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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, March 12, 2002

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, March 12, 2002

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1000)
[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

•(1005)

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 17th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts relating to chapter 26, Health Canada Regulatory Regime of Biologics and chapter 27, Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission Power Reactor Regulation of the December 2000 report of the Auditor General of Canada.

I am also pleased to present the 18th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts relating to the Public Accounts of Canada, 2000-01.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109 of the House of Commons, the committee requests the government to table a comprehensive response to these two reports.

* * *

PETITIONS

MISSILE DEFENSE PROGRAM

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition in which a great many Canadians express their concern that the Government of Canada might be asked to support the U.S. national missile defense program to be operated by the North American Aerospace Defense Command.

The petitioners are concerned that NMD, as it is known, is a unilateral initiative of the United States and that it would be a step toward the deployment of weapons in space and lead to a new arms race.

They are also concerned that the NMD would violate the 1972 anti-ballistic missile treaty and run counter to Canada's commitment as a signatory of the non-proliferation treaty to promote complete nuclear disarmament.

With all these things in mind, they ask and call upon parliament to declare that Canada objects to the national missile defense program of the United States and call upon parliament to play a leadership role in banning nuclear weapons and missile flight tests.

* * *

[Translation]

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]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—NATIONAL SECURITY

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

That this House condemn the government for its failure to implement a national security policy to address the broad range of security issues, including those at Canadian ports of entry and borders, and call on the government to reassert Parliament's relevance in these and other public policy issues.

Points of Order

[Translation]

POINTS OF ORDER

ALLOTTED DAY MOTION

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I wish to exercise my right to rise on a point of order. I am sure that you will allow me a few moments to draw to your attention a few facts which deserve your closest consideration and which I wish to raise following your ruling yesterday granting the Progressive Conservative party a votable motion.

Before looking at the impact of your ruling yesterday regarding the votable nature of the day, I think that it would be appropriate to identify some of the factors taken into account, factors which were the subject of prior discussions between the leaders.

Let us recall that, at the beginning of each parliament, the number of votable days is divided up informally between the parliamentary leaders of each of the political parties recognized in the House.

This division of days took place in the early days of the 37th parliament. All the political parties, all the leaders, reached an agreement as to the number of days allocated to the opposition and the number of days which could be votable.

At the time that we did this, this distribution reflected the representation of the political parties here in the House of Commons. The various opposition parties agreed that the distribution would be as follows: the Canadian Alliance, 11 days, eight of which would be votable; the Bloc Québécois, six days, four of which would be votable; the NDP, two days, of which one is votable; and the PC/DR, two days, one of which is votable.

So far, some of these days have been used, but not all. Up until March 11, the Canadian Alliance had used four days, of which three were votable; the Bloc Québécois had used three days, all of which were votable; the NDP had used two days, one of which was votable; and the PC/DR had used one day, which was votable. Therefore, the Conservative Party—it should be noted—has one non-votable day left.

Yet, yesterday you decided to grant the Conservative Party a votable day, unless the leaders of the political parties agree unanimously to a solution that is different from your ruling.

Nothing that was agreed to in the discussions between parliamentary leaders at the beginning of the Parliament can be changed, unless there is consensus among all of the leaders to go back on a decision.

In the past, you made a ruling regarding the fact that the Conservative Party is now associated in a way with a coalition of members, and the two associations form one parliamentary group. However, in your wise decision, you also asked that any changes to be made to the number of questions or on giving the right to speak in the House be made based on a consensus among leaders. This was a ruling that was to your credit, and there were discussions following your ruling.

We did not agree to a distribution of the questions in the House. However, after lengthy discussions, after having made some compromises, after the Canadian Alliance members demonstrated

some flexibility, you were able to change the number of questions granted to the Conservative Party and the group of independent members.

However, the spirit of your first decision was quite clear. Parliamentary leaders will have to come to an agreement, otherwise the status quo will apply, and we will reconsider the facts following the discussions.

However, in your decision yesterday, you completely reversed the burden of proof, if I may use this expression. You agreed that the Conservative Party be given an additional votable day, beyond the number of days already provided for in the standing orders, unless parliamentary leaders determine together that this day will not be votable and that we will continue to operate within the framework that has been decided at the beginning of the 37th parliament.

● (1010)

Standing Order 81(16) is clear. It says that:

Not more than fourteen opposition motions in total shall be motions that shall come to a vote during the three supply periods provided pursuant to section (10) of this Standing Order.

The Standing Orders are quite clear: there are 14 opposition motions that may be declared votable. Not 15, not 16, but 14. Thus, the Speaker's decision to make the Conservative Party's motion a votable motion *de facto* brings the number of votable motions from 14 to 15, which in contrary to the standing orders. In doing so, the Chair is unilaterally amending the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, which provides for 14, according to Standing Order 81 (16). This standing order is very clear.

Marleau-Montpetit, on page 726, first paragraph, reads as follows:

However, except in a situation where the limit of allowable votable motions in a Supply period or in any year has been reached, it is not within the competence of the Chair to rule whether or not a particular motion should be votable.

This limit has not been reached. The Standing Orders say 14 days. Marleau-Montpetit indicates to us that the Chair may not change this part of the standing orders unless the total number of days has been reached, and this is not the case.

In making such a decision, the Chair has given itself a power that neither the standing orders, nor the philosophy or the practice recognize.

Moreover, you asked parliamentary leaders to come to an agreement if we do not wish this day to become a votable day. This creates an obligation for all leaders to agree, as provided under the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, and it also gives a veto to the parliamentary leader of the Conservative Party. It is pointless to think that this parliamentary leader, who is asking for an additional votable day, will achieve a consensus with his colleagues, saying that they will comply with the rules of this House. Mr. Speaker, you gave him a power that clearly exceeds the powers of a parliamentary leader. Moreover, you yourself went beyond what is provided in the standing orders by giving this power to the leader of the Conservative Party.

Points of Order

I am sorry, but your ruling is not based on any rule of this House, on any practice, or on any interpretation made in Marleau-Montpetit. Under these circumstances, I really cannot see how we could accept a ruling such as this one, because it clearly exceeds the powers of the Chair.

I remind the Chair that, as the authority responsible for implementing the act and the standing orders, he must ensure that they are applied, including that of Standing Order 81(16), in compliance with well established and recognized practices. The role of the Speaker of the House of Commons is to scrupulously respect the rules and, sometimes, clarify things under certain circumstances.

By granting the Conservative Party an additional day, you will have no choice but to keep following the same logic and deprive another political party from one of its opposition days. But, Mr. Speaker, you do not have that power either. No speaker has the right to make that decision. Parliamentary leaders have come to an agreement under the rules. The reasoning behind your ruling seems to be to strike a better balance as regards opposition days between the coalition and the Conservative Party. This is what I understand from this ruling. However, when we discussed the issue of oral question period, you did not make that decision.

• (1015)

You said that, in light of your decision as Speaker, you were asking the leaders to reach an agreement; that, if there was agreement, there would be a transfer of questions or the right to speak to the Coalition and that, if there was not agreement, then the status quo would remain.

Why, in the case of opposition days, are you reversing the burden of proof? Why, in the case of opposition days, are you allowing this unless there is no agreement? We are not going to agree, because the leader of one of the parties is the petitioning party. So saying this is tantamount to making a wish that can never be fulfilled.

In the spirit of the decision you rendered the first time, and the spirit of the application of your first decision for question period and speaking time, on which the leaders had to reach agreement and consensus, this should be exactly the same thing. You should continue using the same logic, Mr. Speaker, and rule that there could be another division of opposition days if the leaders reach agreement. If, however, there is no such agreement, with all due respect, Mr. Speaker, it is not up to you to change that agreement.

What is more, in rendering such a decision, you are entering into the jurisprudence of parliamentary law an approach that has never been used, one which is contrary to the standing orders and one which people could later on use as grounds for violating the orders.

In fact, since the opposition days have not all been used, if you maintain your decision to assign an additional day to the Conservative Party and the coalition of independent members, you will then need to give the same warm welcome and open reception to requests from my friends in the Canadian Alliance or from my own Bloc Québécois. There will certainly be some forthcoming from the NDP. When a door is opened in this way, it is like opening the hatch of a submarine during a dive. Who can shut it?

I would therefore ask you sincerely, with the greatest respect for parliament, the greatest respect for the interpretations that have been

made to date, and the greatest respect for the parliamentary leaders, to review this decision, once the parliamentary leaders have met this afternoon and discussed the matter. If no agreement is reached, I sincerely believe that your duty would be to continue in the same vein as your first decision concerning questions and speaking time, which is to leave the task of discussion to the leaders, the task of clearing the way, and then to acknowledge a new situation.

I ask you to respect the parliamentary leaders, to respect me, to respect my friend from the Canadian Alliance party, as well as my friend from the New Democratic Party and the government House leader. I ask you to respect a longstanding tradition. I also ask you to maintain your authority as the keeper of the standing orders and to review your ruling, because there is no way, relying on the standing orders, that we can accept such a ruling.

I hope that these few remarks will be enough to convince you that perhaps there has been a misinterpretation of the facts and that you should review your decision.

With all honesty and respect, Mr. Speaker, I ask you to exercise your role as Speaker, which is to see that the Standing Orders are respected. The Standing Orders are clear: this day should not be votable.

• (1020)

The Speaker: I have a question for the hon. member for Roberval. Does he believe that the agreement accepted by the House leaders is the one described in the letter, dated February 6, 2001, which Mr. Strahl sent me?

Mr. Michel Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I do not have here the letter you are referring to. However, the agreement arrived at by the leaders at the beginning of the 37th parliament was absolutely clear. At that time the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell was the government House leader and he informed you of the position of the other leaders.

The agreement was specific, “Canadian Alliance 11 days, 8 of which would be votable; Bloc Québécois 6 days, 4 of which would be votable; NDP 2 days, one of which would be votable; PC/DR two days, one of which would be votable”.

This is what the agreement stated and, as far as I know, the leaders have not changed it. However, it would have to be changed if you want your decision to be upheld.

The Speaker: Is the member for Roberval quoting those figures based on the letter from the government House leader, another source he has quoted or simply a written document?

Mr. Michel Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, you know how we proceed. When the House leaders reach a consensus and make a decision, that decision is conveyed to you by the government House leader on behalf of all the leaders. That decision was conveyed to you at the beginning of the 37th parliament. All the House leaders can confirm what I am saying. That was the spirit of the agreement and those were the actual figures in the agreement concluded at the time. I presume the government House leader probably conveyed that agreement to you by letter or verbally or otherwise.

Points of Order

However, right from the start, all the leaders have worked—and by the way this is not the first day in the session—with that option. That has not been changed in the last few days. That is exactly what had been conveyed to you.

How did the government leader convey that to you? I do not know. It is not up to me to know about it, but I do know that right from the beginning of the 37th parliament, that is over the two years ago, we have been following that agreement.

• (1025)

[English]

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I concur with my colleague from the Bloc and I believe that you and the Table have the number of supply days with each party and the number of votable days. If you look at the list you will see that the NDP has two days with one votable and the Progressive Conservatives have two days with one votable. To do otherwise would upset the balance that has existed in the same number and proportion in the House from the first sitting of this parliament.

Yesterday you ruled that because there was no agreement regarding the allotment of votable supply motions you could not disallow the Conservatives from designating their motion as votable. However there was a deal. It was based on honour and not on paper.

