participation by the community. It would not be open and accountable in many respects.

Some of the proposals that have been made by my colleague from the Bloc, address some of those concerns. Amendment No. 2, which was allowed through, would provide for some review and involvement by a parliamentary committee as opposed to almost the complete exclusion of parliament, a parliamentary committee and parliamentary democracy from the process. If the bill goes through, it will be on the government's side and parliament will see very little of the process.

The proposed amendment would at least allow for a parliamentary committee that would have some review power. Quite frankly, it would be a lot less than what was proposed in a number of amendments at committee. The committee process was interesting. Not only were they summarily rejected, but we generally could not even get the government members to make a response. Opposition members made arguments or proposals on their amendments, good

and valid comments. There were at least 74 amendments proposed. Other than on four or five proposals, we got no response from the government at all. It was not a democratic process. It was a charade.

Therefore, I strongly support the amendment. If it goes through, it will at least reintroduce some concept of democracy to the process and allow us as members of the committee to have some review and some input as to how the nuclear corporation, which will dispose of these wastes some point down the road, will be established.

The second amendment before us is one which again goes to the whole issue of building trust with the community that could be affected by any decisions made by the waste management organization. It indicates that there is a potential for a conflict of interest or at the very least an appearance of a conflict of interest by the people who will be an exclusive part of the WMO. The people who produce the waste would now be delegated to make almost 100% of the recommendations and decisions around it. Only the final decision would be made by cabinet as to how waste would be disposed.

• (1315)

The input level for the general population is almost miniscule. It is almost entirely controlled by the nuclear industry. If the government thinks it is going to be able to sell that to Canadians, I suggest it go back once again and read the Seaborn report. It obviously has not digested it; it has not taken it into its psyche. If bill, composed as it is, goes through, there is no way we will find a community in Canada that will be willing to accept these wastes, in whatever form we ultimately decide to dispose of them.

The final amendment, which is the sixth one in the list that we proposed and the third one that was allowed, is about consultation.

At committee, we heard from a number of groups that had worked on this issue, some for 10 or 12 years. Quite frankly, I want to acknowledge, and I probably will again when I speak to it on third reading, the input we received from three mayors of towns in Ontario who have nuclear plants in their communities.

They were quite eloquent on the impact that those plants have had on their communities. They dominate a good deal of the issues, planning, zoning, et cetera, with which those communities and the elected officials at the municipal level have to deal. They were also very strong in saying to the committee they were entitled to representation on this board if they were the ones who were going to be most impacted.

They also shared with us a strong argument as to why communities, which were the recipients of these wastes, should have an entitlement to be involved at that level, the very centre of the decision making process. They said that all aspects of the issues would be considered, input would be taken from all the appropriate groups and communities rather than just the industry itself, which to a great degree is the way the bill is constructed.

We heard from environmental groups at the committee. We took testimony from them about their involvement and their concerns, not only for themselves, because of the work they had done on it, but for the general Canadian populace.

Government Orders

They also spoke eloquently about the need to involve the communities that would be considered as depositories for these wastes. If one looks at the bill in its entirety as it is now, the government has ignored those communities, those groups and those mayors.

To conclude, if the government is at all serious, if it has any belief at all that the communities out there, where these wastes may eventually go, will respond with any degree of trust and openness to proposals for them to become depositories, then these amendments should be allowed to go through.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak today on Bill C-27, an act respecting the long-term management of nuclear fuel waste.

The Bloc Québécois is not against the sound management of nuclear waste. There are currently close to 24,000 tons of nuclear waste stocked on the sites of Canadian nuclear facilities. These tons of waste have a life expectancy of 24,000 years. These figures just keep getting larger. It is therefore quite normal to try to manage these time bombs.

The Bloc Québécois supported the principle of the bill at the second reading stage. We told the government that we would table amendments in committee and were hoping for some open-mindedness on its part. However, once again, it must be recognized that what has been going on these past two weeks is totally absurd.

The important amendments presented to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development and Natural Resources were not read nor heard. The liberals answered "No, no, and no." This is all we could hear.

We are dealing with a major issue here. When I held a public meeting in my region about the importation of 24 grams—and I repeat grams—of MOX fuel from Russia and the United States, Atomic Energy of Canada Limited came to tell us that it had held consultations. There were 28 days of consultations on an Internet site. How many people from my riding said they were opposed? Well, 99.9% of my constituents said they were opposed to any importation of nuclear waste from just about everywhere.

There was opposition from 124 municipalities throughout Quebec, the regional county municipalities, the Communauté urbaine de Montréal, the Communauté urbaine de Québec, the Quebec government, all the environmental groups and all the stakeholders. What did the government do in the middle of the night? I cannot figure out how they went about it. There is a military base in my region. There was sheer panic. They arranged to have armoured vehicles, and they were supposed to come our way. Ultimately, we did not see a thing, but nevertheless, nuclear waste was imported. It cost several hundred thousand dollars.

I consulted some American experts, who can also give us information on the nuclear issue. I consulted internationally renowned experts. They told me that governments must address this issue and must not import other countries' nuclear waste.

We asked this government to include in the bill a clause that would state quite humbly the position of the Government of Canada

as against importing nuclear material from other countries. What did the Liberals say? No, no and no.

This bill does not even contain a guarantee that waste will not be imported from other countries.

When Bill C-27 was introduced, the Minister of Natural Resources said that it was in response to the Seaborn commission. I am not sure if the minister did indeed read the report, or if he was conscious that he was reading the Seaborn report, but this bill does not respond at all to the Seaborn report.

We wanted to improve it, we agreed. We said that we had the Seaborn report, that we wanted to improve it along those lines. We were aware that he wanted to act. We said that we would give him the opportunity to manage what needs to be managed in our region.

● (1320)

As for the committee chair, I would like to discuss this. Sometimes I wonder if he was not both judge and judged from the start. I think that the issue we are debating today is an extremely serious one, which we debated in good faith in committee.

Nobody listened. The first recommendation of the Seaborn commission stipulated that the government must consult Canadians, and that it have significant support from them. I do not know what happened to that consultation, nor the support. But the Liberals are moving ahead.

I am very sad to say that this is yet another dark moment in the history of Canada. This is a great tragedy. We are not talking about hospital waste. We are talking about nuclear waste. This is serious.

I do not even think that the government members on the committee knew what they were talking about. Yet, they were there to vote. They watched the parliamentary secretary vote and followed suit. We even explained the amendments that we had proposed, but they did not even bother to listen. In the end, it was clearly no use; it was almost a farce sitting on the committee.

I do not think this is something to joke about. It is a major issue for the present and future of our societies. We are talking about nuclear waste. Nuclear energy is not some little candle that can be blown out. No. It is very dangerous, particularly when there is also talk of burying this waste in the Canadian Shield. Three quarters of the Canadian Shield is located in Quebec.

Will Canada, and Quebec in particular, become a dumping ground for waste from around the world? We have only to think of household waste. People do not want that buried in their backyard. Imagine if it were nuclear waste.

I think that what we have here is a semblance of democracy. I will never accept this. The debate is beginning. The government was not interested in anything we had to say. We will never accept such an insubstantial bill. It is an ineffective response to a commission which lasted ten years and did some serious work. This is not what the commission was trying to accomplish.

Government Orders

Enough. As the House knows, we put forward four extremely important amendments at report stage. I hope the Liberals will pass at least one of them but I am sure they will not because they are deaf and blind. These are the Liberals' only attributes right now when it comes to this bill.

I said I was not going to get worked up today but I cannot help myself. This is frightening. We will fight the battle. We will, keep on fighting until third reading and, if they do not reconsider at report stage, I think they will have to be held accountable. As MPs, we are accountable to our constituents. These are not waste management organizations. The Minister of Natural Resources will be judge and judged. Atomic Energy of Canada Limited reports to the Minister of Natural Resources. So why does he have responsibility for a piece of legislation which makes him the judge and the judged? There is something very wrong with this.

I hope that the Minister of Natural Resources, for whom I have great respect, is listening today and that he will say to his parliamentary secretary "That was not what I wanted you to do in committee. I wanted you to listen to the opposition". Like the eight other henchmen on the committee, he did not listen to the opposition. This is just the beginning and we will keep on fighting.

• (1325)

[English]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak on the amendments to Bill C-27. The reason it is so important to have these amendments considered and added is that the lack of these amendments has drawn the proliferation of nuclear energy to a slower start.

In my riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke we had the birth of and were responsible for the initial Canadian scientific research into nuclear energy. We have had many inventions relating to nuclear energy as spinoffs as a result of the growth stage of the nuclear industry, for example, the MRIs we have right now and the medical isotope research. We supply over 70% of the world's medical isotopes. That is a result of the acceptance of nuclear research.

The amendments, if accepted, would bring more clarity to and provide the general public with more insight as to what the nuclear industry is all about. Once we have more public acceptance of the nuclear industry, then we will have the support to go forward and do more research.

For example, for the past two years cabinet has been considering funding the Canadian Neutron Facility. Even though the member who spoke previously said that the Minister of Finance had accepted this in principle and that we are just waiting for the go ahead on the funding for the Canadian Neutron Facility there is still reluctance on the part of government to go ahead because it is not sure whether or not the public will see it as a positive move. The reason people will not necessarily see it as a positive move is that there is an element of secrecy surrounding the entire nuclear industry. What these amendments seek to do is demystify the nuclear industry.

Energy is the key to our future. The need for energy is growing exponentially. The electronics industry is an example. More computers are showing up in people's homes.

Right now in Ontario we are preparing for a potential shortage of electricity for the upcoming winter by building more coal fired plants. With coal fired plants we have the emission of carbon dioxide. As we all know, this contributes to global warming. The use of nuclear energy as a part of the overall mix in power supply is necessary not just to have an ample supply of energy but to save the environment.

In the amendments before us we have Motion No. 2 which deals with the outline of the establishment of an arm's length organization to monitor and dispose of nuclear fuel waste. We cannot support this motion because it takes away from companies the onus on dealing with nuclear waste. Companies and the producers of nuclear waste say that they want to have an active role in storing the spent fuel. In fact the whole issue of storing spent fuel can be an industry in itself. It can be an economic boon to the communities who accept it. Therefore we would not necessarily want to take away the opportunity for the power industries and companies to eventually use the spent fuel, the infrastructure and the jobs surrounding it, as a means of a profit sharing idea.

• (1330)

If we had a profit element to the spent nuclear fuel commodities, it would serve to subsidize fuel costs. Last year's high increase in fuel costs was debilitating for people on level incomes. We need to ensure that does not happen again. Anything that a power company can do to decrease costs for customers is a real plus.

Motion No. 4 would attempt to bring more accountability and openness to the activities of the waste management organization by making it subject to the Access to Information Act. We support this. A few years ago the riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke had the opportunity to house spent nuclear fuel. Some of Canada's brightest scientists could be found in this community. The community understands the chemistry and physics behind nuclear science.

People in the community were willing to accept this because they knew what it was all about since they had worked at the plant for over 40 year. It could have meant more retail jobs and more people coming into the community. Yet because of the fear of the unknown and the lack of accountability or the public not being informed of everything there was to know, this drew to a standstill and the community lost out on the opportunity.

Motion No. 5 would amend clause 12 which states that the waste management organization must submit plans to the minister for proposed disposal approaches as well as recommendations within three years of the act coming into force. The amendment would extend the deadline to 10 years, which is far too long to wait for the nuclear industry to be able to grow again.

Government Orders

It is important for the nuclear industry to go forth at this time because of alternate uses of energy and not necessarily nuclear energy itself. For example, the science behind hydrogen fuel cells was developed at the research station in Chalk River. When a nuclear reactor is not needed it does not have to be shut down. It could continue to operate but instead of being used for the production of power it could be used for the production of hydrogen. Rather than building a whole new plant to produce hydrogen for fuel cells these plants could be used to make hydrogen.

Car companies are looking for ways to store hydrogen and electricity in fuel cells. Instead of all vehicles being carbon burners we could use this technology. The science behind knowing what nuclear energy is all about has promise for not just the nuclear power industry but for other industries as well.

Another side advantage of the research behind the nuclear industry is the science of materials. Reactors are also used to look at different types of materials, to look for fractures and to examine structures. For example, when the space shuttle Challenger crashed it was Chalk River and the nuclear reactor science department, NRC, that examined it and determined that an o-ring was not responsible for the crash.

● (1335)

It is very important to discuss these amendments. Motion No. 8 would give further clarity and openness. The bill must be passed but with the proper amendments in the best interest of all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to rise to speak to this important bill, Bill C-27. This bill may not seem important, but it is because it has given rise to major debates in various regions of Canada, most specifically in certain regions of Quebec.

Let us take, for example, the area represented by my colleague from Jonquière. He was eloquent in listing the realities surrounding the importing of MOX in his area, which was done without any real consultation by the federal government.

This bill is important because it also affects Quebec, particularly the Gentilly plant, where, inevitably—because Hydro Quebec will become a member of the waste management organization—Quebec will become involved in a broad debate involving not only the crown corporation, but over time, we hope, all Quebecers.

Four amendments by my colleague aim to improve transparency. Members opposite criticize my use of the word transparency. This bill demonstrates one thing: that this government never once listened to the opposition, including in committee, as my colleague mentioned, when it came time to make proposals regarding consultations. Not only did it not listen to the opposition, but in real cases, when it came time to consult the residents of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, the federal government failed to set up a consultation process and mechanism that satisfied the expectations of residents.

What is the objective of this bill being considered today? One of them is to require owners to take on financial responsibility when it comes to nuclear waste management. As well, a second basic objective of the bill is to undertake waste management in a comprehensive, integrated and efficient manner.

It is important to highlight that there are three categories of radioactive waste. First, there is waste from nuclear fuel. The second type is low level radioactive waste. The third type is uranium mine and mill tailings.

The bill before us today deals primarily with the first of these three types of waste, namely nuclear fuel waste. Currently there are 1.3 million nuclear fuel bundles in Canada, which means that more than 18,000 tonnes of waste are stored in so-called pools. The nuclear fuel waste is put in these pools to neutralize it to some extent.

However we must not delude ourselves. This is not a long term solution. On the one hand, it is not intended to last some 30,000 years, as could be the case if the nuclear waste was buried in the Canadian Shield and, on the other hand, it is not a long term solution because the pools used to store nuclear fuel are currently overloaded.

● (1340)

We fully agree with the federal government's decision to establish a long term plan to better manage this waste. This is the first objective of the plan proposed at the time by the federal government.

The second fundamental objective of the plan is to permanently store waste over a 20 year period in the geological layers of the Canadian Shield.

This is where there is a problem. Even though a number of scientific studies indicate that the Canadian Shield could be a long term storage area, for a period of about 30,000 years in the case of nuclear fuel waste, the various consultations that were held, including by the Seaborn commission, show that, in several regions, the public is strongly opposed to the storing of such waste.

Scientists have confirmed the desirability of such a solution. For example, an article published on September 24 in *Trois-Rivières' daily Le Nouvelliste* refers to comments made by Don Wiles, a chemist from the University of Ottawa. The article said the following:

As a scientist, Mr. Wiles feels that the best solution to the problem remains the burial of nuclear waste in the Canadian Shield, where such waste could be stored for 30,000 years without posing any risk to people or to the environment.

The chemistry expert tells us:

Mr. Wiles hopes Atomic Energy of Canada will offer more transparent and simpler explanations, which might facilitate public acceptance.

Government Orders

Greater transparency is where the problem lies with Bill C-27. There is no transparency whatsoever and no desire to involve citizens or groups of citizens on the boards of waste management agencies.

Where the basic criticism lies is that only energy companies such as Hydro-Québec, New Brunswick Hydro and others with nuclear waste on their territory would have a say in this waste management agency, although from past experience we know that the public wants to be involved.

We have the example of the MOX in the riding of my colleague from Jonquière and the instances of public outcry when there were plans to bury waste or experiment with the possibility of burying nuclear fuel waste in the geological layers of the Canadian Shield. All of this demonstrates that people want to have a say in decisions.

But no, not only has the government not integrated these provisions in its bill, it also seems, for all intents and purposes, prepared to reject the four amendments by the Bloc Québécois. First of all, Motion No. 6 calls for more consultation.

An hon. member: The least we can do.

Mr. Bernard Bigras: It is the least we can do, as my colleague said.

We also asked that no nuclear energy corporation be a member or shareholder of the nuclear management organization.

The Liberal Party is against transparency, as the chemist said he wanted. It is against consultation and it supports the involvement of energy corporations within the waste management organization.

This is why, in 1989, the Seaborn panel was mandated to examine the merits of the techniques and solutions proposed by the government. This panel sat for 10 years and submitted its report in 1998.

One conclusion of the Seaborn panel that I remember and that should guide the government in its decisions with regard to Bill C-27 is this, and I quote:

Broad public support is necessary in Canada to ensure the acceptability of a concept for managing nuclear fuel wastes. Safety is a key part, but only one part, of acceptability. Safety must be viewed from two complementary perspectives: technical and social.

Therefore, I hope the government will accept the arguments of the Bloc Québécois, and especially those of the people of Quebec.

•(1345)

Mr. Odina Desrochers (Lotbinière—L'Érable, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will also speak to this important bill, Bill C-27, an act respecting the long term management of nuclear fuel waste.

What I am seeing mostly is the way that my party has analyzed this bill. Our party has a long term vision. When someone has a long term vision, he or she is able to provide, through sound regulations, a framework for a project such as the one proposed with Bill C-27.

If our party has moved new amendments today, it is because, when the committee studied this bill, all the amendments moved by the Bloc Québécois were once again opposed by the Liberals.

It is as though this government, which should normally be more transparent, was not able to accept any idea put forward by another party. These people think they are totally controlling all the democratic decisions here in this parliament. If our parliament became the model of what the Liberals want, there would be no more democracy here. The only democracy here is when we have the opportunity, like now, to make ourselves heard and to put forward interesting proposals, but that is all.

When we work in committee, I often notice that we have trouble getting started on time because these people are so serious we cannot even have a quorum. However, when the time comes to reject motions, there are seven, eight and even ten liberal members there to quash our proposals. That is what they call democracy.

I want to refer back to one amendment in particular which I think should have been accepted. With that amendment, Bill C-27 would have created a transparent management committee. The proposal gave some people the opportunity to participate in transparent and fair management.

Let us look at the proposed membership for the board of directors. We asked for two representatives of nuclear energy corporations, which is normal when dealing with nuclear energy; one representative from the government, once again a normal request since the government is responsible for the implementation of the act; one representative from the aboriginal community; and one from a recognized government agency active in the environmental area. As far as I know, nuclear waste management does have an impact on the environment. As the issue is very specific and highly technical, we also requested one representative from a scientific and technical area related to nuclear waste management and one expert in public affairs in the field of nuclear energy.

From the expression on your face, Mr. Speaker, it sounds reasonable. Everybody agreed with that. It was good common sense. Unfortunately, our proposal was rejected at committee.

Let me give an example. When a child goes through negativism—the infamous no, no, no phase—we figure he will soon grow out of it. As far as I can see, negativism has such a great hold on members on the other side that it will be years before they reach political maturity. When they do, they will be capable of openness and they will understand that we too, on this side of the House, can have good ideas and move a bill forward.

•(1350)

We can hope that one day there will be political maturity on that side. However, since my election here, on June 2, 1997, I have often despaired of the fact. I would like to return to two amendments introduced by my colleague from Sherbrooke.

An hon. member: You have not read them.

Mr. Desrochers: Yes, I have. It is my custom, when I hear something, to respond regardless of whether it is an off microphone comment or not. It is an idiosyncratic holdover from another career.

It is important to talk about one of the amendments by my colleague from Sherbrooke, that is the one on consultation. Here again, I will speak of the government's consultation practices.

S. O. 31

I have travelled twice across Canada with the Standing Committee on Finance. It would have cost the Minister of Finance a lot less to take the Liberal Party's program and publish it in its entirety. A lot of money would have been saved. The consultations were bogus. What we wanted were democratic consultations, consultations in which the public would be heard and would see there can be responsible people in a political party.

The way the party opposite could show it is responsible is by listening once in a while. We realize it does not. These people do not listen. I know that when we speak the truth, it is disturbing. I note that, as I advance in my remarks, the other side—pardon the expression—fidgets. Do you know what I mean, Mr. Speaker?

When we have to resort to using such expressions, it indicates how sad a point democracy has reached on the other side. It is to show that there is no responsibility. When serious things are being discussed and people are fidgeting, it means they are not part of the debate. It is they we are talking about when we say they are fidgeting. They are always on the outside of the real debates.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Desrochers: Let us get serious. When this sort of expression describes democracy today, we can understand that all the amendments introduced in committee were defeated by the members on the government side. I insist. They can stop. First, they can accept real consultation and, second, they can also make sure no nuclear waste management organization will be in conflict of interest if it sits on a management committee.

I hope the members opposite have understood common sense and that it was important to adopt the amendments of my colleague from Sherbrooke.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1355)

[English]

PEACEKEEPING

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on December 14 I will have the honour of presenting Chief Warrant Officer B. D. Kennedy with the Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal.

The peacekeeping service record of this officer reinforces my deep admiration for the men and women of the Canadian armed forces. As everyone knows, peacekeeping has become one of the hallmarks of our international identity. Time and time again, Canada has demonstrated not only military expertise but patience and diplomacy.

Now as we face the latest threat to our way of life and with holidays approaching, let us take a moment and remember our navy personnel who today are serving overseas to help establish and maintain international peace, stability and therefore a better Canada. My only hope is that in the December budget our armed forces finally will be funded as professional soldiers should be and not as the Liberals see them, as boy scouts equipped to shovel snow in Toronto.

• (1400)

RON LENYK

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my constituent Mr. Ron Lenyk on becoming this year's recipient of the Dean S. Leshar Award.

Ron's achievements during his 30 years in the newspaper industry include the introduction of colour photographs throughout his newspaper, a sophisticated neighbourhood distribution system and the introduction of community specific editorial coverage.

As well, under Ron's leadership the Mississauga *News* became the first newspaper in the world to implement a full desktop pagination system of production.

Ron's achievements in the city of Mississauga in community projects such as the Christmas bureau fund, community living, the millennium committee and the sports celebrities dinner are also to be commended.

On behalf of the citizens of Mississauga West I congratulate Ron Lenyk and thank him for his dedicated service to the newspaper industry and to his community.

* * *

KIM EVERINGHAM

Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to congratulate Kim Everingham of Stratford, Ontario. Kim has recently been awarded a Wayne Gretzky-CNIB scholarship to continue her studies in sociology and psychology. The scholarship was presented to Kim by Canadian National Institute for the Blind district manager Sherry Malcho during the November 16 commencement at Northwestern Secondary School. It is one of only 15 of these scholarships which will be given out this year.

Although Kim has bilateral optic atrophy and is considered to be legally blind, she has chosen to maintain a positive outlook on her life. Kim has continued to set goals for herself and is presently attending university on a full time basis. She is able to use a computer and has special needs software to assist her in her studies. Kim, who holds a Honeywell scholarship, is determined to continue on to teacher's college after completing her degree.

I am extremely proud to congratulate Kim Everingham on her persistence in pursuing her dreams regardless of her visual impairment. She has set an example to many other young people, both those with and without disabilities.

* * *

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada and the United States have the longest undefended border. In the weeks and months since the terrible events of September 11, because of increased security, we now have the longest delays ever in the history of the border.

This has created great frustration with business people and other travellers, some of whom have been harassed by untrained security personnel simply because they dress or look a little different.

I would call upon the appropriate officials of both governments to move to ensure not only that our borders are secure but that they can be crossed quickly with a minimum of inconvenience.

* * *

CHINESE WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS ASSOCIATION

Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last Friday in Vancouver I had the pleasure to join 400 people for the sixth annual banquet of the Chinese Women Entrepreneurs Association.

The association was established by a group of motivated and community minded women of Chinese descent with successful businesses and professions. This outstanding group of 180 young women generously provide support to their community by sharing their valuable business experience and insights with new Canadians.

I salute them for their dedication and contribution. Indeed they are fine examples of our celebration of diversity in Canada.

* * *

RAMADAN

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton Centre-East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Ramadan is an important time of the year for the Muslim community. Starting November 16 and lasting for 31 days it is a time of reflection, a time of spiritual renewal.

This year more than most, because of the unconscionable acts of inhumanity on September 11, Ramadan has special meaning for the Muslim community as it expresses deep sympathies for Muslims and all others who perished.

We want the Muslim community in Canada and around the world to know that as the followers of Islam celebrate the revelation of God's word to Muhammad we join them in honouring his call for harmony. I ask members of the House to recognize and embrace the Muslim spirit of reflection and annual renewal. I am sure that our upcoming year will be bettered by such resolve.

To Oula Sanduga of my Edmonton office and all the members of the Muslim faith nationally and internationally I say Ramadan Mubarak.

* * *

• (1405)

[Translation]

ROBERT LEPAGE

Mr. Serge Marcil (Beauharnois—Salaberry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Robert Lepage on receiving the 2001 London *Evening Standard* theatre award for best play.

The award winning play, "The Far Side of the Moon", the English version of his "La face cachée de la lune", was a sold-out success at the National Theatre in London this past summer. This is the first time a foreign playwright has been so honoured. His accomplishment brings honour to all Canadians.

S. O. 31

Robert Lepage has a rich and varied body of work, with which most of us are familiar. After his start in 1984 with Théâtre Repère, his career was marked by successes at the National Arts Centre, and with major companies in Germany, Great Britain and Sweden. In all of these, as in his screen debut, Robert Lepage moves his audience with his bold and skilled handling of images and new technologies.

He has mounted some of Shakespeare's major works, as well as his own creations, which include "Vinci", "The Dragon's Trilogy" and the film "Possible Worlds".

On behalf of the government, I congratulate Mr. Lepage on this accomplishment and wish him continued—and greater—artistic success.

* * *

CANADA LABOUR CODE

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec women who are pregnant or nursing and who come under the Canada Labour Code still do not enjoy the same benefits as women who come under the Quebec legislation.

Women whose work is covered by the Quebec law and who take advantage of preventive withdrawal are paid 90% of their salaries, while those covered by the Canadian legislation receive only 55%.

The federal government must cease to show its disdain for expectant or nursing mothers by refusing to treat them with all the dignity they deserve. No price can be put on the birth of a healthy baby.

The Minister of Labour finally made a commitment last week before the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development to listen to the voice of reason and has assured us that she will take this recommendation into account in the forthcoming review of part III of the Canada Labour Code.

At the same time, the minister boasted of Quebec's social policies. Now she must put her words into action. Women can count on the Bloc Québécois to ensure that the minister fulfills her commitment.