You based your opinion on the assumption that no agreement was apparent. You identified two letters, one from the House leader of the official opposition claiming a deal was struck and one from the House leader of the fifth party making another claim. The letter from the House leader of the Conservatives addressed last year's supply which was an anomaly because of the late start date due to the election. There was a dispute unique to that year and it was resolved by the House leaders. There was never a dispute with regard to a normal supply year. The dispute for this year is new and it breaks the original agreement.

It is unfortunate we did not use some sort of House order to cement the agreement. Normally House leaders honour their agreements. This is a perfect example of how laws are put in place not to prevent honest people from taking advantage of others but to curtail dishonest people. Now the unanimous agreement has been broken.

I will address the definition of agreement you touched on yesterday. I stand by the verbal agreement of the official opposition. I think you will soon find confirmation of it. Other members in the House including the government House leader are likely to stand and support it. We should find that all but one of the parties in the House will agree. The 12 individuals in the fifth party may not. Notwithstanding the position of the Conservatives, there was and is a consensus and therefore an agreement.

As a result of your ruling yesterday you cannot insist on unanimity. If you do there will never be an agreement. You will never get unanimous agreement from the Conservatives because any agreement would prevent them from taking on more votable motions. I am sure you do not mean your ruling to become an obstacle to an agreement. You should therefore make a fair interpretation of an agreement and end the impasse in an attempt to restore integrity to the normally smooth functioning of the House.

My last point has to do with the argument that has been made for the seven independents that attend with the Conservatives. Independents are not allotted supply days. Therefore no claim can be made for more votable supply days as the House leader of the Conservatives tried to claim yesterday.

As you pointed out in your ruling on the matter, the independent members in the coalition have not devoted themselves to the cause in a way that would allow the coalition to present itself as a party in the House. If members have difficulty understanding the concept I will present it in another way.

We could compare the coalition to a ham and egg breakfast. The ham and eggs are both part of the same meal but the chicken and the pig do not share the same dedication. The chicken is only involved whereas the pig is committed. Until the seven remaining chickens get off the fence and follow the pigs into the smoke house the PCs must remain the fifth party in the House. The fifth largest party cannot be entitled to more votable items than the fourth largest party.

• (1030)

The coalition does not deserve what it has. I can understand the members at the other end being upset, but we are talking about the integrity of the House and not whether the fifth party is happy.

There was an agreement. There was no dispute for a normal calendar year. The letter in question from the House leader of the Conservatives addressed last year's short supply year, not a normal calendar year. Despite the lack of unanimity at the moment a consensus of the majority of parties constitutes an agreement by consensus.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you live up to and honour the agreement as we have. If anything, the same situation should exist until all the House leaders agree. If we never come to an agreement the status quo will remain.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I too will make a comment about the point of order raised by the House leader for the Bloc Quebecois because I share his concern about your decision yesterday. It is a regrettable decision and it could possibly have a lot of negative consequences if you do not find a way to review it and come to some other understanding of how these things should be settled.

Points of Order

It is my view as NDP House leader that there was an agreement as to how votable days would be allotted or, for that matter, how opposition days would be allotted and how votable days within the allotted opposition days would be allotted to the various parties.

I offer as evidence not just my memory of the fact that there was an agreement but the fact that the NDP which has used up both its opposition days had only one votable day out of the two opposition days. We had a non-votable opposition day and then we had a votable opposition day on which we are having the vote tonight. If we had thought in any way that there was an agreement which would have permitted us to have two votable opposition days we would have sought to have both our opposition days votable.

On the face of it, it is clear at least from our point of view that there was an agreement. However I think there was an agreement and what has happened is a form of parliamentary mischief, to put it kindly, on the part of the PC/DR caucus, Mr. Speaker, and I do not think you should fall for it. My problem is that in making the ruling you did yesterday you have left yourself open to the accusation that you have been part of the parliamentary mischief on the part of the caucus I refer to.

Mr. Speaker, the evidence for this is in the *Hansard* for yesterday although you were quick to deny you had any intention of ruling on the larger matter. The fact of the matter is that the attempt by members of the PC/DR caucus to have their motion votable was in their minds connected to the larger question of their status and rights in the House of Commons. In commenting on your point of order The Progressive Conservative House leader said:

This issue ties into another larger issue you are aware of and on which you have also ruled. That is the fact that the coalition now has 19 members, members of the Democratic Representative caucus and members of the Conservative caucus. It was different when the original arrangement was—

You cut him off there, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the House leader of the Conservatives was inadvertently referring to the agreement that existed with respect to votable opposition days when he was talking about the original agreement.

Mr. Speaker, the Conservative House leader sent you a letter in March, 2001 disclaiming any part of any agreement having to do with votable days, but nevertheless I see evidence here of the fact that there was general knowledge of such an agreement. Last year we had no such dispute on the floor of the House of Commons about votable days and opposition days.

If this was a matter to be raised independently of the new situation the House leader of the Conservatives finds himself in, why was it not raised last year? It was not and that is because there was an agreement. There was a general understanding and agreement that the NDP caucus was clearly operating out of, otherwise we would not have willingly foregone the opportunity to have an extra votable opposition day.

Mr. Speaker, I urge you to find a way to get yourself, or for that matter the House, out of the hole being dug here with respect to the value and reliability of agreements that are entered into by the House leaders.

●(1035)

If we were to accept the logic of the ruling yesterday, which is to say that whenever someone wants to break an agreement, there has to be agreement otherwise the person who breaks the agreement gets their way, is a perverse sort of procedural logic that I think would wreak havoc both with respect to this decision and with respect to the others.

As the House leader of the Bloc pointed out, one would hardly expect the Conservative House leader to agree that he was wrong in putting forward a votable motion. Why would you give the veto, Mr. Speaker, to the people who were the mischief makers in the first place, to the people who were trying to transcend or go beyond or break, however one wants to put it, the agreement that was in place? It just does not make any sense and it sets a very bad precedent.

It may be that you were not fully aware of the facts with respect to the agreement or with respect to the fact that all parties in the House agreed, with the exception of the Conservatives, and I would say even they, I think, at some point knew there was an agreement but may have had a different view of how much they liked that agreement. Nevertheless there was an agreement. If you were not aware of the facts, if you were not aware of that general agreement about there being an agreement, this would be a forgivable thing and you could move on and say that now that you were fully aware of the facts you could make a different decision. If you do not, I think you will certainly have established a very bizarre sort of precedent procedurally, which is whoever breaks an agreement has to agree. It is so bizarre that I am not even sure how to phrase it.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, you have given a veto to people who are trying to break agreements and I do not think that is a good idea at any time.

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government for obvious reasons has no direct role in determining which opposition party gets which opposition days. However of course in the interest of assisting the House in doing business, the government has participated in discussions with the parties on such matters.

I have heard the description by the hon. member from Roberval of the agreement. My understanding is that description as he put it is accurate.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to the rather sanctimonious and righteous comments directed at myself and members of the coalition. I have to take issue with much of what has been said.

I am quite surprised frankly at my colleague from the NDP and some of his commentary, but perhaps I should not be. I think there is another motivation here that is obviously at work. I need not go into detail on that, but clearly the correspondence that you have in your possession, Mr. Speaker, indicates that there was no agreement. I took the step of putting it in writing, therefore leaving a paper trail in anticipation that something like this might happen.

Points of Order

There is some irony obviously, and I need not point it out, but the member who originally made the request is now sitting as part of the coalition. There is almost an interest against self-interest here.

Having referred directly to the member from the NDP, I guess I should mention, and I use these words cautiously, my colleague from the Alliance, and I guess there is an old expression that comes to mind "You don't expect more than a grunt from a pig". I take great umbrage with his comments and his belittlement of our party. In the context of this, here we are now discussing this issue for 45 minutes on an opposition supply day—

●(1040)

The Speaker: I think we have had quite a lot of references to bovine things this morning and it would be better if we avoided those kinds of references. I think hon. members know that. The hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough has the floor.

Mr. Peter MacKay: It is actually porcine, Mr. Speaker.

My colleague from the Bloc Québécois refers to the burden of proof, and in essence I think their suggesting that it should be a reverse onus. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, you made a ruling. I suggest there is no ability to simply reverse that ruling now based on a dispute over whether in fact there was an agreement or not.

My NDP colleague says that it only used one votable supply day and it had another supply day that it could have deemed votable. We were in the exact same position. I would suggest that we chose to make this day votable in the understanding that we would have another votable day before parliament recessed in the summer.

With respect to the shortened supply day, that was in fact the last time we had this discussion. It was during that shortened supply day that there was an attempt by the official opposition to limit the number of days the PC Party would receive. At that time there were discussions.

Since that time, I would suggest they have simply acquiesced, suggesting that somehow everything was agreed to, that we could simply forgo this issue of how many supply days there were and shorten the number of days upon, which the official opposition and the other House leaders are now maintaining was the agreement. My submission is there was no agreement. I went to the trouble of checking any correspondence that I might have in my office and speaking with members of my staff who were present at every House leader meeting that I attended. I am afraid that this is down to an issue of who said what.

I resent that somehow my integrity is being impugned because I am trying to create mischief or I am somehow trying to get something that this party is not entitled to. I would suggest that what we are doing at this point is simply eating up time and beating the clock, much to the benefit and delight of the government. I find it really perverse.

I know from previous conversations that the efforts of members of the various parties here, the second, third and fourth parties, who are now training their guns on the fifth party would be far better spent devoting their time discussing this very relevant supply day in criticizing the government on its performance when it comes to security. Instead, the true priority of the temporary House leader of

the Alliance Party comes out here in directing his attention toward a party I guess he feels quite threatened by.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that your original ruling should stand. There is no new evidence before you that would reverse that decision. In fact the original references to the standing orders and to the rules of engagement in the House of Commons should be applied and respected.

The Speaker: I am not sure there is a lot I can add that would be useful at this point in time. I am prepared to revisit the matter in light of the comments I have heard today and I am prepared to do that now.

I have a question for the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough. At the conclusion of the point of order yesterday, after my ruling had been given and there was some objection, I suggested there be a meeting of the House leaders. Could he tell me whether one has taken place since then?

●(1045)

Mr. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, there has been no meeting of the House leaders nor has there been a request for one. I would suggest that on previous occasions, such as when we were making submissions about the status of this party in the House, when I attempted to secure a meeting of the House leaders with the now Leader of the Opposition, there was absolutely no effort and no cooperation.

There has been no approach or attempt whatsoever to convene a House leaders meeting. I was not able to glean from your suggestion and your ruling yesterday as to who should initiate such a meeting.

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding these comments from the righteous individual at the other end, there was no need last night to have a House leaders meeting because we knew this was coming before you today and I believe you were advised of that. If we do require a House leaders meeting, that can certainly be undertaken today. In fact, there is one scheduled for 2.30 this afternoon.

Notwithstanding whether a meeting took place or not, that is not the issue. The issue is whether or not four out of five parties in the House, which all have the same agreement and understanding, are wrong or everyone else in the House is wrong and the hon. self-righteous member at the other end from the Progressive Conservatives is right.

The Speaker: That is not the issue as the Chair sees it. It says in Marleau and Montpetit, at page 725:

Although the government designates which days shall be used for the Business of Supply, the opposition parties decide among themselves which party will sponsor the motion and whether or not, subject to the provisions of the Standing Orders, that motion will be brought to a vote.

What is clear from the discussion we have just had, and from the point of order raised yesterday, is that if there was an agreement, it has broken down. It is not in effect. The Chair is put in the position then of making decisions based on the precedence that I have referred to in the decisions yesterday.