* * *

[English]

MARIJUANA

Mrs. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, home grow marijuana operations are a plague in communities across Canada. Just this year Waterloo regional police have raided 64 home grow operations and suspect another 200 homes are actively growing marijuana.

Across the country residential family homes are being converted to large scale marijuana operations producing an average of 300 to 400 plants, typically for export. Hydro meters are illegally bypassed and special generators and lights are installed.

Officials have increasing concerns about the deadly booby traps and dangerous living conditions that exist in these houses. Just last week a man, a woman and their four children ran from a flame filled Kitchener house where marijuana was being cultivated.

S. O. 31

This is not a drug problem. It is a community problem. It is a community emergency. I encourage all my colleagues to discuss this concern with their municipal governments and law enforcement officials. Currently sentencing through the courts provides no real disincentives to the perpetrators.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Andy Burton (Skeena, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of both the minister of fisheries and the minister of aboriginal affairs the concerns brought to my attention by the fishing community of Bella Bella. It is seeking access to an increase in its allocation of the herring spawn on kelp fishery.

The fisheries minister must approve the 2002 management plan for this fishery in two weeks. As time is of the essence I urge the ministers to give serious consideration to the Heiltsuk band request given its current unemployment situation and the spinoff income this would produce for the town of Bella Bella. Obviously conservation and other user requirements must also be taken into consideration when deciding on allocation levels.

As the MP representing this area I urge both the minister of fisheries and the minister of aboriginal affairs to deal with this request immediately. I note for the House that representatives of the Heiltsuk band are in Ottawa today and are prepared to meet.

* * *

[Translation]

YOUTH STRATEGY INITIATIVE

Ms. Carole-Marie Allard (Laval East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Secretary of State for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the regions of Quebec, the hon. member for Outremont, for the assistance he is providing young people from all regions of Canada.

I learned this weekend that young people have access to strategic information, consultant services, loans and other key stakeholders in the export sector, through a program that has a proven track record, the Youth Strategy initiative. This program is implemented in co-operation with Community Futures Development Corporations.

For the year 2001 alone, the Youth Strategy initiative provided funding to 1,516 entrepreneurs, helped create or maintain 4,580 jobs and generated \$102 million in investments. These are concrete results.

The issue of young people leaving rural areas is of great concern to the government. This past weekend, Laval hosted the 12th convention of the Regroupement des jeunes gens d'affaires du Québec. This event was organized by Laval's Jeune chambre de commerce et d'industrie. This issue was on the agenda.

Congratulations to our young entrepreneurs.

●(1410)

[English]

SPECIES AT RISK

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after many witnesses, many meetings and much hard work the environment committee reported on the species at risk bill earlier this week.

I commend all the members of the committee for their involvement and contribution. None of us are completely happy with the outcome, but after much debate and many compromises we reached a result that I believe my party can live with.

I urge the government to accept this revamped bill as the absolute minimum the country needs to protect our natural environment.

* * *

[Translation]

HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is pleased to see that the Conseil du patronat du Québec, the Chambre de commerce et de l'industrie de la Rive-Sud de Montréal, the Chambre de commerce et de l'industrie de Châteauguay, the Comité d'action régional pour le prolongement de l'autoroute 30, the Association des constructeurs de routes et des grands travaux du Québec, and the Quebec government all support the extension of highway 30 and the construction of the two bridges.

The Quebec government is ready to start the work as the main contractor. All that is missing is the federal government's will to fund half of the project. Everyone is ready, except for the federal government. The time for meaningless election promises is over. It is now time to deliver.

The federal government must announce before Christmas that it will quickly fulfill its election promises.

* * *

KEN HECHTMAN

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Ken Hechtman, a Montreal reporter, is believed to have been taken hostage four days ago in Afghanistan. This hostage taking comes on the heels of the deaths of European journalists in recent weeks.

Being a foreign correspondent can be dangerous, especially in a war situation such as the one in Afghanistan. The men and women who travel to these countries do so with great courage and temerity.

They do so in the name of the right to information, freedom of expression and democracy, values we all cherish. These defenders of freedom must not be used as currency or pawns.

For these reasons, I support the Government of Canada in taking all of the necessary steps to rescue Ken Hechtman.

*Oral Questions**[English]***BILL C-42**

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have become masters of combining the good, the bad and the ugly into massive omnibus bills, forcing members to accept flawed legislation in order to pass needed amendments. They did this with Bill C-36 and they appear to be pushing the boundaries even further with Bill C-42.

Tagged with the misnomer the Public Safety Act, the bill should be more accurately called the ministerial power grab act as most of the bill would give ministers broad authoritative powers with no parliamentary accountability. Bill C-42 would give the Minister of Transport and bureaucrats a blank cheque to develop an aviation security process as they see fit.

Let us contrast this to the American aviation and transportation security act where it was elected representatives and senators who determined what the security measures would be.

When will the Liberal backbenchers finally realize that all bills like Bill C-42 do is strip them of whatever little power they still have left?

* * *

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Traffic Injury Research Foundation released a survey that showed 17% of Canadians admit to driving after drinking alcohol. One in every 12 Canadians admit that they were drunk at the wheel at some point during the past year.

These figures are both frightening and alarming. In 1999 there were 3,500 serious injuries and 906 deaths in fatal car crashes involving alcohol. These people are our neighbours, our friends and sometimes our family members. It is up to us to act responsibly.

On behalf of all my colleagues in the House of Commons I encourage all Canadians not to drink and drive.

* * *

● (1415)

PETER MAARSMAN

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on October 31, Peter Maarsman retired after seven years as executive director of the Surrey Crime Prevention Society.

During his watch the society grew from one employee and a handful of members with a budget of just over \$40,000 into a thriving organization with eight staff and an annual budget of over \$300,000.

The citizens crime watch patrol, the safe rider bicycle program and the mobile patrol were developed by the society under Peter as was the community mall patrol which combats auto theft from mall parking lots. The fatal vision-drunk buster program teaches children not to get into a car with a driver who has been drinking.

What began as an anti-graffiti project, the spirit of youth mural program, saw Surrey student artists design and produce over 45

murals throughout the community over six years. Last summer a group of these young artists travelled to Ottawa to paint a mural on a business in Nepean.

Peter Maarsman can be proud of his contribution to Surrey. We thank him for his commitment to our community and we wish him all the best in his well deserved retirement.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD*[English]***IMMIGRATION**

Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, as terrorists are being hunted down around the world, many of them know that despite Bill C-36 they can still get into Canada without documentation. Now workers at Pearson airport have told us that about 35 people a day arrive without documents. As a matter of fact, on Tuesday there were 30 who arrived here without documents. These frontline workers also tell us they are worried about possible terrorist connections that these people may have.

I ask the Prime Minister, specifically of the 30 who arrived here on Tuesday without documents, how many were let go and how was it determined that they were not a security risk?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my information from sources that I think are at least as good as the hon. member's is that there were not 30 people let go without documents. One person arrived without documents. He was examined and the appropriate action was taken.

We are being vigilant at our borders. We are giving ourselves additional legislative tools. We appreciate the fact that most of the members of the Alliance Party supported us on Bill C-36. I hope that this support on behalf of Canada's security will continue.

[Translation]

Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): That is not the case, Mr. Speaker. Terrorists know that they can enter the country without identification, in spite of Bill C-36. And amazingly, they can continue to belong to terrorist organizations.

How long on average will the government detain these individuals before setting them as free as birds?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am certain that the minister and departmental officials will apply the law with the necessary vigour.

We strengthened the legislation with Bill C-11. I am certain that we are going to work actively and successfully to protect the safety of Canadians.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the government has a real problem here because frontline workers are saying that at Pearson airport alone there can be up to 35 people a day arriving without documents. The Deputy Prime Minister has just said that it may be only one a day. This is a huge discrepancy.

We would like to know, since September 11 how many people have arrived at Pearson without documents? How long was each one detained and, of those who were let free, how was it determined that they were not a risk? There is a huge discrepancy here. The government has to face up to it.

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, under our rules a detailed question like that should be placed on the order paper or, at the very least as a courtesy, conveyed to the government before question period.

I would be very happy to get the hon. member the detailed answer to his question. In the meantime it gives me a chance to reply by saying that we are working vigorously to protect the security of Canadians. We appreciate the support that has been given by the hon. member's party until now. I am sorry he is slipping away from that support and embarrassing himself.

* * *

TERRORISM

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, that is because the bill had nothing to do with these immigrants and refugees without documents.

Earlier this week U.S. attorney general John Ashcroft, who is responsible for both law enforcement and the U.S. immigration and refugee systems, announced publicly the names of all those who have been charged and the numbers of people detained in connection with the September 11 attacks on North America. That is reassuring to the American public.

Will the solicitor general and our immigration minister do exactly the same here in Canada to reassure Canadians that there is something going on after that terrorist attack?

• (1420)

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. colleague is well aware that I do not make announcements for investigations by the RCMP. That is up to the RCMP to do.

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, that is the standard answer from the solicitor general "I can't make a comment because there is an ongoing investigation".

What is the difference between the U.S. and Canada? The U.S. attorney general stands up and says "These are the number of people that have been detained; these are the number of people that have been charged", and he names them.

Why can we not reassure the Canadian public that here in Canada something is going on after that terrorist attack? Why not?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): I am not really sure, Mr. Speaker, if my hon. colleague is

concerned about security or is trying to create fear in the Canadian people.

The fact of the matter is we have a very efficient police force and security intelligence agency which are working around the clock. They are working with their counterparts in the United States to make sure that anybody who needs to be brought to justice will be brought to justice.

It is up to the RCMP to inform the Canadian public what takes place within an investigation.

* * *

*[Translation]***PUBLIC SAFETY ACT**

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, provincial ministers were told that Old Quebec could have been declared a military security zone if the public safety bill had been in effect during the summit of the Americas.

This explanation provided by the privy council contradicts the statements made by the Minister of National Defence, who told the House that the Bloc Québécois was exaggerating the ramifications of this bill.

Will the minister admit that he misled the House and that even the privy council says that he could declare Old Quebec and the national assembly a military security zone without being asked to do so by the government of Quebec?

[English]

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated, the intent of the bill is to protect military property and Canadian forces or allies when they are off a military base. When they are on a military base we already have that protection, that security. This protects them off the base.

It also provides for other circumstances where police would have control and would need additional assistance in providing security to a specific area. It could include an area where meetings are held, as I have indicated, somewhere such as Kananaskis. It could also include a nuclear power plant.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are not talking about intentions. We are talking about what is written down. And when the senior official meets with ministers, the example he gives is the one I gave here, but we are accused of exaggerating.

The minister talks about the G-8 meeting in Kananaskis. He agrees that this area could be declared a military security zone, if the province so requested.

With the bill he is introducing, the request does not need to come from the province. The minister could make the decision himself and bypass the province. That is what the bill says. I am not asking him to tell us what his intentions are or what he has in his head, but what is in the bill.

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is any difference between what I am saying here in the House and what the officials have said. I would still say that the hon. member is exaggerating how this particular law will be applied.

I will say this. There will be an opportunity to discuss this at committee and to consider changes. They may make recommendations at that time. I also intend to consult the provinces on this matter forthwith.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence has said that the Kananaskis police could ask for help from the army if it needed it. This type of request is entirely possible in the current context, so long as it is made by provincial authorities.

Will the Minister of National Defence recognize that Bill C-42, on public safety, goes a lot further than the present legislation, much further than he wants us to know, and that he does not need to ask anyone to order a military security zone for as long as he wants, on top of that?

• (1425)

[English]

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are limits on the area. It must be reasonable. It must be reflective of the purpose. If we are protecting a ship or protecting a military jet aircraft, it will only be that area that will be protected. It will not be a whole city. That is where members opposite get into gross exaggeration of the situation.

In terms of the common law powers that are exercised by police, we are not talking about any expansion of them. We would take over from them in circumstances where they would need help. Aid to the civil power already provides for that kind of situation.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, no one here is naive. Parliament passes legislation. What is written has force of law, not what the minister thinks of it. That is the fact of the matter.

Will the minister recognize that the major difference between the current situation and that of Bill C-42 is that, at the moment, the armed forces can come to the help of the police, while under Bill C-42 they would take control of a designated zone for the period they wanted, and all citizens' rights would be suspended? There is quite a difference.

[English]

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if, for example, a nuclear power plant were in danger of being attacked by terrorists, I think Canadians would want the Canadian forces to be there to protect it. That is why they would be there, to provide that kind of security.

These kinds of provisions are subject to judicial review if people think they go beyond what they are intended to do, but I do not think that is the case at all. I think there is a great exaggeration over there

on the other side. They can make suggestions and propose amendments at the committee.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on Monday I asked the Minister of Justice a question about Bill C-42 and mentioned Kananaskis and she sought to reassure me. She said that there was no hidden agenda, and I guess she was right. That which may have been hidden has now been revealed by the Minister of National Defence, that Kananaskis is in fact a possible target of the powers that we find within Bill C-42.

I ask the Minister of Justice, is she not concerned that the reassurances she gave me on Monday have now been contradicted by the Minister of National Defence?

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Not at all, Mr. Speaker. The situation with Kananaskis is that area would be under the control of the RCMP. The federal police will have involvement in securing that area. If they required additional assistance from the Canadian forces, we would be there to provide it. That is simply what this would mean.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know that Liberal assurances have a short shelf life but this is ridiculous. This only went from Monday to Thursday.

I would like to ask the government, what does it have against legitimate protesters who may not share its world view from time to time?

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, absolutely nothing. It has been said many times in the House that we want to allow for legitimate protesters. What we are trying to prevent are terrorist attacks and violence from occurring. We need to protect people and we need to protect property from time to time. The police do that. There is no change in the power in terms of that. It just means the Canadian forces can come in and assist in this time of concern about terrorist activities. That is an appropriate and reasonable thing to do. All of this will be discussed at committee and members can make all their suggestions at that time.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, we are allowed to make our representations in committee; it is just that we know the government will ignore every representation.

Bill C-42 is moving us in the direction of the old War Measures Act. That is back to a time when ministers unilaterally made decisions affecting the fundamental rights of Canadians. They did it without parliamentary review or oversight. The War Measures Act was criticized quite properly for the virtually unlimited power it conferred upon cabinet. It had to be repealed and it was repealed.

Why then is the government once again concentrating power in the cabinet and bypassing parliament and the rights of Canadian citizens?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is in the bill will come into effect only if it is agreed to and approved by parliament. We are not taking anything away from parliament. It is parliament itself that, because of a national security situation, will be designating in a certain limited way, subject to the charter of rights and freedoms, certain authority to ministers. The ministers are not taking this authority; they are getting it from this House and from the other place.

Oral Questions

•(1430)

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, no one believes that.

Bill C-42 will give ministers the power to implement security measures unilaterally and in secret. They do not even have to get approval from the cabinet for 90 days and the powers last for one full year. There is no parliamentary review of the powers. There is no system of parliamentary checks and balances. There is no citizens overview. There is no way to stop ministerial abuse of these incredible powers.

This is an unnecessary power grab by the government. How can the government ensure that Canadians' rights are protected when those rights are held in the hands of a single minister?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the bill is subject to the charter of rights and freedoms and the Canadian constitution. I understand that this measure, if it becomes law and goes into effect, could be subject to judicial review. Very important at this stage is that this will be studied carefully in committee and if valid points are made, the government has already proven over and over again it is willing to take them into consideration.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the government's own immigration officials are confirming that there is an unprecedented tide of undocumented refugee claimants arriving at our international airports. Officials say this high number of undocumented arrivals is due to the war in Afghanistan or the mistaken impression abroad that the government is poised to crack down on the abuses that are rife within the refugee system.

How can Canadians have any confidence that their security will not be compromised as we face the rush of people fleeing the war zone?

Mr. Mark Assad (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should check his facts because the department does its work. Whenever there are any types of threats the RCMP and CSIS take them into account. They look into these matters very seriously for our security.

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it sounds like he is reading from the same cue cards that the minister reads from every day.

The government consistently defends the status quo. It talks about the power to detain but it never seems to use it. We know that many of these undocumented claimants, some of whom may be connected to the Taliban or al-Qaeda were photographed, fingerprinted and then just released.

How can the government continue to pretend that this is an adequate response to the crisis we face?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is abusing the privileges of the House of Commons

by asserting that there is a flood of undocumented refugees who are not being dealt with by the authorities.

These people, to the extent that they do come in, and I do not know that we could say that it is a flood, are being dealt with by the authorities under the law.

If my hon. friend says that he has evidence that they are connected to the Taliban and al-Qaeda, I say that he should put it on the floor of the House of Commons right now and not try to frighten people for narrow political purposes.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Transport maintained that the deregulated environment in Canada's air transportation industry had allowed Canadians to have access to more flights and cheaper fares. One wonders on which planet the minister is living.

Does the minister find it reasonable to have to pay \$1,191.12 for an Ottawa—Mont-Joli return airfare, when one can fly to Europe for half of that amount?

Mr. André Harvey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question is clear. It should be the same when referendums are held.

All the measures taken by the Minister of Transport and by the various departments promote fair competition. We hope that, in the months to come, prices will stabilize and become even more competitive.

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary should realize that the problem does not exist only in eastern Quebec.

In northwestern Quebec, for example in Abitibi, it cost \$483 in 1995 for a return airfare between Rouyn and Montreal. Today, the same ticket costs \$743.

How can the minister claim that fares are cheaper and that there are more flights, when it is just the opposite?

Mr. André Harvey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, contrary to the Bloc Québécois demagoguery, the government took positive action. All companies were eligible for the federal compensation program and several regional companies benefited from it.

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the government has failed to charge eight Canadians suspected of distributing child pornography.

According to an international agency mandated to end the sexual exploitation of children, the Liberal government has failed to keep its promise to set up a national plan to fight child prostitution and abuse.

I ask the Minister of Justice, why has the government failed to eradicate the sexual exploitation of children?

• (1435)

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is working very hard with a number of agencies, levels of government and our allies to deal with the problem of the abuse and exploitation of children.

Let me reassure the hon. member that not only do we have provisions in the code dealing with child pornography now, Bill C-15A, which the justice committee considered some time ago and is now before the Senate, further enhances our ability to fight child pornography. We will continue to work with our allies and police forces around the world to track down—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Crowfoot.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government made it legal in Canada to have sex with children as young as 14 years of age.

Federal child pornography legislation was sidelined as a result of the Sharpe decision about five years ago.

Laws prohibiting the luring of children and child pornography over the Internet have yet to be enacted. Why will the justice minister not protect our children?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, the government is working not only here at home but abroad to deal with the problems and the horror of child pornography.

In fact we could have had laws in place protecting our children further against child pornography had the opposition and others not stonewalled the passage of Bill C-15. Months ago we could have had new laws in the country protecting our children. They should look at themselves.

* * *

[Translation]

EXPORT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Export Development Corporation has provided financial assistance to GM of London, Ontario, for a \$2 billion locomotive construction contract. It seems that this company has subcontracted at least 50% of the initial contract to a Mexican firm, while the employees of Alstom, in Montreal, are short of work.

Does the Export Development Corporation consider it within its mandate to subsidize employment elsewhere instead of supporting job creation at home?

[English]

Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have that question. First, I have to point out that the details of the contract are commercially confidential, obviously, but all of EDC's criteria in terms of benefits to Canada and Canadian content were satisfied.

This is the largest such contract in North American history and 850 workers in my riding of London, Ontario will not have to be laid

off. They will be maintained in their jobs because of this contract. Because of this contract the full workforce of 2,755 employees will be maintained in place in London, Ontario.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, people in Montreal have been laid off, and there is no more work for them.

Could the government ensure that the EDC is more careful about creating jobs at home, and ought it not include strict clauses in the agreements it signs with companies to which it provides assistance?

[English]

Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this may come as a news flash to the hon. member, but London, Ontario is in Canada.

If I may quote from Alstom's own website, it notes that in view of the NAFTA, "ALSTOM Canada works closely with its US and Mexican counterparts to better coordinate its activities and its development in North American markets". That is exactly what General Motors in London, Ontario did with the appropriate help of EDC.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mrs. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, more than two months ago British intelligence agents gave evidence that 8 Canadians were suspected of child abuse and child pornography and 120 people in more than a dozen countries have been arrested. We know there are suspects in Ontario, British Columbia and Nova Scotia but no one has been apprehended in this country.

I ask the solicitor general, why have Canadians not been arrested?

• (1440)

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that my hon. colleague's party continuously condemns one of the best police forces in the world, if not the best.

I can assure my hon. colleague that the RCMP is pursuing this matter, but does the hon. member expect me to give information on investigations publicly? No, I will not.

Mrs. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, as the mother-in-law of a police officer I resent what the solicitor general just said.

The RCMP commissioner admits cases are put on the back burner while the RCMP deals with terrorism. Organized crime, drug trafficking and now cases of child pornography and sexual abuse are falling through the cracks. This appalling scenario is a direct result of the government's gutting of the RCMP budget.

Oral Questions

Will the solicitor general immediately ensure that the RCMP is sufficiently staffed and funded so that our children stop falling prey to sadistic pedophiles?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have told the House many times that the government, in the last budget and since, has put just about \$2 billion into the public safety envelope. We have funded one of the best police forces in the world. The RCMP has indicated quite clearly that it is pursuing this matter and this government will not criticize the RCMP.

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[Translation]

RAOUL LÉGER

Mr. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 1981 Raoul Léger of Kent County, New Brunswick, died under tragic circumstances in Guatemala. His family is today calling for an autopsy to help them discover the facts surrounding his death.

Could the minister tell us how his department can help the Léger family?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the member for his interest in this situation, which is very sad, and for raising it with me last week.

Since then, officials from my department have contacted the family to offer support that is appropriate in the situation.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister of Finance almost announced that the 5¢ reduction in EI premiums would not be going ahead.

Yet large employers and big business went to the Minister of Finance tearfully asking for their money. Tomorrow the minister will announce a reduction for big business.

My question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. How many tears do workers, women and children need to shed before she will bring in changes to employment insurance?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to explain to the House yet again the approach that the government has to the employment insurance fund. On the one hand, we have been able to reduce premiums every single year since taking office and return to employers and employees \$6.4 billion in that time.

In addition, we have been able to broaden the benefits, whether it be doubling parental benefits, whether it be working to ensure that we change structures for the benefit of seasonal workers.

This is our approach. It is a formula that has worked and has ensured employment insurance—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP) Mr. Speaker, when students were pepper sprayed at UBC there was a full public inquiry, but when an unarmed aboriginal man was shot dead by the OPP at a peaceful protest we had nothing but six years of shameful silence.

Dudley George was more than just one dead Indian. We believe that he is the only aboriginal man in the country in this century, the 20th century, killed in a land claims dispute. That makes it a federal matter.

Will the federal government call for a full public inquiry into the tragic events at Ipperwash and the tragic death of Dudley George?

● (1445)

Mr. John Finlay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend is mixing up two problems. The government is committed to cleaning up the land at Ipperwash and returning it to the first nations. However, the matter of an inquiry is a provincial matter. The government will support such a provision.

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IMMIGRATION

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, nine days ago the minister of immigration said “Under the new Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, we have done everything... to try to make” refugee processing “as fast as possible...”.

Bill C-42 introduced last week would see her department revert to the much slower Immigration Act of 1976.

How does the minister of immigration explain this 180° turnaround on a faster and more efficient system?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, speaking of turnarounds, the hon. member, when he was critic for I do not know which party, tabled a motion about Bill C-11 at committee stage to restore certain appeal rights to the appeal division for serious criminals and threats to Canadian security that Bill C-11 had removed to allow for quicker removals.

The hon. member should be allowed to get up again, apologize for this and explain the inconsistent position.

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no truth whatsoever to that statement.

The minister said of her much touted Bill C-11 “...we have streamlined procedures because we know that it does take too long”.

What happened to change the minister's mind as we see in Bill C-42? She was the one who insisted on the faster procedures. What happened to change her mind?

Oral Questions

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will get his answer by looking at himself in the mirror. He is the one who tried to slow down Bill C-11 and we are the ones who are speeding it up by putting the key clauses in Bill C-42. He has things totally backwards. No wonder he is hidden in the corner down there.

* * *

BILL C-35

Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, tragically 10 months ago this week Catherine MacLean of Ottawa was killed by a drunken diplomat who could not be prosecuted under Canadian law because he was given immunity.

The minister expressed regrets. The minister said it was unjust. The minister made promises. Bill C-35 breaks those promises by expanding immunity to thousands of additional non-Canadians. Will the minister do the right thing and pull Bill C-35 today, or will he break his promises?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, Bill C-35 breaks no such promises. Second, the actions that I took following the terrible incident last January were exactly what were required in order to ensure that as much as possible we could prevent this ever happening again.

This happened in my community. I am ashamed that I have to face a member across the aisle who tries to play cheap political games with a tragic incident.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: I know all hon. members want to hear the supplementary question.

Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, what is cheap is that response. There were 90 victims in the last five years. There is nothing cheap about that, nothing cheap about Canadians being raped, nothing cheap about Canadians being assaulted, nothing cheap about their being seriously injured, nothing cheap about drafting legislation as a result of the actions of someone above Canada's law, and nothing cheap about expanding those laws to include hundreds more people.

The Canadian Alliance wants to prevent future actions like this. The minister has the chance to choose to prevent future actions or just to continue to cry crocodile tears.

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, evidently the Canadian Alliance would like to withdraw from the Vienna convention. Evidently the Canadian Alliance would like to suspend diplomatic relations with every civilized country in the world. Evidently the hon. member seems to think that most diplomats are committing crimes, which simply is not true.

We have taken unprecedented steps to provide entire transparency with respect to the incidents that involve foreign diplomats. We have taken the necessary steps in order to ensure that those who do break Canadian laws do not remain in the country. We have put adequate pressure to ensure that in the case of MacLean and Doré the perpetrator is brought to justice.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

● (1450)

The Speaker: Order, please. The Chair has to be able to hear the questions and answers. It is clear that some hon. members do not like the questions and others do not like the answers, but the Chair has to hear them all. I would appreciate some co-operation.

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[*Translation*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is reassuring Americans and promising them that the oil from Canada's tar sands will be available to them in the years to come, yet the government is dragging its feet when it comes to the natural gas off Sable Island in Nova Scotia.

How can the Prime Minister's eagerness to make our oil available to the U.S. be justified when he continues to refuse to do anything to make the natural gas off Sable Island available to New Brunswick and Quebec?

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is blessed with very rich natural resources: gas in the north; yes, gas off Sable Island; yes, oil, heavy oil, tar sands, nuclear renewable power and a whole range of others.