Points of Order

If the parties make another agreement, that is up to the parties. It is not for the Chair to make the agreement unless the parties fail to reach agreement. Then, it seems to me, the Chair may have an obligation to step in and do something.

As I say, I am prepared to take this matter under consideration. I would urge the four opposition House leaders to meet to see if they can achieve an agreement. If I can assist, of course, I am more than happy to provide assistance, but I believe agreement is what the standing orders really demand in the circumstances. It appears to me, from all I have heard today and yesterday, that if there ever was an agreement, which seems to be disputed, that agreement no longer is considered binding.

The Chair is put in an awkward position. I am prepared to do my utmost to ensure that we get an agreement. If that means meeting later this morning or earlier this afternoon, whatever is convenient for the House leaders, the Chair would be more than happy to facilitate. However I suggest they meet on their own first to see if some arrangement can be made, and that arrangement could deal with today's motion.

In the meantime, might I suggest that we proceed with the orders of the day. I will get back to the House later with a ruling in respect of yesterday's ruling. However, in the circumstances, I do not know that there is much more I can do at this moment.

Mr. Randy White: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to clarify what you just said. Does that mean then if the Canadian Alliance members, for instance, no longer agree on the question period format or the statement period format, that we can enter into a new agreement with yourself?

I just want to clarify that because, if we had an agreement that was a longstanding agreement and someone says that now we do not have an agreement, that stands for virtually everything we do in the House, and quite frankly I guess question period would be off too.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, before going any further, I would like, with all due respect, to make some points very similar to what we have just heard from my hon. colleague.

By resolving, in this House, an issue between House leaders, you will be setting a precedent which whoever sits in the chair will have a hard time ignoring.

Let me point out that there was an agreement and, as long as the Chair is not advised that there is a very broad consensus or even unanimity among the leaders to revisit the matter, the agreement stands. It is a matter of mutual respect between the political parties in this House.

I believe that it would be excessive and inappropriate for the Chair to decide, at the request of one House leader no longer happy with the agreements that have been reached, to get involved in a decision, if only to chair a meeting between House leaders, which has nothing to do with the role the Chair should be playing in this House.

Things have been working well in this House for many years now because leaders have played the role of leaders and Chairs have played the role of Chairs. For things to keep going well, everyone has to stick to his or her role.

Since all House leaders, except one, the one who has submitted this request, acknowledge that there was an agreement—and we have the figures and the documents to prove it—and since this agreement has been upheld for the last two years of this Parliament, if the Chair were to interfere because one of the House leaders had expressed some concerns, you would put yourself and your successors in an extremely difficult situation.

I felt I had to make this point out of respect for my colleagues. I do respect the Chair, all my colleagues respect the Chair, and the Chair has always shown respect for the House leaders and will continue to do so, I am sure.

• (1050)

[*English*]

The Speaker: I do not want to continue this unnecessarily. I seem to have heard from everybody almost twice now. Does the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona have something important and very brief to say?

Mr. Bill Blaikie: I hope so, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I hope so. I do not want to hear a repeat.

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, you asked a question of the House with respect to whether House leaders had met. I just wanted to go back to what I had said to you earlier. I believe that you framed the problem in such a way that there was no point in House leaders meeting yesterday. Given the fact that you framed it exactly the same way today, there is no point in House leaders meeting today about this matter as long as a particular party in the House, which has decided for whatever reasons to go beyond an agreement that we had, knows that it has the trump card by virtue of the way that you have ruled.

If you continue to insist that people who go beyond agreements, with good or bad intentions or with different understandings or whatever, have the trump card, if they know that the speaker will rule in favour of the person who goes beyond the agreement, why would we ever meet? Why would we ever have agreements, for that matter, because people would be free to break them and know that they would have the Chair on their side?

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I was listening to your comments and I would like some clarification. I believe you said that there was an agreement and that there now is not an agreement between all the opposition parties. Were you inferring that one party may later disagree with the agreement and break that agreement? Was that your inference? I would like to understand what you said.

The Speaker: I was not making any inference. I was simply saying that it appears that there is not an agreement. Whether one party has broken it or whether it was not made in the first place, I do not know. It seems to me that we have conflicting statements.

In the circumstances it is not for the Chair to decide how the agreement came to an end. What is apparent to me is that it appears to have come to an end. That is all I can say in answer to the hon. member.

Supply

Mr. Richard Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I should bring to your attention that this, by virtue of this incident that appears to be going the way of the PC Party, sets a precedent. It sets a precedent for any other agreement that has ever been made by the House leaders that is not carved in stone or written on paper.

As you know, the common process is that House leaders gather and reach an agreement. It is an honourable agreement that people are expected to abide with. From now and forever, for any agreement that was arrived at in a so-called honourable fashion by the House leaders, any party in the House could subsequently down the road say that it never really agreed to that and therefore it wants to have something happen that it prefers. No matter how we try to debate that, there will always be this precedent that we are talking about today.

What about the seating plan? That is something that we arrive at by general agreement. We do not sign a paper and say that this is the way the seating plan will go. We could very well stand up sometime during the day and say that the official opposition House leader never agreed to the seating plan, that we want the whole seating plan revisited and maybe we will agree on it and maybe we will not.

You have to understand the precedent that is set here. While members of the House are expected to be honourable in all things, it appears that when that honour does not serve their purpose they will have the opportunity, because of this precedent, to say that they never really did agree to that or that the agreement is off.

I need you to consider this and understand the very dangerous path that we could be going down in the House. It will place in jeopardy every future agreement that the House leaders make. They will be in severe jeopardy and that must not happen otherwise the House will simply become dysfunctional, more so than it is at times.

• (1055)

Mr. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Prince George—Bulkley Valley ignores the fact that disputes sometimes arise around this place and I know that may come as a shock to many. We are in a situation now where it has been decided that this supply day motion is votable.

As my colleague from the NDP suggested, this is not an issue of siding with one party over another. This is a decision that is consistent with the standing orders and the rules of precedent. There is no precedent here. It is simply alarmist and untrue to say that all agreements are off and that this place will fall into chaos.

The Speaker: I will take the matter under advisement and we will proceed with orders of the day.

* * *

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—NATIONAL SECURITY

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of the supply day motion which I moved, seconded by the hon. member for Edmonton North. I would indicate to the Chair initially that I will be splitting my time with the hon. member.

I want to recognize the invaluable work that she and others, including Senator Lowell Murray of the other place, have done in moving forward on issues of parliamentary democracy and reforming the way in which we operate in this place in such a way that we could bring about greater accountability and responsibility, not just on the part of the government, but on the part of all parliamentarians by raising the level of debate, the degree of participation and the pure and simple degree of democracy that is at work in this important institution.

This supply day motion condemns and points out that the Liberal government is failing on a number of fronts. It is failing with respect to the security measures that it has implemented, not only post-September 11 of last year, but also with respect to the level of democracy at work in this important institution.

The government has had a strong and destructive hand in dismantling a number of important institutions not the least of which is this very House of Commons.

What I am speaking of in more pointed and specific terms is the dismantling of Canada's ports police. That decision was taken specifically in 1997 but brought about almost immediately. The government put in place a plan after its election in 1993 to starve off or choke out the resources, the importance and the relevance of Canada's ports police.

A similar effort was taken toward our Canadian military and we have seen the costs associated with that. We have now seen what I view and what others see, including a Senate report which was published last week, as a great vulnerability in Canada's ports. There is a great deal of threat that now exists with regard to that water point of entry which makes up an important part of this country's boundaries.

If individuals of nefarious intent wish to bring contraband material, illegal migrants, or explosives of any sort into this country today, clearly their least likely opportunity is at a border crossing or at an airport. Sadly, and I do not say this to be alarmist or to in any way be pessimistic about any future threat to Canada, our borders on the water are clearly a vulnerable and virtually unpatrolled entity at this time.

This factor has been contributed to greatly by the ill-fated and unsubstantiated decision taken by the government to disband Canada's ports police. It has been coupled and aggravated by budget cuts to Canada's coast guard where it is unable to patrol our waters to a large degree. We have currently deployed over 50% of our naval capacity, therefore again, leaving our coastal waters and ports vulnerable to any sort of attack or attempt to bring materials into this country.

The Progressive Conservative democratic coalition has been at the forefront of the security debate for some time. While the Liberal government has, post-September 11, tried to put on a brave face by telling Canadians that everything was okay, that everything would be fine, we in the coalition have developed a comprehensive border security and management plan which would enhance the security and safety of Canadians across the country.

It is clear and it has been stated many times in this Chamber and elsewhere that we share the longest undefended border with the United States of America. It is also clear that at this time in world history the United States appears to be the target of much of the aggression felt by other corridors in the world.

Hundreds of billions of dollars in goods and services travel between our countries each year. Without a comprehensive border management plan which deals specifically with all aspects of border management, including ports, the safety of Canadians could be jeopardized and trade with our partners to the south would be significantly damaged.

● (1100)

I would suggest, given the preparations and the very vigorous attempts undertaken by our American cousins to get their ship in order with respect to security, that in the very near future they will be turning their attention to Canada and assessing our security and our ability to give guarantees that goods and services that come into our country will not leave them susceptible to some sort of attack.

I come from the east coast, where very often it is a common sight to see American warships in the port of Halifax or off the coast of the maritimes. That very fact, I would suggest, is something that has to be very prevalent in our preparations and in our attempts to secure our ports and our coastal borders. Similarly, there has been an increase in cruise line traffic wherein American citizens and citizens from all points come to Canada through our ports. Sadly, there have been past experiences and tragic events outside of Canada where American citizens have been targeted while outside the United States.

This is an alarming situation that has been brought forward, not just by members of the opposition, but in an extremely comprehensive report, published last week, from the Senate committee on national security and defence. I will quote from that Senate report in the section dealing specifically with ports. It states that in the committee's judgment "inadequate levels of security at entry ports to our country, deficiencies in intelligence capabilities and emergency preparedness capacity that has only recently begun to shift into gear, constitute a threat both to Canadians' economic and physical well-being".

The report goes on, and I am referencing specifically the subject of organized crime that is active and operating in increasingly alarming rates at our ports, to state: "the security breaches encouraged by organized as well as petty criminals at Canada's ports are offered enhanced opportunities to would-be terrorists....Lax security at Canadian ports constitutes a threat to both the security and well-being of Canadians".

This is extremely worrisome given the volatility of this age we are now living in. We have a very active and notorious threat of organized crime, and it is not just the traditional mafioso. We know that eastern block mafia and organized crime are becoming very active. On the west coast, in Vancouver, we see Asian gangs that are very active in the ports of that region of the country.

Of course it is not limited to our water points of entry. Airports and the border also play a big part in this overall strategy that must be undertaken and must be guarded very vigilantly by the

Supply

government. In fact, this is why we are taking this opportunity to engage in this debate, to inform Canadians, to bring to the forefront of the House of Commons this issue of what challenges face the government and the country as a whole.

Sadly, these concerns and the concerns of Canadians who have taken the opportunity to question the government's policy seem to have fallen on deaf ears, partly, I would suggest, because of the structure that is in place surrounding democracy. Even the opportunity we have to pose questions is becoming more and more limited; witness the decision of the government to shut down further discussions on the budget yesterday, the seventy-fifth time in the regime of the government that it has used closure or time allocation. That is hardly consistent with a democratic institution.

I want to focus a little further on the issue of ports. In so doing I am referencing a very telling and, I would say, in some respects a foretelling document, which was published out of an international workshop dealing with airport and seaport police that occurred in March 1995. The report spoke of the privatization of police.