The policy of the Canadian government is to ensure that those resources are developed according to the principles of sustainable development to meet the market requirements of all Canadians and to take advantage of export opportunities wherever they exist. To the enormous advantage of the country, last year there were \$50 billion worth of exports from Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that is not the right answer.

The federal government provided more than \$1 billion in tax credits to support exploration off Sable Island.

Why is the government not giving Quebec or New Brunswick access to this natural gas when Gas Métropolitain is prepared to build the required gas pipeline, even without a subsidy? When will the federal government stop dragging its feet?

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again the hon. gentleman misunderstands the procedure. If there is a complaint that can be legitimately sustained that an energy development is not providing proper access to Canadians, that complaint can go before the National Energy Board and the National Energy Board will adjudicate upon it. That is what the National Energy Board is for.

*Oral Questions***AIRLINE INDUSTRY**

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, the Minister of Natural Resources and as the senior minister from Saskatchewan.

As Saskatchewan's only member of the federal cabinet I am wondering what steps he is taking to ensure that WestJet, which provides the only jet competitor to Air Canada, does not suffer the same fate as Canada 3000. What steps is he taking at the cabinet table to ensure that WestJet does not die and that air competition does not die in his province for which he is responsible?

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. Once again, we do want to hear the answer.

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should not try to mislead the people of Saskatchewan or Canada through television from the House.

Questions cannot be placed to ministers in their capacity as regional ministers. I can assure the people of Saskatchewan and all Canadians that the Minister of Natural Resources is very actively involved in ensuring competitive services for the people of his province and all of Canada. He is doing a great job. He deserves our applause.

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the senior minister from Saskatchewan is really involved. He will not even get on his feet in the House of Commons to defend his own province. If the senior minister from Saskatchewan—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member will put his question directly and will perhaps omit some of the preamble. It seems to be getting a little footloose and fancy free this afternoon on both sides.

• (1455)

Mr. James Moore: Mr. Speaker, this is the minister's chance to prove that he is the senior minister for Saskatchewan. Defend your province in the House of Commons. If the minister—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Peterborough.

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MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and the Status of Women has been meeting with various communities to monitor serious concerns they have had since September 11.

Could the secretary of state tell the House what plans she has to alleviate those serious post-September 11 concerns?

Hon. Hedy Fry (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since September 11 I have been meeting across the country with ethnocultural communities, police, municipalities and other levels of government to monitor the concerns of communities.

As a result we have developed a plan of action to partner with institutions such as the police, municipalities, provinces and communities to create educational tools to assist in developing intercultural and interfaith understanding and to strengthen communities.

* * *

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Richard Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, British Columbia's forest industry provides billions of tax dollars to the coffers of the federal government and is now in a crisis because of a massive pine beetle infestation. There are 25,000 jobs at stake in that forest industry and the government has refused to live up to its obligations to help the province in this time of crisis.

I want to ask the government and the minister from Saskatchewan: Will they recognize their obligation to help in this natural disaster and immediately commit to joining the province in this fight against the pine beetle?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have already joined the province in the fight against the mountain pine beetle. Indeed it was in 1995 that scientists from the Government of Canada alerted the province of British Columbia to the problem.

Since then we have continued to provide scientific assistance. In terms of the most recent situation in British Columbia, I understand it is under review by the provincial government which has the responsibility for forest management. To the best of my knowledge it has not yet made a request.

Mr. Richard Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, that is just plain nonsense. That is the Trudeau Salmon Arm salute to British Columbia all over again.

The government is prepared to let a vital industry in B.C. die. Where is its responsibility? Why does it show such ignorance toward British Columbians and why is it prepared to let 25,000 forest industry workers in B.C. lose their jobs?

The senior minister from Saskatchewan apparently knows where B.C. is. Why does he not tell the rest of his government about it and get some help for the problem they have out there?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman asks why the Government of Canada is not doing its job. The responsibility of the Government of Canada here is delivering the science.

We delivered the science in 1995. We have not received a request from the provincial government, which indeed is the government responsible for forest management practices. We have not received a request from that government for further assistance at this time.

Privilege

[Translation]

KEN HECHTMAN

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, freelance journalist Ken Hechtman, from the Montreal weekly *The Mirror*, has just been captured in southeastern Afghanistan. Information about him is distressing and contradictory.

Could the Minister of Foreign Affairs bring us up to date and tell us how successful the representations made by his emissaries in Afghanistan have been thus far?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have nothing new to report today. We have tried to find out more by sending two representatives of the Department of Foreign Affairs based in Islamabad to the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan to try to obtain information.

At this point, there is very little available. We are also trying to maintain contact with the family, which, obviously, is very worried about the situation, which is very serious.

* * *

● (1500)

[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for Children and Youth. Would the minister inform the House on what the government is doing to ensure that aboriginal people have the training and skills development they need to participate in the labour market?

Hon. Ethel Blondin-Andrew (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, human resources development administers the five year \$1.6 billion human resource development agreement with aboriginals which began in 1999 and is aimed at assisting aboriginal people to prepare for, find and maintain employment.

Under the strategy HRDC has signed 79 aboriginal human resource development agreements with first nations, Inuit, Metis and urban aboriginal organizations across Canada. They are meeting as we speak, from November 29 to December 1, to plan for future strategies and maintain their employment opportunities.

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IMMIGRATION

Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. This fall the immigration minister initially said she needed Bill C-11 to speed up the process and fix the system. Then she flip-flopped by contradicting herself and said she already had the existing tools to detain where there was any security risk. Now she claims we need Bill C-42 to fix the mistakes of Bill C-11.

Given her acrobatics as a serial flip-flop artist, does the minister want to give us her preview of what next week's position will be and, moreover, will she just admit that Bill C-11 was a very bad bill from the get-go?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, nothing the minister of immigration says or does could match the flip-flops in the hon. member's question. The measure with respect to Bill C-11 and Bill C-42 was not to fix Bill C-42. It was to advance the bringing into application some of the most effective and meaningful parts of Bill C-42.

If the hon. member were serious about protecting the security of Canadians and their rights, he would be supporting the bill instead of coming up with his ridiculous question.

* * *

[Translation]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Jean-Jack Queyranne, Minister of Relations with Parliament of the Republic of France.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

[English]

PRIVILEGE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Jordan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege arising from the debate of yesterday afternoon. I want to thank the table clerks and the clerks of the committee on procedure and House affairs who helped me in haste to put together the facts of this question of privilege.

In his remarks concerning Bill C-36, the Leader of the Opposition made repeated references to the findings, proceedings and evidence of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs concerning the matter of a breach of privilege brought to the House by the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast. The Chair will know that the matter was referred to the standing committee and the report was tabled this morning by the chair of that committee, the member for Peterborough.

As a foundation for my argument I draw the attention of the House to page 884 of Marleau and Montpetit:

Committee reports must be presented to the House before they can be released to the public...Even when a report is adopted in public session, the report itself is considered confidential until it has actually been presented in the House.

It goes on to say:

It is not in order for Members to allude to committee proceedings or evidence in the House until the committee has presented its report to the House.

I would argue that the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition contravened both conventions. On the first issue he twice referred to the fact that the committee concluded that there was no breach of privilege. The reference from the House required the committee to recommend on that issue and the issue of the alleged breach. That finding was the essence of the report. It was the committee's response to the reference from the House.

Privilege

The committee did go in camera for a portion of the discussion so the notion that confidentiality was expected could not have been misinterpreted. On the larger issue of when and why committees go in camera, a practice that I think all members try to minimize, a major factor is the confidentiality protections that public proceedings enjoy as laid out in Marleau and Montpetit.

To take elements of the proceedings out of context and bring them to the floor of the House, using the argument that they were technically not part of the in camera discussions, may very well result in a dramatic increase in in camera activities by committees. In addition, the context of the member's criticism leaves no doubt as to the inference he was making. On November 28 the Leader of the Opposition stated in *Hansard*:

—why did the committee conclude that no breach of privilege occurred?

Marleau and Montpetit specifically included findings from public meetings to reinforce the fact that the finding is not the conclusion of the committee until the report is tabled in the House. Members are prohibited from cherry-picking aspects of the process without the context of the full and complete report. The hon. member continued his critique of the committee:

Then for some reason the committee decided to abandon its responsibilities in the incident related to Bill C-36.

I would argue that the responsibilities he refers to being abandoned were not fulfilled until the report was tabled in the House. That happened this morning. He continued:

I do not know how the committee will explain why it concluded that no breach of privilege had occurred when it tabled its report.

In fact the report had not been tabled. As I understand it, it was delayed at the request of the Alliance Party.

The words in context of the member were a conscious criticism of the findings of the committee, again before the actual findings were tabled. The member chose to exploit findings of the committee to potentially strengthen his political argument. The finding of no breach was a *fait accompli*. He referred to it in the past tense. He went on to disagree with and criticize the Liberal members of the committee in the House for that finding.

The only issue I take exception to is the timing. He should have waited until the finding was tabled in the House like all other members of this place. By pre-empting the finding and the reference that it was the final conclusion of the committee prior to the chair tabling the report this morning, the Leader of the Opposition, an officer of the House, showed contempt for the rights and privileges of all members of this place.

On the second issue of the reference to evidence and proceedings the transcript is clear. The member repeatedly described evidence and the voting pattern of the committee on a number of motions that were dealt with. I rose on a point of order at the time to object to the content of his remarks but was told it was a matter of debate. I would appreciate some clarity on this issue from the Speaker.

I put the issue in your capable hands and learned mind, Mr. Speaker. Should you find there is a *prima facie* breach of privilege I would be prepared to move the appropriate motion.

● (1505)

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the member's question of privilege cannot be taken seriously for two reasons.

First, everything the Leader of the Opposition said came from a public meeting of the standing committee on November 22, including the motion to report to the House that a breach of privilege had not occurred. I invite the Speaker to review the proceedings from November 22 and compare them to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. Any mention of the report by the Leader of the Opposition was in the context of a request. Again, if you review the leader's request and the report, you will see that they do not match.

Second, the member's question of privilege is out of order because the proper procedure to raise a question of privilege involving a committee is to bring the matter before the standing committee. If the standing committee concludes that a breach has occurred, it could report the breach to the House. I refer the hon. member to page 128 of Marleau and Montpetit:

Speakers have consistently ruled that, except in the most extreme situations, they will only hear questions of privilege arising from committee proceedings upon presentation of a report from the committee which directly deals with the matter and not as a question of privilege raised by an individual Member.

I bring your attention to the fact that the hon. member was in the House affairs committee earlier this day and did not raise the matter whatsoever. The hon. member does not understand the parliamentary procedure and definitely does not understand privilege. It is evident today in the manner in which he raises the issue and by his behaviour at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs when dealing with the question of privilege regarding the premature disclosure of the contents of Bill C-36.

During the public proceedings of the committee the hon. member, as the Prime Minister's parliamentary secretary, led his Liberal members to shut down the opposition, gag the privy council and sweep the matter under the carpet. His members made the lamest excuses to discontinue the study such as it costs too much to investigate the matter, the committee has gone far enough and it is too difficult a task.

If the hon. member wants to talk about contempt he should look no further than at his behaviour and efforts today. He should take note of another aspect of parliamentary privilege. Page 26 of Joseph Maingot's *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada* declares:

"One of the first and greatest of its privileges is free speech and one of the advantages of legislative bodies is the right of exposing and denouncing abuses by means of free speech".

If any privilege is under siege today it is the right of a member to speak freely in the House and expose and denounce the abuses of the government. The premature disclosure of the contents of Bill C-36 is one example. The lack of action to deal with the matter is yet another. The government use of closure on Bill C-36 is yet another example.

Points of Order

The member's attempt to question the right of the Leader of the Opposition to speak freely in the House is conclusive evidence that the government's contentious behaviour regarding the proceedings on Bill C-36 is pathological. I ask the member and the House to consider the report in question and the Deloitte & Touche findings which my leader referred to. The report stated at page 11:

The disquieting aspect, however, is that a small portion of the article contains or alludes to information, which, at the time prior to the tabling of the bill itself, was classified secret and was subject to protection as a confidence of cabinet.

In addition, my leader made reference to the fact that it was disclosed to the committee that the PCO had the Deloitte & Touche report edited prior to its delivery to the committee. The opposition smelled a rat and moved to use the authority of the committee to obtain a copy of the unedited report. However the member, probably acting on the instructions of the PMO, led his Liberal majority once again to vote the motion down.

All this took place at a public meeting. I invite the Speaker and the public to examine those minutes, not just to clear the air but to expose the disrespectful and contemptuous actions and behaviour of the Liberal government in this cover-up.

It is no wonder that the contents of Bill C-42 were also leaked to the media prior to being tabled in the House. Why should any government official be deterred from leaking information to the media ahead of parliament when the majority in control of the House is too weak-kneed and complacent to take any corrective action to avoid it? There is contempt here today, but you will not find it on this side of the House. You should look to your right.

• (1510)

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it will be up to you to ultimately decide this question. I have not had an opportunity to examine what the Leader of the Opposition said, but if it turns out he was quoting from a committee report that had not yet been tabled in the House then in fact he would have been doing something that was inappropriate and inconsistent with a lot of complaints his party and mine and others have made about the releasing of committee reports before they are tabled in the House.

On the other hand, if he was referring to information that was in the public domain, that was available in the course of a public meeting and that was part of the public proceedings of the committee, people may not like it but I do not see it as something that was reprehensible.

It will be up to you to examine the record to see whether or not the Leader of the Opposition was behaving in a way that was inconsistent with good practice in the House and inconsistent with what the Leader of the Opposition and his party have condemned on occasion. I would urge you, if the latter is the case, to rule accordingly.

• (1515)

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am the chair of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and I do not particularly want to engage in this debate, but as it is the committee on procedure and House affairs it might be useful to you if I were to lay out how we handled this matter.

On October 15 when the House leader of the official opposition raised the question of privilege you referred it to our committee. On

October 18 we had our first public meeting on this matter. Our witnesses included the House leader of the opposition and the Minister of Justice. On November 1 we had another public meeting and the witnesses then were from the Privy Council Office. They described to us the inquiries which were in progress.

On November 21, following some hundreds of interviews, all members of the committee received copies of the documents circulated by the Privy Council Office. These included the Deloitte & Touche report and a comparison which an official of the PCO provided between the *National Post* article and various ministerial public announcements.

On the day following, November 22, there was another meeting of the standing committee and we had witnesses again from the Privy Council Office. The meeting was mainly held in public but we went in camera for members to be able to direct the chair and officials on the drafting of a report.

Members of the committee who supported this and I have gone to a great deal of trouble to avoid in camera meetings, except where they are absolutely necessary. On November 27 we had another public meeting. The report was agreed to and it was agreed that there should be dissenting opinions attached.

On November 29, today, and a day later than I had originally intended, at the request of the official opposition I tabled the report. Mr. Speaker, I thought those facts would be useful to you.

Mr. Joe Jordan: Mr. Speaker, the opposition House leader made an interesting argument essentially attacking me personally. I want to point out to that member that if he wants to attack my credibility that is fine. However I am standing here protecting the rights and privileges of 301 MPs and I will not let him run roughshod over those rights and privileges. There is no absolute right of free speech in this place if it infringes on the privileges of members of the House.

I brought this issue here and I would argue it is the appropriate forum for it. I do not feel that his counterargument that I am in contempt is treating this issue with the respect it deserves.

The Speaker: The Chair has heard enough on the point and will take the matter under advisement. I will review the remarks of the hon. Leader of the Opposition and I will review the proceedings in the committee as I have been invited to do by hon. members on every side.

I will review the very pertinent comments made by the hon. parliamentary secretary, the hon. House leader of the official opposition, the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona and the hon. member for Peterborough. I thank them all for their kind assistance. I will get back to the House in due course on this matter.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is an issue involving question period. That is why I raise it.

Points of Order

A question was asked by the hon. member across the way to the hon. Minister of Natural Resources, who is also a member of parliament from Saskatchewan, regarding a Saskatchewan issue involving transport. It was clear from the question, and we can review the blues, that both the question and the supplementary referred to the minister being the regional minister from Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan's only representative in cabinet, and so on and so forth, each one of them of course asking the question because the minister is a representative from Saskatchewan, obviously not because he is the Minister of Transport, because he is not.

I protested that, as probably the entire House heard. I want to remind the House that citation 412 of Beauchesne is quite clear on the rules.

Mr. Vic Toews: What is the point, Don?

Hon. Don Boudria: As the hon. member used to be a minister of a previous house, I am sure he will know about rules. He is asking what the point is. I am surprised that he even has to ask. The point is this.

Citation 412 of Beauchesne states:

A question may not be asked of a Minister in another capacity, such as being responsible for a province, or part of a province, or as spokesman for a racial or religious group.

I did not decide that. This is referenced as October 16, 1968, at pages 132 to 134 of the Journals. I am sure the hon. member knows that very well. I am sure he has read that portion of the Journals.

The more contemporary Marleau and Montpetit, or M and M as we sometimes refer to our own procedural manual, at pages 426 and 427, refers to this. The reason I raise it is because in the supplementary question a criticism was made that this excellent minister was not representing his region properly.

This is what the reference states:

These two statements, along with some of the guidelines adopted by the House in 1965, are used today by the Speaker as a reference in managing the Question Period.

That is in reference to you, Mr. Speaker.

It further states:

In summary, when recognized in Question Period, a Member...should not...address a Minister's former portfolio or any other presumed functions, such as party or regional political responsibilities.

That is page 427 of Marleau and Montpetit.

Obviously this was in clear breach of our rules of the House. The hon. member who made that reference was not only allowed to get away with it but was allowed to get away with it twice. He was eventually cut off by the Speaker for his obvious lack of respect for the rules of the House. However the mistake was obviously made and made twice. That is an improper accusation against a minister of the crown and is in breach of our rules.

This is serious. The hon. member does not think that representing Saskatchewan is serious. I believe it is.

•(1520)

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in defence of my two

questions in question period, there are three reasons I phrased my questions as I did.

First, the government has made it a virtue, in fact it is a virtue, to appoint someone to cabinet from every province in this country. There is a cabinet minister from P.E.I., some from British Columbia and one from Saskatchewan. In fact, that is a virtue in a country such as ours.

Second, as such, in the media, whenever a serious issue arises relative to that province, that minister is the first person delegated from cabinet to handle that issue in defence of that province. This government approaches public policy that way.

Third, frankly without a Senate that is balanced and represents the equal interests of the province, there is no other way to effect public policy and the influences of a specific province.

The government makes a virtue out of appointing cabinet ministers from every province. This is the only way to ask a province a specific question and to hold the government accountable. My aim was to hold the government accountable for its public policy as it reflects on Saskatchewan. It has appointed a cabinet minister responsible for Saskatchewan. I expected an answer. Unfortunately I did not get it. Perhaps in the future this government will be more eager to answer questions and defend the provinces of this country.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam during question period did ask a question. It appeared to the Speaker to be regionally based and accordingly, and in accordance with the citation cited by the hon. government House leader, I did not believe it was in accordance with the usual practice in this House. The Deputy Prime Minister chose to stand up and respond to the question and the response was given.

When the hon. member started his supplementary, he obviously was treading on the same ground, which produced disorder in the House, and it was another question along the same vein so I terminated the hon. member's question and moved on to the next because I believed it was not in accordance with the usual practice.

The practices are there. The hon. member can go to the procedure and House affairs committee and its chairman, who was just here, and present evidence as to why the practice should be changed and possibly persuade the committee to agree to submit a report changing the practice. We have done it before. I recall we changed practices in relation to questions just a few years ago, allowing questions that previously had not been permitted. The House is free to do that.

•(1525)

[*Translation*]

But for the time being, I think that the point raised by the hon. government House leader has been noted.

My ruling is that the question asked by the hon. member was out of order, and I pointed this out in connection with the supplementary. I will do the same thing again if another similar problem arises.

[English]

I invite all hon. members to comply in every respect with the practices set out in Marleau and Montpetit, M and M as they like to call it. It is wonderful reading and I commend it to hon. members, especially those sections dealing with question period. I know it will help them phrase questions and of course answers that are in accordance with the rules.

Mr. Richard Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to challenge something that my colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam said in his statement. He said that the government had ministers in Saskatchewan and other provinces. Given the way the government has regarded British Columbia, it is impossible to believe that it has ministers out in that province.

The Speaker: I do not think the hon. member's comments are helpful in dealing with the point of order with which we have just dealt. I know it is very tempting, because the government operates in a particular way, to say that in the House we must operate in accordance with that practice. The difficulty is we have a set of rules that govern the way the House proceeds and we know that sometimes proceedings outside the House are at variance with proceedings inside. That goes for every side.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, after we have had this delay from the government, when I thought we had more important business to do, I would like to now ask the government House leader what is the business for the rest of the day, tomorrow and next week?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond somewhat belatedly, as a result of the disorder created by the opposition.

The business of the House will be as follows. We will continue this afternoon with Bill C-27 respecting nuclear waste. Following that I propose we move on to private members' hour.

Tomorrow the business will be Bill C-44, the aeronautics bill for which the House gave its unanimous consent earlier this week and for which I thank it.

On Monday we will consider the report stage and third reading of Bill C-37, the Alberta-Saskatchewan claims bill. That would be followed by Bill C-39, the Yukon Act amendments.

Tuesday shall be an allotted day. This is the final day in the supply cycle with the resulting supply votes and so on at the end of the day.

On Wednesday we will complete any of the business that I previously mentioned that has not been finished, if such is the case, and we will consider the report stage of any bill that is reported from committee in the interim. I am told for instance that Bill C-41 has been reported today or will be tomorrow. That will be on the list as well.

Finally, there has been agreement among House leaders that on Monday, after we complete the deliberations on the two bills I

Government Orders

mentioned, we would have a short debate on a motion on employment equity. That is a compulsory requirement according to our rules, to have a committee review of the employment equity legislation. The House leaders have agreed, and I have since put it on the order paper, that we would consider that motion toward the end of the day on Monday, in addition to the business I have just announced.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1530)

[English]

NUCLEAR FUEL WASTE ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-27, an act respecting the long-term management of nuclear fuel waste, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question

The Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 2. 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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 2 stands deferred.

[Translation]

The next question is on Motion No. 3. 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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Government Orders

The Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 3 stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 6. 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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 6 stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 8. 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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 8 stands deferred.

The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions on the motions at report stage of the bill. Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

Mr. Jacques Saada: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the recorded divisions on the motions be deferred until next Monday at the end of House business.

[*English*]

The Speaker: The recorded divisions stand deferred until the conclusion of government orders on Monday.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Saada: Mr. Speaker, discussions have taken place among all parties and there is agreement, pursuant to Standing Order 45(7), to further defer the recorded divisions requested on report stage of Bill C-27 until the end of government orders on Tuesday, December 4.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that you seek the consent of the House to see the clock as being 5.30 p.m.

[*English*]

Mr. John Reynolds: Mr. Speaker, I find it just amazing that a government that just yesterday had to move closure on a bill, today is adjourning the House early when members of the House so badly wanted to speak on a very important bill.

A government lost an election in 1957 on a closure bill over a pipeline. We had closure yesterday on a very important bill, probably one of the most important parliament has ever seen, yet today it is 3.30 in the afternoon and the government is telling us it is time to go home. It is shameful.

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Speaker, there is a bit of a contradiction here.

An hon. member: There surely is.

Hon. Don Boudria: Yes, but it is not the one that the hon. member raised.

Mr. Leon Benoit: That is the obvious one.

Hon. Don Boudria: No it is not. In fact in reference to Bill C-36, we had allotted three days for the consideration of that bill but that was refused. The bill has to go to other place to be passed.

The bill that was passed today was thanks to the co-operation of everyone on all sides of the House. That is the kind of co-operation that we would have sought and we could have received, but unfortunately were unable to do so on Bill C-36, would have made it equally possible at the time. Thankfully it occurred today. Regrettably it did not occur yesterday.

The Speaker: Order, please. The difficulty is that we have a proposal by the hon. government House leader to call it 3.30 but there is no motion before the House that is subject to a debate. We seem to be getting into a bit of a debate here, if the House would accept that admonition from the Chair, but far be it for me to admonish the House.

I know the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River would not want to prolong a debate but if he is rising on a point of order I will be glad to hear him.

• (1535)

Mr. Jay Hill: Mr. Speaker, since we do not have a motion to debate, I would put forward a motion that we use the next two hours to debate the closure the government imposed on Bill C-36 so we can have the debate we did not have yesterday.

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact I spoke yesterday with at least two opposition parties and did offer such a take note debate. Unfortunately, it was not accepted by the opposition.

The Speaker: Here we go continuing a debate. Is it agreed that we call it 5.30?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Richard Harris: Mr. Speaker, we have two hours that the government appears to want to just write off because it does not have more business, but there are some very pressing and even critical issues in this country. One, in particular, is the very disastrous pine beetle epidemic in British Columbia that is devastating our forests.

I would like to suggest that we call an emergency debate on the pine beetle disaster that is devastating our forests and putting tens of thousands of forestry workers out of work.

I would like to seek unanimous consent—

The Speaker: We appear to be getting into a debate. Is there unanimous consent for the proposition of the hon. member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Speaker: I would suggest we suspend the House until 5.30 when the bells will sound to call in the members.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 3.35 p.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 5.30 p.m.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1730)

[English]

STRYCHNINE SOLUTIONS

The House resumed from October 22 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Larry McCormick (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak on this debate which is very important for our producers in western Canada.

During two previous debates, on September 19 and October 22 respectively, the government fully described, for the information of the hon. member for Lakeland and all members of the House, how and, more important, why a decision was made concerning the availability of liquid strychnine concentrate for use in the formulation of strychnine baits on farms.

I will describe, step by step, the actions that the government has taken to investigate and find solutions to the problems that farmers have been experiencing with the ready to use formulation of strychnine.

However, first I must reply to the hon. member's allegations that we are hiding information about this decision. He stated in the October 22 debate that there has to be more and that he had not received all the goods.

We have fully disclosed all information regarding the decision taken by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada on strychnine in 1992. There is nothing to hide, no secret studies and no undisclosed data.

Private Members' Business

We are working together with the provinces and with the partners to resolve this major challenge for our farmers and for our ranchers.

As was explained during the last debate on strychnine, it was impossible to have predicted the poor performance of the ready to use strychnine baits prior to the restrictions put in place in 1992.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada took very reasonable action to protect the health and safety of all Canadians. That decision was made with every expectation that safer, ready to use baits available to farmers would prove as effective as the baits prepared by the farmers from liquid strychnine to control the gopher pest. The concentration of the baits was the same in both cases.

The reason action had to be taken to restrict the availability of liquid strychnine was that it was implicated in the intentional and unintentional poisonings of non-target animals, including dogs and wildlife. There were also some suspected human suicides linked to this.