● (1105)

The Hon. René J. Marin said this with respect to municipal police taking over the role of ports police:

It is a reckless obsession with cost cutting and the disregard for the potential risk. Not insuring your personal property is a saving but we do not take the risk; it is simply not prudent.

He goes on to discuss the shortcomings in the ability of police, both municipal and RCMP, to do the very specialized job of ports police in this country.

I note my time is up. I hope that all members will engage in this debate and that we will receive some assurances from the government that greater prudence and effort will be taken to secure Canada's borders and ports of entry.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I would like to call for a quorum count.

And the count having been taken:

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): There is no quorum and the bells shall ring no longer than 15 minutes. Call in the members.

● (1115)

[*Translation*]

And the bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): We now have a quorum. Resuming debate.

[*English*]

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, it is pretty ironic, is it not, that we were just speaking about the relevance of parliament and every single opposition bench is empty, except for this coalition, which is sponsoring this debate today?

Mr. Grant McNally: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hate to interrupt my colleague from Edmonton North, but I do believe before the quorum was called for that we were on questions and comments. Am I right about that?

Supply

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I consulted with the clerks during quorum call and if quorum call is indeed made then the five minutes allotted to the member is gone with it.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Edmonton North.

● (1120)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member for Edmonton North is a long-standing member, and she should know better than to refer to the absence of members from the House. I believe she should withdraw the remarks she made earlier about members not being in the House.

[*English*]

Miss Deborah Grey: Mr. Speaker, I was not speaking about a particular absence.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The hon. member for Repentigny has made his views known. We should not at any time refer to the absence or presence of any individual member in the House. When such remarks deal with a group, the matter is for the Chair to decide.

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member may have been referring to members of her own party or coalition, since they did not manage a quorum.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): All right. The score is now even.

[*English*]

Miss Deborah Grey: Mr. Speaker, I am an English teacher. My math is not good but there are 19 in the coalition and we need 20 for quorum.

We were talking about the relevance of parliament. If anyone should ever talk about the relevance of parliament it might be this morning: We have wasted an hour and 22 minutes with opposition parties attacking other opposition parties and the government thinking this is all just jolly good fun. It is pathetic that someone would get into such minutiae, pettiness and small-mindedness when we have a country to run here and there are some pretty serious problems.

Talking about the relevance of parliament, let me welcome the members to the fact that this place is dysfunctional and we have not seen it any more clearly than we have seen it in the last 24 hours. We have seen the government in the last 24 hours with the seventy-fifth anniversary of time allocation and closure when we should be holding the government to account because, the last I knew, that is what the opposition is supposed to do. In fact, the official opposition is supposed to be ready, willing and able to form government should the government fall, but they just wander off, having a temper tantrum—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I was just about to rise to warn the hon. member for Edmonton North to speak on the subject at hand, which is national security, and at the very same time the member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley rose on a point of order.

Mr. Richard Harris: Mr. Speaker, I was about to ask you to request that the member speak relevant to the motion. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I am passing on the message. The hon. member for Edmonton North.

Miss Deborah Grey: Mr. Speaker, I heard the message. Let me read the motion for all members in the House:

That this House condemn the government for its failure to implement a national security policy to address the broad range of security issues, including those at Canadian ports of entry and borders, and call on the government to reassert Parliament's relevance in these and other public policy issues.

Forgive me, but I thought the relevance of parliament that is addressed in the motion means the relevance of parliament and I am happy to speak about that. I know there will be some who will pay attention with rapt interest.

Let me talk a little more about the whole idea of the relevance of parliament in dealing with national security. We have watched it since September 11 when the government members sat frozen not knowing what to do. Should they go to New York or should they not? Should they recall parliament or should they not? I do not know why they would bother anyway because precious little happens here. The last 24 hours and the last hour and a half specifically show that sadly in spades.

Would they call a prayer meeting? Heavenly day no, that is a dangerous one for them. Would they have a memorial service? Yes, but only if it was safe. We saw the pathetic protocol, or lack thereof, for a memorial service after September 11.

Then there is the matter of legislation. The ports police is in bad shape. I was in Windsor yesterday. Five RCMP are trying to patrol the Windsor-Detroit corridor and watch people coming across the border in boats. How is parliament relevant to that? There should be 18 people on duty there. They are trying to get things together but it is not happening. There is not enough manpower. There is not enough money. There is not enough equipment. If the government is taking seriously the whole idea of border patrol and national security, it is sadly lacking.

When we think about how much better it could be pre or post-September 11, this place would function a little more relevantly. That is the sad topic I am addressing today. It is written in black and white in the motion. I am not sure how anyone could have a problem figuring it out. Parliament is not relevant.

An excellent Senate report was issued recently by both parties in the Senate Chamber. The Liberals along with the Tory senators and the independents agreed on all of the recommendations. I believe it was a unanimous report. Nonetheless it shows that there are Liberals somewhere who are willing to stand up and make recommendations and say there are some serious problems with our national security. The Senate has figured it out. The senators worked together on that.

Supply

Here in parliament we need to be able to work together. What we have seen today is tiny mindedness with capital letters among the opposition parties, not even the government. Something is wrong. We need to get that together. I do not care who has a little grudge. I do not care who thinks they need to make a point. I do not care who thinks they are going to win a war of attrition. But I am saying that as of tomorrow I will have been in this place for 13 years and I am not sure I have ever seen it sink to this level, and I have seen a few things here. I have not been here as long as some members, but I have been here longer than some and I am embarrassed.

I talked to someone last night who asked me what is an MP and what does an MP do. I tried to explain about legislation and about what our job is here in the highest court of the land. She said to me after a few minutes of conversation "And for this you get paid?" We get paid well to do our job here. I am embarrassed on the eve of my 13th anniversary to see this nonsense and absolute shenanigans that have gone on.

When are we going to get it right? When are we going to fight together rather than fight each other? This is not even about government and opposition members because we would think there would be some sparring between them, but if all of us are under the title and guise of opposition, whether its official or unofficial opposition, our job is to hold the government accountable. Shame on all of us, because this is absolutely ridiculous.

● (1125)

When I see some of the things that the senators have done, good for them because they work together. Government and opposition senators are working together trying to make something better. Their report was excellent.

We in the coalition came up with a democratic task force report, which as far as I understand because of my political history in this place, is something that former colleagues believe in and support. There is not one of them who would not agree with free votes and having House of Commons committees a little more effective. In the last couple of weeks we have seen that to be a *Gong Show*.

Let me address the relationship between parliament and the courts. I ask my former colleagues, how long have we talked about that? How long have we been in agreement about that? How long have we said that parliament needs to tell the courts that it makes the legislation and the courts interpret it? We have agreed on that for many years.

Is there one among those members over there who will stand up and say they do not agree with Senate reform? We agree on this.

Enough is enough. We need to agree on what is going to be better for this country, not what is going to be better for my political career or someone else's political career. That better be pretty low on the totem pole.

We need to put all this nonsense and petty mindedness aside and work together with the government and with other opposition members. We will work with anyone who is going to make this country better. Shame on any of the 301 members in the House who think that getting re-elected or their political career is bigger and better than what is better for Canadians. Shame on all of us if we fall to that level.

● (1130)

Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Edmonton North has touched on some important points.

We have long called for members to work together in this place. If we as opposition members can find agreement on things to hold the government accountable, it is good for the country. It is also good for the country to have opposition members working with government members.

My colleague from Edmonton North is an experienced member. As she said, she has been here almost 13 years. It is her anniversary tomorrow. I wonder if she would reflect a bit more on the aspect of her speech where she described the need for people to come together, not only as opposition members to keep the government accountable on this important national security issue which we raised today, but on other matters as well. Could she expand on that aspect?

Miss Deborah Grey: Mr. Speaker, members spend lots of time on airplanes. We spend a lot of time away from our families. We spend a lot of time in this place and it is not working. It is not working as well as it could. I think everyone on either side of the House would agree with me on that.

There are Liberal backbenchers here in the House. There are also Liberals from Windsor. I mentioned the frustrations of the people in Windsor because of the water. It is unbelievable. People can just come ashore. There are Liberals who are frustrated about that but they are tied in chains, figuratively speaking, because they cannot speak out.

We saw what happened a couple of weeks ago in committees. Someone who had been an excellent parliamentary secretary and would have been a very effective committee chair was bunted, drop kicked out of there because of small minded, petty politics. The leadership race is not even close to happening for goodness sake. When we see that kind of nonsense going on and the lobbying, manipulating and scheming, where is the betterment of all of us here in parliament?

It is easy to rant and toss a comment off, but what is relevant is that this place is irrelevant. That is the problem.

Look at someone with a grudge who will show somebody by letting someone else know. When somebody says something in the sacred place of a caucus room and then tells the media gallery about it, there is the relevance. To try and disguise that as altruistic does not fly.

Sooner or later we had better learn some of those painful lessons. There will be more painful ones ahead if we do not pay attention.

● (1135)

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first I want to congratulate the member on her 13 years of service.

Supply

It was totally unfair to all members of the House who come here to work diligently when she said that nothing happened. There were 100,000 Canadians on the lawn of Parliament Hill after September 11. There was prayer breakfast in the West Block. The room was packed with all members from the House praying together.

It is shameful, with her experience, the holier than thou attitude that she portrayed with the cacophony that she expressed today. I was saddened to hear her degrading it. She should be ashamed of the negative message she is putting out to Canadians.

Miss Deborah Grey: Mr. Speaker, I would love to address that with the member, but I certainly will address it to the others. I trust he will watch it on TV.

I know there was a powerful memorial service on Parliament Hill. I could not get to it because I could not get on a plane. I live several thousand miles away. I watched it on TV. It was powerful. I was proud of that, because so many Canadians came out. However they were told they could not even mention the name of God. People were groping and trying to come to grips spiritually with that huge event which was cataclysmic.

He talked about an event in the West Block, and I appreciate that too. I know that people were moved by that and they had a desire to call out. We had a prayer service in East Block and it was pretty small, but we did what we could do.

I thank the member for bringing that forward. I thank the Canadians who came out but they wanted to do more and were restrained.

Mr. Lynn Myers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to enter the debate on national security which remains a key concern for all Canadians I believe. I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River.

On behalf of the solicitor general, I assure you, Mr. Speaker, and all members of parliament that national security and public safety continue to be the number one priority and the top priority for the Government of Canada.

The Solicitor General of Canada has a leadership role within the Government of Canada for protecting Canadians and helping them to maintain a peaceful and safe society.

Many other ministers of the government, including departments and agencies, are also key partners in this very important area in the fight against terrorism, including my hon. colleagues from justice, CCRA, CIC, DFAIT, national defence, Transport Canada and Health Canada. We all work closely with our federal partners on a daily basis through a variety of informal and formal meetings to ensure that the government's overall public safety strategy is co-ordinated and effective.

The ad hoc ministers' committee on public security and anti-terrorism as well as the deputy ministers' committee on public safety are prime examples of interdepartmental co-ordination.

The portfolio of the Solicitor General of Canada also co-operates with federal, provincial and territorial partners in a number of ways to share information, consult on major initiatives and to reach consensus on proposed criminal justice reforms. These include, for

example, ministers responsible for justice, deputy ministers responsible for justice, co-ordinating committees of senior officials and several subcommittees and working groups to examine specific policy issues.

In particular, a new federal-provincial-territorial deputies committee has just been formed to ensure co-ordination among all jurisdictions in their approach to anti-terrorism and public safety issues.