The decision on strychnine was not taken lightly. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada recognized that these changes would involve some minor increased costs to users who previously used their own grain for bait, but would now have to purchase pre-packaged grain treated with strychnine.

Prior to the withdrawal, a two year consultation was carried out with those provinces where strychnine products were largely used, that is, in Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. This consultation involved the western forum and the then Canadian Association of Pest Control Officials.

However, let me emphasize that no formal economic impact studies were done because it was reasonable to expect that the bait products remaining on the market, which contained the same or higher concentrations of strychnine, would control gophers in the same way that baits prepared by the farmer from the liquid strychnine concentrate had. The problems with the ready to use bait came to light only after several years of use.

Again, let me underline the fact that strychnine has a very high acute toxicity and it acts quickly on the central nervous system causing frequent violent convulsions which eventually lead to death through respiratory failure. There is no effective antidote available for poisoning from strychnine. The safety implications of allowing access to this type of product in Canada cannot be ignored.

In Alberta, the number of accidental strychnine poisoning has been steadily declining over the past seven years. According to the provincial agri-food surveillance systems lab in Edmonton, there are now 10 to 15 cases a year. In Saskatchewan 20 to 25 strychnine dog poisonings and the occasional strychnine wildlife poisoning are confirmed each year, according to the Western College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan.

I want to point out that poisoning wildlife and domestic animals using bait laced with strychnine is illegal, not only under the Pest Control Products Act but also under the cruelty to animals section of the criminal code, as well as provincial wildlife acts.

Private Members' Business

Canada is not alone in having taken action on strychnine. All above ground uses have been prohibited in the United States since 1988. It is illegal to use strychnine for pest control in most European countries and its use is prohibited by the Berne convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats.

In its initial response to growers' concerns about ineffective strychnine baits, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, PMRA, made an extensive analysis of the ready to use products currently being marketed to find out whether they met the level of strychnine guaranteed, that is, 0.4% strychnine. This is the concentration that has been shown to provide an acceptable level of control.

• (1735)

This analysis confirmed that the concentration of strychnine present in the ready to use baits is the same or even slightly greater than that found previously in baits prepared by mixing the concentrated liquid strychnine product with farm available grain. It was then necessary to look for other explanations for the poor performance of these products, such as baiting procedures, environmental conditions affecting the bait and the fact that some of the gophers just did not like the bait.

To investigate these possibilities, the following actions have been taken: The PMRA upgraded the labels of all registered strychnine products to provide clearer instruction on the need to carefully locate and time bait placements to ensure optimum performance. These use instructions were developed in consultation with the provinces.

From 1998 to 1999, registrants were required to submit quality control results on several batches of their product to the PMRA for review prior to their product being distributed into the marketplace for the upcoming use season.

In 1998-99 the province of Alberta and the Alberta Cattle Commission each carried out efficiency studies designed to explore the relative attractiveness of various carrier baits. Based on the findings of these studies, which showed some indication that canary seed was preferred to other bait, in 2000 the PMRA granted a research permit to Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development to conduct further field trials on strychnine treated canary seed bait. The results of the trials done in 2000 showed that bait freshness and the type of bait seemed to be important considerations in achieving good bait uptake and successful gopher control.

In 2001 the PMRA granted another research permit to AAFRD to conduct additional field trials to compare the effectiveness of commercially available, ready to use 0.4% strychnine bait to freshly prepared 0.4% strychnine bait, the same product. The results of these trials again showed that bait freshness appeared to be very important.

In July 2000, staff from the PMRA visited sites in Alberta to better understand the nature of the gopher problem and have discussions on improving control measures. To further the state of knowledge on alternatives to strychnine, the PMRA is in contact with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and a number of northern U.S. states to discuss the problem of gophers in various regions, as well as the available control methods.

The U.S. uses anti-coagulant baits for gopher control and they appear to be effective. Let me stress that these anti-coagulants control products are also registered for gopher control in Canada,

along with others such as zinc phosphide and sulphur gas based products.

Unfortunately, strychnine seems to be preferred by growers here. The alternative products may appear to be more inconvenient and labour intensive to apply than strychnine products but the PMRA believes that further study needs to be done to see if their use could be enhanced.

In recognition of the serious nature of the gopher control problem in western Canada, the PMRA also granted emergency registrations this summer in Saskatchewan and Alberta. In this highly restricted access program, premixed fresh bait product at 0.4% was made available to growers under the supervision of provincial officials.

On November 16 the PMRA met with Alberta and Saskatchewan pesticide regulatory officials to review the further results of research and to assess this summer's emergency registration program.

Officials will discuss whether the access program was effective and whether it provided reasonable availability while mitigating any possible adverse effects of allowing liquid strychnine concentrate to be used to make fresh bait. Another topic to be discussed at this meeting will be the use of currently registered alternative products to strychnine.

To sum up, members should be assured that the concerns of farmers regarding strychnine have been listened to. There is nothing being hidden from hon. members. They have indeed received all the goods and progress is being made to find a resolution to this very serious and complex problem.

• (1740)

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we are here tonight debating Motion No. P-3 in regard to the production of papers requested by the hon. member for Lakeland. He had requested that the Minister of Health produce papers with regard to the use of 2% and 5% solutions of strychnine and the studies on their effect on the income of Canadian farmers.

The reply came back from the minister that no studies were done on the economic impact on Canadian farmers of the withdrawal of the registration of the concentrated strychnine solutions used by farmers to mix their own 4% end use product. We heard the parliamentary secretary talk about how the government was studying the issue and doing research projects.

However the problem remains massive. All the studies in the world at the rate they are being done will not solve the issue for prairie farmers and ranchers.

The member for Lakeland is doing an excellent job in bringing the issues of predator and pest control before the House for debate. Pests and predators are those animals and plants that hinder the production of the very food supply we eat such as grains and meat supplies.

Private Members' Business

Gophers are pests that cause a lot of damage to fields by making mounds where they dig holes and eat plants. That is what we are debating. The issue is something I grew up with.

My granddad came to Saskatchewan in 1902 from Iowa, Eric Hilstrom and his wife Elsie started the family ranch and homesteaded before Saskatchewan was even a province. There were some gophers around at that time but not to the extent we see now. Agriculture practices facilitated the vast expansion of the gopher population throughout the prairies.

My brother Donald and his wife Gail still operate the family ranch. My other brother Mervin and his wife Isla have a grain operation. I am there every summer. I see the problems they still have with gophers and the issue of the federal government not making products available to the farmers who could control the gopher problem.

As a child growing up, besides hunting gophers which every prairie farmer's son did from time to time, maybe once a summer for a couple of days, we would help a farmer whose field was massively destroyed by gophers. He would put the strychnine product out and kill the gophers off in a couple of days. Then there would be no more strychnine around and as a result there were very limited auxiliary deaths of other animals and birds.

The product was used because it was effective. The member for Lakeland is trying to keep agriculture viable and not have a farmer's bottom line ruined by a pest that should be controlled. No one is asking that gophers be wiped out. Certainly the mascot for the Regina Roughriders should never be touched in this regard.

The issue of the PMRA was raised by the parliamentary secretary. What a mess. The Pest Management Regulatory Agency under the health minister is horrible. It does not have the ability to make decisions. For example, veterinarians bring forward new products to be used for cats and dogs such as antibiotics and other things that need to be passed through the health minister to get approval and be registered. I met with them just this week. They told me that it takes four years from the time they notify the health department for it to say it will look at the product.

• (1745)

Once it starts to do research on it, it takes another four years for it to finish up. It said that our regulatory system of licensing new products is in such a shambles that it is impossible to get a decision out of it. In Manitoba we have a related problem to the PMRA and that is the use of cyanide as a predator control.

We have a massive problem in southern Manitoba with wolves attacking and killing our cattle and ranch animals. For example, Stephen Cook is a rancher from the Steep Rock area who had 85 heifers in a half section pasture. The wolves came in one night in the fall after the lake had frozen over and harassed and killed some animals right on the spot. These were 700 pound to 800 pound heifers. The wolves then drove about 80 on to the ice on the lake. When they got them about four or five miles from shore, the ice was so thin the animals broke through and 25 to 30 of them drowned. After that the rancher had to round up the rest of the animals. Predator control is a massive problem.

I referred to the Cook ranch and the Reykdal ranch along Lake Manitoba. All that is needed is reintroduction of the use of a cyanide gun for predator control. The Manitoba Cattle Producers Association identified as one of its resolutions that it would lobby both provincial and federal governments to have that brought back. Conservation officers do not want to go against their employers, but they say that is the only predator control which works. It is much like the strychnine and gopher issue that the member for Lakeland has brought forth.

I wrote a letter to Oscar Lathlin, the minister responsible for conservation in the province of Manitoba, asking him why we could not have cyanide for the use of controlling wolf populations. Again, it is only used when a problem arises such as the killing of livestock at a given time. The killing may only happen for a week. If we can control it right away and kill off one or two of the wolves, it would be finished. However if we do not take some action and eliminate a couple of wolves out of the killer pack, we end up having them kill for maybe a month or two before they finally move on through their own natural volition.

The minister in Manitoba wrote back to me on July 20, 2000, and said that the existing permit was apparently cancelled because documents forwarded to the federal government were misplaced.

I come back to talking about a health minister who made a series of mistakes and mix-ups, which I guess I should not go into right now, which cost Canadians a massive amount of money. This includes ramming the old gun bill down on us in the west, in the east and in central Canada, which we all resent.

Oscar Lathlin said the federal government misplaced these documents. He alleged that a renewal of the permit was being considered as part of the department's review of all predator control initiatives currently under way. He added that the review would provide recommendations for future programs.

The problem is that the NDP minister and the Liberal government are still wondering what to do while ranchers, farmers, conservation and police officers, and people of average common sense are telling them to bring back the use of cyanide for predator control. It would not be used by individual farmers but by professional conservation officers who are used to dealing with predator control problems.

I have identified the problems. Inevitably, like many other situations in the country, the problem rests right over on that side of the House. It especially rests with the health minister. I will not go into his whole sorry history as a member of the House, but in my opinion we need a new health minister to get on with the corrections that are required in the pest management review agency.

• (1750)

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is again an honour to stand in the House and debate issues that are of concern to the people of Crowfoot, to western Canada and I am sure to all Canada.

The picture is a serene one. The picture is one of a lake, the sun setting and the call of the loon whistling out over the twilight and through the calm of the day at the close of sunset. It is the song of peace and happiness as well as of western Canada and Alberta.

Private Members' Business

The song of the loon is not the song that has the people of Crowfoot worried. The song that has the people of Crowfoot worried is the little squeak of a gopher or Richardson's ground squirrel. It is a beautiful little tune, is it not? For some that little tune is not one of beauty but of horror with increased frequency. In fact not only is it sung by the gophers, but by hundreds of farmers who sit in their trucks trying to whistle a gopher up a hole so they can rid the world of one of the worst pests the agricultural sector of western Canada has.

For me to stand in the House and try to create a picture of the threat of the Richardson's ground squirrel or the gopher on farming communities would not bring justice to it. I would not do a good job.

This past year was my first year as a member of parliament. I live and work as a farmer and have cattle on my little ranch. I have spent a lot of my time in Ottawa and throughout my constituency. I have not obviously spent the time on my farm that I would have liked. One of the very first things I realized when I went home in the spring was that we had a huge gopher problem. This is not something new. It has been around for a long time. We know the damage the Richardson's ground squirrel or the gopher can do on an agricultural operation.

In the fall or spring when we walk out on our farms and see the huge patches of crop or pasture that have been eaten down and destroyed, we realize that we have a problem. This is not a problem of little animals. It is a problem of economy. This a problem of the bottom line, margins and trying to make it. When we see literally hundreds and hundreds of gophers in a very small pasture, we recognize we have a problem.

Why do I say hundreds and hundreds? When a person buys a box of 22 gauge shells there are 50 in a box. When that person puts four or five boxes in the ashtray of his or her pick-up truck, continuously loads the rifle and runs out of shells after having shot 100 gophers, that person realizes there are probably three or four times that many that are never seen. It is a huge problem.

I thank the member for Lakeland for being so adamant in bringing this bill to the House. I went around my constituency calling on many municipal governments. As a new member, I wondered what the concerns would be of municipal governments or counties like Provost or Flagstaff or many of the special areas in my riding. It was not going to be housing so much. A lot of it was the family farm and agricultural concerns. When I visited those municipal counties, offices and governments, by far the largest issue brought forward was the problem with gophers and the fact that the strychnine poison, or gopher poison as we call it, had been taken off the market.

There was a recess in the debate on the bill. The government eventually came forward with strychnine last year but it was a little too late. Although there was some definite advantage to having it, the farming community needed the strychnine poison at the right time, which was when gophers were breeding and the young were being raised. This was the concern that my constituents and councillors in many different counties brought forward.

● (1755)

We stand in the House many times and we talk about bills. We bring forward evidence that we use to build a debate. We use evidence to bring forward our arguments.

When we go to Motion No. P-3 and the decision of the government to remove the 5% strychnine from shelves across western Canada, we look for evidence. We ask the government, why would it remove poison that the farmers and those involved in agriculture depend on? We would say, show us the science.

The member for Lakeland has continually brought this problem to the House. I asked him to please show me the science and the reason that the government gives for pulling the use of strychnine. The concern the hon. member brought forward was that there just is no evidence. Science has not proven that there is any huge risk to the environment, but the government pulled it regardless. This huge decision was made but no evidence was brought forward.