Strong partnerships with stakeholders is vital to the work of the Solicitor General of Canada. We encourage and actively support co-operation with our non-governmental partners, including provincial and municipal police forces, and emergency firstline responders through consultation, information sharing, exchange of expertise and knowledge, training and the provision of resources.

It goes without saying that since September 11 counterterrorism is a top priority for police and security agencies the world over. It is a top priority here at home too for the RCMP, for CSIS and for law enforcement officials across Canada.

The primary role of the Government of Canada is to lead this fight against terrorism at national and international levels. The government is doing so through new legislation and several important initiatives announced in the last two federal budgets.

Since the year 2000, the Government of Canada has dedicated a total of \$9.5 billion to public safety and national security, including \$7.7 billion in the December 2001 budget. The comprehensive set of measures outlined in budget 2001 are designed to keep Canada safe, keep terrorists out and keep our borders open. To this end, it includes major investments to equip and deploy more intelligence and frontline investigative personnel, improve co-ordination among law enforcement, intelligence and national security agencies, and to boost marine security and safety to the tune of \$1.6 billion. It also includes improving the screening of immigrants, refugee claimants and visitors to the tune of \$1 billion; creating a new air security organization, assigning armed undercover police officers on Canadian aircraft, purchasing explosive detection equipment and enhancing policing to the tune of \$2.2 billion; and finally, enhancing border security and improving the infrastructure that supports major border crossings to ensure the legitimate flow of people and goods, which is so important to our economy, to the tune of \$1.2 billion.

Furthermore, under Canada's anti-terrorism plan, key federal agencies responsible for public security, such as the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, will receive substantial new funding to enhance their counterterrorism capacity and priorities.

Supply

• (1140)

CSIS will receive an additional \$334 million over five years which will be used to boost its frontline security intelligence capacity. The RCMP will receive an additional \$576 million which will bring new technology on line and put more officers to work on national security matters.

Under Canada's anti-terrorism plan, specific federal support for provinces, territories and municipalities include the establishment of new integrated national security enforcement teams, INSETs, and increased integrated border enforcement teams, IBETs, by the RCMP with provision for the salaries of INSET members seconded from other jurisdictions.

These are all important measures and, while the focus is on counterterrorism, initiatives undertaken on this front have had ripple effects that will benefit organized crime investigations, community policing and policing and law enforcement in general. What these measures do is establish a framework to ensure a high level of public security and safety for Canadians wherever they live in a national security framework.

Federal anti-terrorism initiatives will clearly strengthen the criminal justice system on a national basis. All jurisdictions will benefit from the resulting tools, expertise, new or expanded programs and infrastructure. These benefits will continue over a long period of time.

As a result of the events that took place on September 11, the Government of Canada and the U.S. administration have been more attentive than ever in ensuring security and safety at our joint border. Both countries have formally agreed to co-operate on border security and regional migration issues and have signed a smart border declaration which includes a 30 point action plan to ensure a safe, secure and efficient border.

The goal is to facilitate the movement of legitimate goods and people while preventing terrorists and undesirable individuals from entering Canada or the United States.

The Government of Canada has long realized that the fight against organized crime is not a task it can take on alone. Since the adoption of the joint statement on organized crime in 1998, we have been working very closely with our provincial and territorial counterparts to address this problem.

The national agenda to combat organized crime identifies a series of new legislative initiatives to enhance the investigation and prosecution of organized crime. Bill C-24 was a good first step and an important first step.

The police community told policymakers there was a need to improve legislation and that is exactly what happened and what we did. Bill C-24 will assist in addressing serious problems like biker gangs and other forms of serious crime.

We all know that criminals are making full use of technological advances to facilitate and provide leverage for their crimes. In order to respond effectively, we need to capitalize on the new technological tools available to us.

An excellent example of this is the Canada Public Safety Information Network which is designed to link criminal justice agencies across Canada to allow for better detection and prosecution of offenders. In October 2001, the Solicitor General of Canada announced that \$4.9 million in new money would be dedicated in part to enhancing this program.

Furthermore, encryption technology is becoming cheaper, stronger, widely available and easy to use. Criminals and terrorists increasingly use some form of encryption or password protection to secure their communications. That is why the Department of the Solicitor General has implemented an action plan to provide technical solutions and to conduct a comprehensive legislative review.

Here, as with organized crime, the challenge is for our laws to keep pace with the changing face of technology and crime.

The Government of Canada does not take public safety and national security for granted. As I have just outlined, we have introduced numerous initiatives designed to enhance both national security and public safety.

Parliament and parliamentary committees continue to play a vigorous role in this area. We have only to point to parliament's work on Bill C-36, Bill C-24, Bill C-11 and continuing debate regarding Bill C-42 and Bill S-23.

I look forward to the continued input of all parliamentarians as we work together in this very important area. I will conclude by saying that public security and public safety remain a top priority. As a government, along with all Canadians, we need to work in this very important area to ensure that at the end of the day we secure a safe and good place for Canadians wherever they live in this country.

• (1145)

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, after listening to the canned rhetoric I was glad when he deviated just long enough at the end to say that there might be more that could be done.

Does the parliamentary secretary endorse some of the decisions that he did not mention in the notes prepared by the department? Does he endorse the \$200 million that were taken out of the RCMP budget since his government came to office in 1993? Does he endorse the decision to cancel the helicopter program at a cost of over \$500 million and countless more millions in jobs and technology that could have come from that decision leaving our borders, marine patrol capabilities and armed forces extremely exposed.

I would also like to know whether he endorses some of the other ludicrous decisions his government has taken, including the registration of guns at a cost of over \$700 million. If that money had been given to frontline policing, it could have gone to far greater lengths to help combat all sorts of crime.

Does he endorse his government's decision to disband the ports police which were a specialized police force acting as a deterrent at ports in Canada, such as in Vancouver, Montreal and Halifax? Does he endorse those government decisions and can he justify what his government has done?

Supply

Mr. Lynn Myers: Mr. Speaker, with respect to ports police, we take port security very seriously and have worked with local agencies to ensure that it is kept at a pace that is relevant for activities at those areas. The RCMP and customs people are still involved when it comes to certain crimes. I am convinced that we have a good system in place.

On the other matters that the hon. member raised, I would point out that it was his government back in 1993 that left us in a financial wasteland with a \$42 billion deficit and a huge debt that was accumulated as a result of the kind of policies those Conservative people wreaked on the country.

For him to talk along those lines now is just ludicrous. We as a government put in place the mechanisms to get the country back on its feet. We are seeing now that we are on solid footing. What we now need to do is ensure that our streets, communities and neighbourhoods are safe, and that is precisely what we are doing.

We as a government continue to work effectively in the best interests of all Canadians, not to bankrupt as the Tories tried to do but to make sure that we have in place the kinds of tools and resources that police wherever they exist in the country can be proud of, and that is exactly what we are doing.

• (1150)

Mr. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I do feel compelled to at least reply to the reference made to the debt that was left. The hon. member refers to the \$42 billion deficit when his government took office. Will he show some intellectual honesty for the first time on the government side and accept the fact that it was a \$38 billion—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Before I give the floor to the hon. member, I ask members to be judicious with the choice of their words; intellectual honesty.

Mr. Lynn Myers: Mr. Speaker, if I had been one of the Conservatives I too would be very sensitive about the issue because what remains is a terrible legacy left by the Mulroney government in terms of literally bankrupting our great country.

They should be sensitive to the fact that they almost put the country into the ground. What we did as a government was resurrect Canada and put it on solid footing with a great foundation made in a way consistent with the great values of the country.

I cannot believe that the member would have the gall to actually bring this kind of thing up because all it does is serve to remind Canadians of the disaster of Mr. Mulroney and the Conservative government.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to try to nudge the debate a little closer to the topic. The mover of the motion proposed the motion and we seem to be dealing with all kinds of different topics such as the way the deficit was 5, 10, 15 and 20 years ago, firearms legislation and helicopter purchases.

I remind colleagues, and perhaps the mover of the motion, that the subject is national security generally. The opposition has moved the motion so inevitably it will be rhetorical. Inevitably it will be political and sometimes willfully blind to some of the facts. However that is the way we operate around here. Our job is to try to contribute things to the debate that will keep us on topic.

National security is very much a challenge of responding to and managing risk. It is pretty clear to everyone that the perceived risk pre-September 11 is different from the risk we see now. Most of the risk we have had to encounter was risk targeted at our American neighbours.

Pre-September 11 these risks did not seem to be targeted directly at Canada, but these days national security is an international item. It has an international dynamic. It is not just domestic. We must work with our partners internationally to deal with managing the risk. When one of our international partners is at risk our legislation and our policy are to assume that we also are at risk and will collaborate with them.

The December 12 announcement of a 30 point action plan by this government and by the government of the U.S.A. reflects the fact that security in North America is pretty much pooled together. That 30 point action plan was not accomplished overnight. It is a wish list that will span out over several years. The 30 point plan became a much shorter 8 point plan, I think it was, by March 8 when our minister met with his U.S. counterpart, Mr. Ridge.

Many things are going on and one of the challenges of responding to security threats is that the actual response by government is not made public necessarily at the time the response is taken. One element of dealing with security is that its elements are not usually made public, at least in an aggressive, press release kind of way.

The March 8 announcement included improvements to our Canada-U.S. border screening operations and a joint program to address the risk of security breaches involving shipping container traffic at our seaports. These joint teams will now be developing action plans for Canadian and U.S. ports across the northern tier of the U.S. or the southern tier of Canada.

They will find problems. They know what they are. The member opposite who moved the motion has referred to the problem of organized crime in more than one of our seaports. It is a fact that police have told us at committees of the House and apparently of the Senate that we do not control container traffic. It is controlled by workers at the ports. Statistically speaking approximately half the workers in some of those ports have criminal records, which does not mean they are not following the rules but it does raise concerns. I for one have concluded that we do not control sufficiently our container traffic coming into our ports. I will not say which one.

We have a serious problem which can only be addressed by government. What we have heard publicly so far from the people who manage the seaports is not accurate. I assume some of us in this place will be engaged in further debate on that.

• (1155)

One of the problems with security matters is that they often get siloed into different subject and ministry areas. The difference among health, policing, customs and military security creates a great challenge for modern government.

We have tried to address it by placing one minister at the cabinet table with an ad hoc committee of relevant ministers. The Americans have tried a different route by using a non-cabinet minister to try to bring things together. There were challenges on both sides of the border. Both sides are working with these challenges and have attempted perhaps to low ball the turf wars that occur between different agencies within government.

Our problems are analogous to the kinds of problems in that regard of our American neighbours. Our response to terrorism includes two pieces of legislation: one passed by the House, Bill C-36, the anti-terrorism bill, and Bill C-42 which is before the House. It will certainly have more debate here. Those are good faith strong attempts, strong responses by the government to deal with legislative weaknesses of which we perhaps were not aware before September 11. The same has happened in many other countries around the world as we try to remediate our domestic legislation to respond to the very real threats out there.

The government reconstituted the national security subcommittee of the justice committee. The phone calls went out within days after September 11. Members of the House will be working on that committee in an attempt to provide focus for the House on the envelope of national security, which I have already said is somewhat segmented, inevitably so, between different ministries and different agencies within government.

In the motion today is what I regard as a silly throwaway comment asking the government to try to make parliament more relevant. It is not the job of the government to make parliament more relevant. It is the job of parliamentarians. Let us please stop asking government, which is several hundred thousand people strong working outside the House, to try to make the House more relevant. This is our job. Anyone in the House who asks some nameless, faceless person in government to help us make the House more relevant is whistling, dreaming.

● (1200)

Hon. Lorne Nystrom: Jean Chrétien.

Mr. Derek Lee: The member opposite of many years experience is saying it is the Prime Minister's job. No, it is the job of the member opposite. The member opposite is fully capable of providing leadership if he would just get off his duff and provide it instead of asking the Prime Minister to do his job. The Prime Minister is very busy.

In terms of national security, we called our last budget in December a security budget and it is a security budget. As was pointed out by the parliamentary secretary, \$7.5 billion were dedicated to national security items, all siloed with a billion here and a half billion there for many different functions in responding to the threat.

The list has already been mentioned but I will just mention air security measures involving modifications to aircraft, air marshals on aircraft, \$1.6 billion to military security, \$2.2 billion in the air travel envelope, and \$1 billion to improve screening of persons entering Canada at seaports or airports whether they run, walk, fly or parachute. This is a new priority for us.

Supply

We follow a common agenda. I should point out, as everyone knows, someone dropping into North America for a day, a week or a year is dropping into North America. Our American neighbours care who shows up here and we care who shows up there.

A lot is going on. Many taxpayer dollars are being spent. I thank the member opposite for allowing us to bring focus on those expenditures and these policies.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I will comment a bit on the hon. member's speech, especially when he says that all we have to do is stand and be counted and parliament will be turned on its ear, that all we have to do as parliamentarians is stand and say the magic word and things will change.

If we had just stood I suppose the government would not have brought in time allocation and closure on debate 75 times. I suppose, to use the member's words, we could fix the committee structure by simply standing and saying that we wish we could have a proper chair of committees without interference by the government.

I would like to question him on that subject since he raised it. Last spring I put forward proposals called "Building Trust", a dozen specific proposals on helping parliament fix itself. We put together this year a proposal about reforming the entire parliamentary system, including things like estimates, committees, how we deal with things, endorsing all party committees, reports on how we deal with budget allocations, estimates and so on.

What more exactly does he think we could do? It needs fixing but we cannot fix it from here. We need help from the leadership group on that side of the House or enough backbenchers with enough spine to help us. We are putting forward the proposals. We do not have the votes to carry them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Before I give the floor to the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River, I ask members to make an effort to talk about national security at some point in time.

Mr. Derek Lee: Mr. Speaker, you took the words right out of my mouth. Members opposite are trying to turn this debate into something other than the subject of the motion. Now we are talking about parliamentary reform.

I accept that the member opposite has made contributions to this field. I have tried to do the same as have other members on this side and that side. It is an ongoing agenda. We have been renovating the rules of the House of Commons ever since it began in 1867. It is an ongoing task.

I am not saying we cannot make the place better but changes do not happen overnight. We made rule changes only about a year ago and those rule changes are not doing too badly. There is a lot more that can be done. I will be publishing something within days on the same subject.

I will not moan and groan about the failure to accept my changes. There is a process. We should all be involved. I just urge members, if we are to have a debate about national security issues, to please stay on topic. The subject of debate today is not parliamentary reform; it is national security.

Supply

Mr. Chuck Strahl: You raised it.

Mr. Derek Lee: Mr. Speaker, the member says I raised it. I raised it because I was responding to something that was raised across the way. I will just close there. There may be some more comments on something relevant.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Again I ask members to deal with national security. It seems that a trend has been set and that we cannot deviate from it.

• (1205)

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I draw the attention of the Chair and members present to the fact that the latter part of the votable motion calls upon the government to reassert parliament's relevance in addressing these and other public policy matters. I would suggest that very much includes and encompasses the subject matter of parliamentary reform.

I want to follow the instructions of the Chair and I want to commend the member for Scarborough—Rouge River because I think he is a very talented and very gifted parliamentarian who has made a significant contribution to this place. I acknowledge his commitment not only to democratic reform but to security issues in particular, something he has taken a very sincere and very concerted effort to pursue.

I draw him back to some of the comments he referred to in the Senate report, in particular those surrounding the concerns expressed by the Senate over the number of containers which come into the country and the number of containers which are actually checked. I believe those statistics reveal that in Halifax, Vancouver and Montreal, the major ports of entry, they were somewhere between 1% and 3%.

There is an obvious problem that needs to be addressed with greater equipment. There is a problem that needs to be addressed with those doing the checking. The member referred to the disproportionate number of checkers and employees in the ports that have criminal records. That is a huge concern. I would also add the fact that the port authority is not the one that is doing the checking. In many cases it is private companies that hire security firms.

Would he not agree that we have to make a more concentrated effort either to improve the ability of current municipal police and the RCMP to address the situation or perhaps revisit the specialized role of the port authority or port police?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): There is no time left in questions and comments. With the indulgence of the Chair I will allow the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River a minute to respond.

Mr. Derek Lee: Mr. Speaker, I happen to agree fully with the member opposite that the container shipping envelope is out of control. Police and authorities have made that clear. They cannot ensure containers they see coming in on ships get to them for inspection because the crime groups in control of the ports are able to re-number and re-label the containers and do a bait and switch. It is out of control.

I know about the problem, the member opposite knows about it, other members know about it and the government knows about it. I am hopeful that with the joint action of the U.S. and Canada that was announced recently we will quickly come to grips with it.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Langley—Abbotsford.

I again welcome the opportunity to rise and partake in the debate about national security. It is a relevant debate although what we are seeing here today perhaps diminishes the fact that we need a debate on national security.

When we in the Canadian Alliance Party look at some of what we want to draw out today we understand even more that it is not over. National security is not something we are finished with. We are still seeing an ongoing threat to national security.

I will speak today to one of the specific concerns we have in our party. The hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford will speak to another specific concern. Each member of the Canadian Alliance will speak to a specific national security concern.

As we all know, yesterday marked the six month anniversary of the September 11 attack on America. It is quite fair to say it is a day that will never be forgotten. I did not get an opportunity yesterday on the anniversary date to again express my sincere condolences to all families who lost loved ones in the twin tower attacks, loved ones who included citizens of the United States, Canada and other countries. I do so again today. They are still in our thoughts and in our prayers.

I take the opportunity to urge the government to immediately commemorate the lost lives of September 11, 2001 as recommended yesterday by my colleague from Medicine Hat.

This past weekend a senior Canadian intelligence agent warned that dozens of Islamic militants already in Canada could well be planning acts of terror against Canadians on our own soil. This was not shortly after September 11. This was last weekend. Michael Kelly with the counterterrorism branch of CSIS told symposium delegates at the Royal Military College that "The threat is real, it is immediate, it is here".

For so long we have thought Canada was immune to attacks like the one we saw in the United States. Although we recognized that terrorist organizations were using our country to plot or stage attacks against our neighbours we felt we were immune to such attacks. We have heard it again here today.

Canada has long been thought of, especially by radicals, as a comfortable spot to forge documents, make travel arrangements, fundraise, recruit, and engage in other activities to support terrorist networks abroad. Since the attack on America a lot of evidence has been brought forward to substantiate these suspicions. However we have never thought we could be a hard target. We have never considered that an attack could be made on us. As mentioned by the CSIS individual over the past weekend, the tide is changing.

Supply

According to the security expert, Israel and the United States which are the principal symbols of anti-west hatred will become less available to terrorists as they implement more stringent regulations and precautions. As Canada becomes more involved in the war against terror there will be a considerable threat to Canada and its citizens. Much more must therefore be done to protect the lives and liberty of Canadians including taking the threat of biological warfare more seriously.

In a speech I gave on September 18 last year I spoke about the threat of anthrax. I said that despite the warnings of 1998 the government had done nothing to prepare us against potential biological or chemical attacks.

A number of years ago the United States was threatened by the potential of Iraq smuggling the deadly anthrax bacteria into the country. It conducted a series of drills to work out how it might respond as a nation. Donald Henderson of John Hopkins University in Baltimore, who led the successful international effort to eradicate smallpox, concluded that the United States was ill prepared to deal with this type of attack. Henderson recommended the U.S. government stockpile drugs and vaccines, develop and distribute rapid tests for agents used in biological weapons, and come up with effective ways to isolate infected people.

●(1210)

Despite the warnings and recommendations of the mid-1990s and the inglorious long past of chemical warfare, neither the United States nor Canada took the threat seriously.

We can learn from history. Ancient Greek city states overwhelmed opponents in the past with noxious fumes of smoldering pitch and sulphur. Chinese warriors wafted arsenic laced smokescreens against their foes. Plague soaked corpses were tossed into enemy fortresses during the Middle Ages.

On April 22, 1915 German troops twisted open the valves of 5,000 cannisters of chlorine gas at Ypres, Belgium. Massive green clouds made their way toward the allied forces. Within minutes thousands of panicked victims died. British forces retaliated with mustard gas, phosphine gas and other poisons. The total casualties on all sides in World War I are estimated to be 1.3 million.

Modern chemical warfare did not just drift onto the scene. Chemical and biological weapons have long been seen as efficient means with which to destroy the enemy. Yet we are not prepared. Some 100 kilograms of anthrax spores administered by a crop duster or light plane flying over any Canadian city could deliver a fatal dose to over three million people in a very short period.

Canada knows this simple fact because Canadian research led to the development of anthrax as a biological weapon. A deadly bacteria, anthrax was mass produced on Grosse Ile. It was the first such germ warfare station among the western nations. We became the major supplier of anthrax to the British military during World War II.

Canadians have been reluctant to admit we were pioneers or innovators in German chemical warfare. If we were to ask my hon. colleague across the way from Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, the author of the 1989 book *Deadly Allies: Canada's Secret War 1937-1947*, he could attest to this.

However prior to September 11 and despite our extensive knowledge and involvement with this deadly type of warfare we were not prepared to deal with it until a number of anthrax scares, a couple of which resulted in death in the United States. We are only now taking the threat of biological warfare seriously. Perhaps the question should be posed: Are we taking it seriously?

An Ottawa *Citizen* article by Carol Harrington in early February said the government was finally preparing the country to respond to terrorist attacks including biological and chemical attacks. My office has tried to confirm the accuracy of Ms. Harrington's article but to date the Department of National Defence has failed to confirm it.

My offices on the Hill and in Crowfoot have made numerous attempts to get information about the approval of \$12 million for the Defence Research Establishment in Suffield to erect several buildings where police, firefighters and medical personnel would learn in classrooms and in the field about terrorist attacks and, more specifically, biological and chemical warfare. This is extremely important to me because Suffield is next to my riding. I have endeavoured to learn as much as I can because individuals from councils have come to me requesting information about what is happening in Suffield.

For the *Citizen* article Ms. Harrington interviewed John Leggat, assistant deputy minister of science and technology in the Department of National Defence who said "It will be up to municipalities to identify key people and their teams who would need this kind of training".

This would appear to be a directive from the government. However it is like our national sex offender registry. The government has accepted it will do it but never gets around to it. Suffield was chosen for the site because it is a Canadian centre of expertise in chemical and biological weapons. Construction is supposed to start next year.

Ms. Harrington reports in the *Citizen* article that "The centre will also serve as a resource library for scientists to advise emergency crews who are first on the scene of a biological, chemical or radiological attack".

●(1215)

Currently Canada has only one military response team trained for those types of attacks and it is based here at CFB Borden in Ontario. However it takes eight hours for the military to leave the base or respond to an attack. That means it could take 24 hours for such a group to arrive if there was an attack in British Columbia.