We look at issues. We look at bills. We look at legislation that hurts. There are many different pieces of legislation the government has brought forward. I will go back to Bill C-68. I do not believe there has ever been a bill that has divided urban and rural like Bill C-68 has. It has hurt the farmer, the rancher in central Alberta and all across Canada. It has hurt them. Bill C-68 has given the farmers and ranchers the feeling that the government believes they are the criminals in waiting, so to speak.

The government said Bill C-68 was going to cost \$85 million. It has ended up costing \$685 million. My constituents ask why does the government not care? Why does the government not care about what is happening out west?

Now there is Bill C-15B regarding cruelty to animals. Bill C-15B will put at risk my constituents, the farmers, the ranchers, the individuals who raise cattle and hogs and the individuals who make a livelihood from that. Different individuals have come forward as witnesses and said that the bill will allow prosecutions to come against the agricultural sector. It is another knock, another hit, another concern that our farmers have.

I applaud the government for listening. I believe it will make amendments because I cannot believe for one moment that the government would allow the bill to pass as it is. Even the Liberal government must understand that it is absolutely saying goodbye to the west and a lot of the industries: the cattle industry, the chicken and poultry industry. It is causing much concern there. I believe the government will make amendments that will to some degree satisfy my party. I hope the government will accept our amendments.

There is no reason that the government should not be able to say that we will bring back the strychnine poisoning that would help the farmers and ranchers in dealing with one of the big threats to their crops and their economy. It would be a gesture of goodwill and good faith. I hope the government will move in that way.

Private Members' Business

I remember one day in my previous life my brother and I had to treat a sick calf. We did not think the calf could react quickly and we had to employ the rope horses that we have on the farm. Both of us went out through the pasture and began to look for the calf which had taken off into the trees. All of a sudden in a flash out came the calf. My brother spun his rope horse around and took off after the calf. He brought the rope out and all of a sudden down went the horse. Luckily I was there. My brother was not hurt, but the horse was hurt. The horse did not break a leg, but the horse was hurt. Why was the horse hurt? Because he had stepped in a badger hole.

• (1800)

As we watch the gopher population rise, the unfortunate thing in the part of the world where I come from is that the badger moves in and digs holes that cannot be seen by cattle and horses which step in them. For the Liberals sitting across the way, in the space from in front of the Clerk's table to that desk in the aisle for example, there could be 30 or 40 gopher holes. We are not talking about a small number.

This is a concern for the people of Crowfoot. I am out of time, so I thank the member for Lakeland for the opportunity to speak to this issue. I ask the government to please bring back the strychnine so that we can rid our farms and ranches of a huge problem.

The Speaker: Order, please. Under the standing orders of the House there is now an opportunity for a minister of the crown to reply for five minutes.

None rising, I then call on the hon. member for Lakeland for his five minute right of reply.

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to wrap up debate on production of papers P-3. The issue is about farmers being denied the ability to make the kind of living we would expect them to make for producing the food we eat. What is more fundamentally important than the food we eat?

The issue I am talking about and which my colleagues have so ably presented today demonstrates that the actions of the current government and lack of thought on the part of the government before it have denied farmers an extremely important tool. The loss of this tool has cost them hundreds of millions of dollars they can ill afford to lose. I am referring to the 2% and 5% concentrations of strychnine used by farmers to control Richardson's ground squirrels which are commonly referred to as gophers. The solution is effective and safe when mixed with grain the farmers themselves produce. That is what the issue is about.

In this production of papers I ask the government to produce studies, which it would have done before removing the product from the market, to demonstrate the kinds of losses farmers might face due to the loss of this important tool.

The parliamentary secretary stood again today and said the government was not trying to hide anything and had disclosed everything. That is what concerns me. This demonstrates clearly that it has removed an important tool from the hands of farmers with little thought.

I have seen the evidence if the government is hiding nothing. It is shocking how few people were involved in the process. The

parliamentary secretary said there were consultations across the west. Farmers sure as heck were not involved in those consultations. There were very few people involved, period. It was not an acceptable process. It is shameful that the government took the action it did and removed the product from the market based on the bit of so-called study it did.

Some environmentalists came up with an idea. I am not saying environmentalists in a negative way because a lot of environmentalists do excellent work, but the environmentalists who took the issue to the government made a huge mistake. They did not think it through. That is what I am concerned about. The government acted on this with little thought.

I do not have a lot of time today so I will talk about what the issue is really about. It is about the removal of the 2% and 5% solutions of strychnine which are effective in the control of gophers. This has cost farmers hundreds of millions of dollars over the nine years since the product was removed from the market. I want to make that clear. If something is not done it will continue to cost hundreds of millions of dollars.

The problem is so critical that last year in Alberta there was an emergency reinstatement of a temporary permit to use the product. There was an emergency reinstatement of a permit to use the product because farmers so desperately needed it. It became clear even to the government that it should reinstate the product on at least a one year emergency basis.

I have been dealing with the issue through private members' bills, private members' motions and now this production of papers. I have been dealing with it every way I could think of over the past nine years. Unfortunately it has not worked to date.

As a result of the emergency reinstatement last year and the clear benefits of it I hope we will see the permanent reinstatement of the ability of farmers to use the 2% or 5% strychnine solution, mix it with their grain and effectively control the gophers that cost them so much money.

Gophers cause pain and suffering to livestock such as cattle and horses, as my colleagues have pointed out. They cause serious injuries to people riding horses and working cattle as a result of the holes which break the legs of horses and cattle.

• (1805)

What I am asking for here today, and I want there to be no doubt about it, is for the government to reinstate the 2% and 5% solutions of strychnine immediately so that in March and April this year when the gophers start to show themselves farmers can use the product to effectively control them.

The Speaker: The time provided for the debate on this matter has expired. Pursuant to order made earlier this day, all questions necessary to dispose of Motion No. P-3 are deemed put and a recorded division is deemed demanded and deferred until Tuesday, December 4, at the expiry of the time provided for government orders.

It being 6.07 p.m.—

Private Members' Business

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. You are saying it is 6.07 p.m. which is not 6.30 p.m. We have given all this time to members of the opposition. Am I to conclude they ran out of things to do and that is why we are adjourning?

I am a little unsure of what is occurring. I am sure all hon. members want to know precisely why we have nothing to do, as it were. This is something that interests a number of people.

The Speaker: I think the Chair will be able to deal with this in a moment because I believe there is an answer.

The rules relating to debate on notices of motions for the production of papers are ones with which I have to admit the Chair is not entirely familiar. However I am advised and had been advised

before I came into the chair this evening that there were 30 minutes of debate remaining on this item and then two 5 minute responses would be available, one to a minister responsible and there was no minister who wished to speak. Then five minutes would be available to the mover as a right of reply.

Those two opportunities were extended. We did the 30 minutes of debate. There was no minister who wished to speak. The member took his 5 minutes to reply and the question was deemed put and deferred. That is why we are finished.

It being 6.09 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Thursday, November 29, 2001

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

International Labour Conference

Mr. Malhi 7645

Air Transportation

Mr. Harvey 7645

Committees of the House

Procedure and House Affairs

Mr. Adams 7645

Petitions

Gasoline Additives

Mrs. Ur 7645

Employment Insurance Act

Mr. Proctor 7645

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Regan 7645

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Foreign Missions and International Organizations Act

Bill C-35. Third reading 7646

Ms. Carroll 7646

Motion 7646

Mr. Anders 7646

Mr. Casey 7646

Mr. Proctor 7647

Mr. Anders 7647

Business of the House

Mr. Saada 7647

Motion 7647

(Motion agreed to) 7647

Foreign Missions and International Organizations Act

Bill C-35. Third reading 7647

Mr. Anders 7648

Mr. Stoffer 7650

Mr. Stinson 7651

Mr. Proctor 7651

Mr. Casey 7653

Mr. Bryden 7653

Mr. Thompson (Wild Rose) 7654

Mr. Stoffer 7654

Mr. Casey 7654

Mr. Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska) 7655

Mr. Stoffer 7656

Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River) 7657

Mr. Bryden 7658

Mr. Casey 7658

Mr. Bellehumeur 7659

Ms. Lalonde 7661

Division on motion deferred 7662

Mr. Saada 7662

Nuclear Waste Act

Bill C-27. Report stage 7662

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair) 7662

Motions in Amendment

Ms. Lalonde 7662

Motions Nos. 2, 3, 6 and 8 7662

Mr. Cardin 7663

Mr. Chatters 7664

Mr. Caccia 7665

Mr. Keddy 7666

Mr. Comartin 7667

Ms. Girard-Bujold 7668

Mrs. Gallant 7669

Mr. Bigras 7670

Mr. Desrochers 7671

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Peacekeeping

Mr. Thompson (Wild Rose) 7672

Ron Lenyk

Mr. Mahoney 7672

Kim Everingham

Mr. Richardson 7672

National Security

Mr. Malhi 7672

Chinese Women Entrepreneurs Association

Ms. Leung 7673

Ramadan

Mr. Goldring 7673

Robert Lepage

Mr. Marcil 7673

Canada Labour Code

Ms. Guay 7673

Marijuana

Mrs. Redman 7673

Aboriginal Affairs

Mr. Burton 7674

Youth Strategy Initiative

Ms. Allard 7674

Species At Risk

Mr. Comartin 7674

Highway Infrastructure

Mr. Lanctôt 7674

Ken Hechtman

Mr. Proulx 7674

Bill C-42

Ms. Meredith 7675

Impaired Driving	
Mr. Harb	7675
Peter Maarsman	
Mr. Cadman	7675

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Immigration	
Mr. Day	7675
Mr. Gray	7675
Mr. Day	7675
Mr. Gray	7675
Mr. Day	7676
Mr. Gray	7676

Terrorism	
Mr. Hill (Macleod)	7676
Mr. MacAulay	7676
Mr. Hill (Macleod)	7676
Mr. MacAulay	7676

Public Safety Act	
Mr. Duceppe	7676
Mr. Eggleton	7676
Mr. Duceppe	7676
Mr. Eggleton	7677
Mr. Gauthier	7677
Mr. Eggleton	7677
Mr. Gauthier	7677
Mr. Eggleton	7677
Mr. Blaikie	7677
Mr. Eggleton	7677
Mr. Blaikie	7677
Mr. Eggleton	7677
Mr. Strahl	7677
Mr. Gray	7677
Mr. Strahl	7678
Mr. Gray	7678

Immigration	
Mr. Forseth	7678
Mr. Assad	7678
Mr. Forseth	7678
Mr. Gray	7678

Air Transportation	
Mr. Laframboise	7678
Mr. Harvey	7678
Mr. Laframboise	7678
Mr. Harvey	7678

Justice	
Mr. Sorenson	7678
Ms. McLellan	7679
Mr. Sorenson	7679
Ms. McLellan	7679

Export Development Corporation	
Mr. Bergeron	7679
Mr. O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	7679
Mr. Bergeron	7679

Mr. O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	7679
-------------------------------------	------

Justice	
Mrs. Skelton	7679
Mr. MacAulay	7679
Mrs. Skelton	7679
Mr. MacAulay	7680

Raoul Léger	
Mr. LeBlanc	7680
Mr. Manley	7680

Employment Insurance	
Mr. Godin	7680
Mrs. Stewart	7680

Aboriginal Affairs	
Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	7680
Mr. Finlay	7680

Immigration	
Mr. Mark	7680
Mr. Gray	7680
Mr. Mark	7680
Mr. Gray	7681

Bill C-35	
Mr. Pallister	7681
Mr. Manley	7681
Mr. Pallister	7681
Mr. Manley	7681
The Speaker	7681

Natural Resources	
Mr. Cardin	7681
Mr. Goodale	7681
Mr. Cardin	7681
Mr. Goodale	7681

Airline Industry	
Mr. Moore	7682
Mr. Gray	7682
Mr. Moore	7682

Multiculturalism	
Mr. Adams	7682
Ms. Fry	7682

Forest Industry	
Mr. Harris	7682
Mr. Goodale	7682
Mr. Harris	7682
Mr. Goodale	7682

Ken Hechtman	
Ms. Lalonde	7683
Mr. Manley	7683

Aboriginal Affairs	
Mr. Harvard	7683
Ms. Blondin-Andrew	7683

Immigration	
Mr. Herron	7683
Mr. Gray	7683

Presence in Gallery	
The Speaker	7683

Privilege	
Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs	
Mr. Jordan	7683
Mr. Reynolds	7684
Mr. Blaikie	7685
Mr. Adams	7685

Points of Order	
Oral Question Period	
Mr. Boudria	7685
Mr. Moore	7686
Mr. Harris	7687

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE	
Mr. Reynolds	7687
Mr. Boudria	7687

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Nuclear Fuel Waste Act	
Bill C-27. Report Stage	7687

Division on Motion No. 2 deferred	7687
Division on Motion No. 3 deferred	7688
Division on Motion No. 6 deferred	7688
Division on Motion No. 8 deferred	7688
Divisions on Motions No. 2, 3, 6 and 8 deferred	7688

Suspension of Sitting	
(The sitting of the House was suspended at 3.35 p.m.) ..	7689

Sitting Resumed	
The House resumed at 5.30 p.m.	7689

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Strychnine Solutions	
Motion	7689
Mr. McCormick	7689
Mr. Hilstrom	7690
Mr. Sorenson	7691
Mr. Benoit	7693
Division deemed demanded and deferred	7694

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