Again, we have yet to confirm through the government the building of these counterterrorism centres but we certainly do support it. This is the party, the Canadian Alliance, that two days after we reconvened the House, recognized the need for anti-terrorism legislation and we brought forward the supply day motion to come up with anti-terrorist legislation.

Supply

We implore the government to consider more training facilities, more national security, putting the dollars that are needed back into the security forces that the Canadian public want and demand.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague's remarks with interest. I know he has a specific interest as well in domestic policing.

We know that currently the Canadian Police Association and the Ontario Police Association are on the Hill participating in their annual lobby day. One of their great concerns, as is a concern of my friend, is that the Canadian government, the current Liberal administration, is not doing enough to protect Canadian citizens after the fact, after police have done their good work, apprehended a criminal, the criminal has had the benefit of due process and has been incarcerated. There is a real concern on the part of the police that we do more to ensure that we take every precaution before releasing an individual back on the street.

I would also like to ask him about his personal position and his party's position with regard to the disbanding of the ports police by the Liberal government in 1997. The specialized service provided by ports police looked at every individual case with a view to prevention as opposed to simply apprehending, as is often the case unfortunately with federal, provincial and municipal police. They tend to be more reactive as opposed to putting the emphasis on being preventive. That is no ill-reflection on them. It is merely the reality and the limitations placed on them by resources, which is another element of this equation. They have been forced to do more with less because of government cutbacks. The priority that municipal, provincial and federal police forces put on the ports is an additional responsibility, that is it is an add-on to what they are currently encumbered and mandated to respond to.

Would my friend mind responding to that?

• (1220)

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Madam Speaker, yes, we in our party believe we need a stronger commitment to our national police forces. We need to see a government that is in power, in place and ready to show that it is committed to maintaining the peace. That begins when the police officers do their jobs and take into custody those who have been charged with perhaps terrorist activities. We need a penal system which does not have a revolving door on the front of the institution where we can move them in and move them out as quickly as we can.

Some of the quick answers to the question that the hon. member brought forward would be the elimination of section 745 of the criminal code, the faint hope clause. If a terrorist is found guilty of first degree murder and is incarcerated, we want to ensure that the terrorist will be in prison for a minimum of 25 years and not be given any glimmer of hope after 15, 16 or 17 years.

As long as we are talking about prison, we want to be very sure that we are not housing them in prisons like club fed. We have seen this at William Head where there are cop killers right now.

We also want to see statutory release. There is a whole gamut of issues that the Canadian Alliance has continuously brought forward to bring justice back into the legal system, to bring justice into a system that sadly and sorely lacks. We want to ensure that the police

force in this country, the RCMP, which is the frontline of defence against terrorist activity, receives proper and adequate resources.

We even heard the Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General today throw out figures which have been thrown out continually. Big figures have been announced time after time, but then we find out they are stretched out over six years.

We want to see a commitment with the cheque book to our police force, to CSIS and to all those. The amounts that have been given by the government show that there is no commitment: \$200 million for the police; some \$300 million for CSIS; \$200 million for the RCMP; and \$700 million against the gun owners of this country.

With regard to the ports police, we believe that whichever police establishment defends our ports and our port regions has to have access to the resources they need, whether the ports police, the RCMP or whomever. However we cannot continue to pull forces away, allocate them to a different areas and expect what they were involved in before to continue as before.

We need to see those forces at ports of entry with the proper resources to adequately defend our ports.

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to this motion today. I would not limit the implementation of the national security policy to just ports of entry, ports police or police or CSIS or that sort of thing. I would include in the implementation of a national security policy such things as: ports police; the border crossings themselves; the prison issue, as my colleague has talked about; the issue of how to deal with terrorists in the country; and the issue of drugs in the country. The courts of our land, the parole system, the RCMP and CSIS are all national security.

I agree with the PCs who put this motion forward today that we do need an overall guiding policy. It does not have to get into the detailed operations of any one of those items, but it should lay out the general terms and conditions upon which we in our country will operate in terms of national security.

For instance, Samir Mohamed is a good example. One might say that is under the immigration law. It is and it is not. It seems there is no guiding philosophy on an issue such as Samir Mohamed. This fellow is a terrorist. He was pinpointed as a terrorist by one of his colleagues in giving state's evidence, Ahmed Ressam, who was on his way to bomb the L.A. airport and got caught going through Peace Arch Crossing.

Samir Mohamed tried to get into Germany, which deported him immediately. He tried to get into Britain and he was thrown out. In 1997 he came to Canada. We said he was not a legitimate refugee but he could stay and so he stayed from 1997 onward. He undertook fundraising for terrorism while in Canada. He was involved in distributing guns in Canada.

Then he reapplied for refugee status last year. Meanwhile, after September 11, the Americans said they wanted him and asked Canada to extradite him from British Columbia to Washington or wherever he was to be held. Canada said it had to have an extradition hearing for him. The hearing was held, which I was at, but then it was delayed.

I would like, Madam Speaker, to seek unanimous consent of the House to pass at all stages Bill C-333, an act to establish and maintain a national registry of sex offenders to protect the children and communities of Canada, first read in the House April 4, 2001. The reason I ask for it is because of the disgusting attendance in the House by the Liberals. I will be doing so as long as they keep up this kind of attendance.

• (1225)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Randy White: Madam Speaker, let it be known that the Liberals should be on their toes when they have this kind of disgusting attendance in the House that—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The hon. member has been a member of the House since 1993. I believe he is aware of the rule that we do not mention the presence or absence of members in the House, although the hon. member does have other options if he wishes to have attendance in the House.

Mr. Randy White: Madam Speaker, I will now get back to Samir Mohamed after that brief interruption. Samir Mohamed is wanted on an extradition order by the Americans. Meanwhile, this fellow has had yet another extradition hearing which has been put off again until next September. The Americans have said “Wait a minute. This guy is a terrorist. He is in your country. You know he is a terrorist, but you will not send him out”.

This is one of the underlying themes of why I would agree with implementing a national security policy. Surely somebody in the government must be able to say it is the government's overall ideal, its overall objective to ensure issues of national security are dealt with.

This guy is a colleague of another individual who was going to blow up the LA airport and he is still in our country being protected by lawyers and the system through extradition hearings. I would bet my bottom dollar this guy will still be here in five years.

Does the government not care about issues like that? Does the government not have a theme upon which it works? Could it not introduce some kind of national security concept that would not allow this fellow to be here? Not only is this guy a risk to Canada, but the Americans want him in relation to terrorist activities.

As another example, a young fellow from Laos, a non-Canadian, was put in prison because he was involved in beating a young man to death with a baseball bat. While in prison he applied for refugee status to stay in Canada and he got it. After a 15 minute hearing he got it. Is there nobody in government who works on a national security theme and thinks that should not happen? After he has done

Supply

his time, does the government not think he should be kicked out? That is why it is necessary to have a national security theme.

Madam Speaker, in the best interests of the House, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to pass at all stages Bill C-333, an act to establish and maintain a national registry of sex offenders.

• (1230)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Members have heard the hon. member's request. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Randy White: Madam Speaker, somebody watching this might think I am wasting time, but the reason I asked for unanimous consent to implement a sex offender registry is that we have been trying to get the government to do it for a number of years and it has not. The only way to get it done in the House is to ask for unanimous consent when nobody is around because everyone in opposition seems to agree with it. When they are absent from the other side, that is the best thing to do.

Mr. Joseph Volpe: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. You are well aware, Madam Speaker, of the procedures in the House and some of the protocols about attendance and absenteeism, et cetera and the pressures on all members of parliament for their attendance within the House. I find it troublesome that the member who is speaking would draw the attention of members and all viewers to the absence of some of our members and would berate us while he in fact is only accompanied by one member of his party.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I believe I have already mentioned it to him, but I will also say to the hon. member not to do the same thing in the opposite direction.

Mr. Randy White: Madam Speaker, there is a lot of difference being in opposition and being in government and being vacant in the House.

I support the implementation of a national security policy which includes a lot of things. It includes a philosophy of not retaining known terrorists. It includes a cleanup of our prison system. It includes trying to clean up our country's drug problem. None of these issues has been adequately dealt with by the government.

• (1235)

Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, PC/DR): Madam Speaker, in his speech my colleague highlighted some unbelievable examples of the failure of the government in terms of national security.

His riding borders the United States. It is not far from my riding. The ridings of my colleague from South Surrey—White Rock—Langley and my colleague from Fraser Valley also are very close to the U.S. border.

A few years ago I went on a ride with the RCMP. My colleague has done similar things as well. It is unbelievable that there are only four RCMP officers allocated to cover the entire border from White Rock on the west coast of British Columbia to the Alberta border. There are four police officers to cover that entire area.

Supply

How is it that we can have a secure border when the resources are not allocated to that very important task on which the Liberal government is failing to deliver? How is that possible?

Because of those absences of responsibility by the government in patrolling our borders, there is a free flow of people, weapons and drugs across our unprotected border. How is it possible that the government could defend that kind of inaction?

Mr. Randy White: Madam Speaker, we do live on the border and it is impossible. It is a philosophy that kind of escapes me from a government's point of view.

In my riding there are two formal border crossings but between them lie miles and miles of woods and fields. About 10 minutes from my house there is a little ditch and a bunch of trails going across the border. One of them is called the Ho Chi Minh trail. At night the police sit and watch and try to apprehend people, when they can find them, transferring marijuana south for cocaine in return, transferring people south for money and guns in return, transferring alcohol in return for money, and on and on it goes.

About six members of the armed forces are asked to look after that whole area. Those six people work shifts. The problem is that the bad guys do not operate from nine to five. They usually operate at two, three and four in the morning.

It is impossible to watch the whole border. The traffic flows freely. I would be happy to show anyone the beaten down paths.

There is a lack of a philosophy and a lack of an overall concept of national security. Anyone who thinks this does not happen on a daily basis is kidding themselves. Drugs in, money out; marijuana down, cocaine back.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC/DR): Madam Speaker, does the hon. member agree that what is needed is more infrastructure?

Not only is it needed at border crossings but I would suggest the same applies in many instances to the ports where there is entry from the water. Part of the recommendation coming from the other place included references to things like closed circuit cameras and fencing.

Similarly is there not more that can be done in terms of prevention and background searches? I am speaking in particular about having a screening system in place where individuals might be identified, particularly when container ships come into port. Could there not be an effort made to co-ordinate those entities coming into the country and would this not also tie into the problem of information sharing? As we all know, part of the overall picture of which my colleague speaks is in terms of information sharing between CSIS and the RCMP, but I would suggest it also includes immigration, customs and other countries.

• (1240)

Mr. Randy White: Madam Speaker, there is no question that there needs to be more communication on these matters. I do not think we are going to get it in terms of systems unless there is a change in philosophy.

For goodness sake, we are still dealing with a government that has given a passport to a dangerous sex offender in a prison in my area. What does the government think this dangerous sex offender is

going to do with a passport while in prison? He walks down to Washington state, he does some kids and he comes back into Canada, escaping. That is a philosophical problem in this country.

I worry about some of the fundamental problems that are not being addressed. To ask for some sophistication from the government is a high expectation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, first I would like to advise the House that I am pleased to share my time with my hon. colleague, the member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel. I would also like to add that I will not be touching on the discussions that took place this morning regarding procedural issues, as this was debated for one hour. In my opinion, the Speaker of the House of Commons has quite a hot potato to deal with. It will be interesting now to see how he will get rid of it.

There has been much debate about the proposal before us. As far as we are concerned, there is a problem with the wording of the motion. The comments made by my colleague from Langley—Abbotsford only serve to demonstrate this fact. He was already quite happy to broaden the scope of this motion, particularly when it comes to implementing a national security policy.

Obviously the motion refers to areas where we agree that actions must be taken, whether it be at ports, borders—I will comment on this briefly—and in particular, the relevance of Parliament in these matters. However, when it comes to a national security policy, this is quite different in scope, and this scope is interpreted in almost individual terms. Everyone has their own ideas about where action should be taken. As I mentioned, my colleague from Langley—Abbotsford certainly does, and this is what concerns us.

Yesterday we remembered the events of September 11; it was six months ago to the day. Immediately after the events, the Bloc Québécois took a very responsible attitude by telling the government, “We will support you”. This was done in a general manner. We said, “We would not, however, accept too many restrictions on the freedoms of Quebecers and Canadians, because if this were to occur, if we get to the point where we are violating freedoms, the terrorists will have won”.

So when the government introduced the first bills in response, we mostly supported them at first and second reading. However, we reached the point where we felt that the government crossed the line that must not be crossed, the line that violated the rights and freedoms of Quebecers and Canadians.

As an example, there is Bill C-36, the famous anti-terrorism bill. There are all sorts of things concerning human rights, the protection of privacy and access to information, where, in our opinion, people's rights were trampled on.

Consequently, we wanted to put forward important clauses ensuring that there would be a time limit. Everybody remembers the “sunset clause”; it was said that there ought to be a review after three years. Unfortunately, the government did not listen to us. It brought in a so-called sunset clause, which is not really one. It was made meaningless because it applies only to two things: detention and another concept that is minor to us. The government should have done more, in our opinion.

The same thing applies to the bill's definition of terrorist activity. Terrorist activity was very broadly defined, and that concerned us, because we believe that anyone could be considered a terrorist, even a person who throws a rock at a police officer during a demonstration. Some Liberal members had stretched the concept to such an extent. We believed that it was going too far. So we voted against the bill at third reading.

It is the same thing with Bill C-42, the infamous omnibus bill that amended 20 pieces of legislation. We had a lot to say about military security zones, because we know what this means. The War Measures Act had a terrible impact on Quebecers, and we do not want any bill to give the government the go ahead to inflict such hardship on the public again.

So, Bill C-42, the omnibus bill amending 20 pieces of legislation, is just another example I wanted to give concerning military security zones. We were also afraid that many other provisions in that bill would violate the rights and freedoms of Quebecers and Canadians.

The motion brought forward by our friends from the PC/DR Coalition is not totally negative. I am also concerned about the security at our ports and harbours. In fact, a Senate committee has released an excellent report describing their concerns about this issue. I think security in this area should be reinforced.

Will voting on this motion, as it stands today, automatically lead to more severe measures? I am not sure about that. I have more bad than good to say about this motion. However, I wish to remain positive and tell my friends from the PC/DR Coalition that they did raise some very interesting issues. However, we still have problems with the way the motion was drafted.

•(1245)

The motion also mentions borders. Only yesterday, I gave an interview to TVA because, in my region, we are very concerned. My riding borders on Vermont and the State of New York.

We have learned that, after a very arbitrary test, a number of regular customs officers who had always received excellent appraisal reports were let go and replaced by students. I want it known that I have nothing against the students, but the government seems to be taking a penny wise and pound foolish approach right now, to the detriment of security.

Under the legislation, the people laid off had been given increased powers; they could use pepper spray and other means to stop terrorists. They could use handcuffs or a baton, which the students cannot. By replacing these customs officers with students, the government is saving approximately \$10 per person an hour because they were paid \$20 an hour. When security is ignored, there is a problem. That is the point raised in our colleague's motion. But unfortunately I do not think that the positive aspects are enough to offset the problems with the motion's wording.

It is the same when it comes to parliament's relevance. It is very clever to include it in the motion because, in fact, Bloc Quebecois members have been saying that the government is not transparent enough. Furthermore, only yesterday, I told a *Journal de Montréal* journalist that I had learned more in a three hour briefing session with the Americans in Tampa Bay last month than during the entire period following the September 11 attacks.

Supply

The Americans assembled parliamentarians, explained to them where the special force was, how many were taking part in it, and what operations were next. We do not have that here. Parliament is kept in the dark. When I say parliament, I do not mean the cabinet; I mean opposition members and Liberal backbenchers. They do not know what is going on, except when they attend a briefing such as that given by the National Defence chief of staff last week, at which he explained in very vague terms what is happening.

This is deplorable. Things have gotten to the point that when the Minister of National Defence announces that he is going to send troops somewhere, we are told: "The troops will be leaving tomorrow, but tomorrow night you will have a chance to discuss this in the House because we are going to hold a take-note debate at that time". This is a new label for empty debating with no opportunity to vote.

It seems to me that, when issues as important as deploying troops are concerned, it is essential for Parliament to be informed, for them to be fully debated, and for members to have the opportunity to vote.

I was elected as an MP in order to speak and to advance my views. Doing so, however, does not just mean speaking out. We also need to be able to rise and announce how we will be voting on behalf of our constituents. This is a rarity, particularly in connection with security matters.

As far as the government is concerned, their culture is still one of secrecy. The Minister of National Defence, along with a small group, has given himself the exclusive right to decide on security, and then to advise us of the decision. We are told after the decision has been made "If you do not like it, you can express your views in a debate that will not lead anywhere because there will be no vote".

I find our colleague's motion to be a skillful one, but unfortunately as I have said, it is not worded sufficiently clearly as far as implementation of a national policy is concerned, one which underlies all manner of bills that go far beyond this, such as C-36 and C-42. Unfortunately, I must inform my colleagues that we will have to find other ways of solving these problems.

This motion is not going to be the way to do it, because it implies a number of negative impacts as far as restricting the freedoms of Canadians and Quebecers is concerned.

•(1250)

[English]

Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, PC/DR): Madam Speaker, I hope that my colleague's reservations would not hinder him from supporting the motion as it is worded. I think he, all members of the opposition, many backbenchers and perhaps members of the government, would agree that the government has failed to implement a national security policy to address the broad range of security issues. Certainly we could agree on that.

Supply

We might have disagreements as to the implementation of such a policy. In the motion, coalition members are stating first and foremost that the government has failed to implement a far-reaching national security policy.

I hope that the member would be able to focus on that part of the motion and then work within the framework to encourage the government to address how we get to solving those problems in parliament. The second part of the motion deals with those relevant issues of addressing security and other important issues here in the House so that members, regardless of their party and region they represent, are able to have that debate and have an opportunity to influence government policy. Would he agree with me on that point?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand: Madam Speaker, precisely, this may be where the whole problem lies. The hon. member who just spoke cannot give me the exact definition of a national security policy. Since he cannot provide that definition, this means that all members in this House present their party's view or their collective view.

Earlier, I mentioned that the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford spoke at length on the registry of sexual offenders. Another one will deal at length on another issue, while another yet will say that Bill C-36 or Bill C-42, which I tried to define earlier, did not go far enough. As for us, we say that the government went too far.

Until we have a definition of security policy, it is hard for us to give our support. I could be asked “Do you agree to change the national defence policy?” This is not in the motion, but I could include it, because it is indeed a security policy. I would say “Yes, I agree on a new white paper, because the existing national defence white paper is based on the 1994 white paper”. We are now in 2002 and the situation has evolved extremely quickly, as evidenced by the events of September 11. We could never have imagined what happened. Ours was a typical national defence strategy, and it was based on previous wars.

If the motion said that, I would support it. But we do not know what it says. I could also interpret it and say “The Minister of Foreign Affairs should also align his policy with that of national defence, so as to know how to intervene in various existing conflicts”. This is my personal interpretation, based on a part of the motion that is vague enough to allow everyone to give it their own interpretation.

Indeed, the problem is that we cannot support such a broad interpretation. The motion should be much more specific. Again, this is why we cannot support it.

• (1255)

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the member for Saint-Jean, for having presented most of the Bloc Québécois' position on the question of freedom and security. My colleague is absolutely right.

The great challenge for democratic society, following the events of September 11, is to try to protect our values and freedoms while guaranteeing security throughout the country and Quebec, as far as we are concerned. That was the great challenge.

The proposal moved by the Conservative Party and the coalition is to implement a national security policy.

If we look at what the government has on the shelf, Bill C-42, which my colleague from Saint-Jean spoke to so well, we see that this is a bill that violates our rights and freedoms, as far as we are concerned. When a bill allows the federal government to create military security zones without even asking the provinces for authorization, then it is a violation of the rights and freedoms of the citizens of these provinces and of Quebecers, who are our chief concern.

When ministers are allowed to declare special zones of intervention in areas comes under their departments' responsibilities—there are more than 12 ministers who could order this type of zone—and once an order is given, it need not meet the requirements of the Privy Council when regulations are passed, in other words, to test if it conforms to the charter of rights and freedoms, rights are being violated. So, ministers are allowed to issue orders which may contravene the charter, which would come into effect immediately and which could later be validated or invalidated depending on the charter of rights and freedoms. Many powers are being given to authorities and to ministers without the authorization of this House and without the authorization of the Privy Council, and at the same time, powers are being given to officials who advise the ministers. We saw what happened with the Minister of Health, who authorized expenses that breached the Patent Act.

This is the difficult reality, respecting individual rights and providing security at the same time. This is not clear in the proposal moved by the Conservative Party and the coalition.

We must remember—and this will allow me to get into one of the parts of their interventions, which is enhanced security in Canada's ports and harbours—and never forget that, in 1987, it was the Progressive Conservative Party that deregulated transportation throughout Canada. It is this party that entrusted port or airport authorities with the responsibility of managing security. It decided to entrust the private sector with this responsibility and thus ensured that the government would no longer provide money for security.

The Liberal government is using the same strategy. It talked about airline security. It decided to invest \$2.2 billion over five years, but it chose once again to impose on users a tax of \$12, or \$24 for a return ticket. This tax has been condemned by all the travel associations throughout Canadian regions and by the whole airline industry. However, this is the strategy that the Conservatives had used at the time.

And we are supposed to believe them now? They want a new policy on security, but they never talk about the fact that it will take public money to really be able to have an integrated policy.

Nowadays, they rely on the famous Senate report. The Senate report was based on a 1996 analysis. They show percentages of port workers who allegedly have criminal records. However, when we look into this, we see that unions do not maintain a file on criminal records, nor does the employer.

So there is no structure in place to keep track of port workers' criminal records. The simple reason is that these people are those who are carrying out trans-shipment; they are not in charge of security. A Senate report informed us last week that there are alleged criminals among workers, while no port worker has been accused of trafficking or whatever in the last 20 years.

• (1300)

Once again, they are attacking workers. However, the great majority of them, in fact almost all of them, are not responsible for the situation. They are guilty of nothing at all. No port worker has been accused of traffic in the last 20 years. Today, the Senate is saying, "There is a lot of corruption, infiltration on the part of those who work in ports, the stevedores, those who do transshipments, but who are not in charge of security".

Are we to blame the employees for a failure that began in 1987 under the Tories? That is what they have done. After the events of September 11, they accused the employees, those men and women who work in airports, of not having done their job properly. For decades now, year after year, there have been cuts to security services. The private companies was made to pay for that, and it turned to the lowest bidder. Well, we got what we paid for. That is the reality.

Nothing in the Progressive Conservative Party's proposal says that the government should invest some considerable amount of money, that it should increase the number of security workers in ports and airports. We should give them decent salaries and ongoing training.

There most certainly was no ISO security program for employees involved in either port or airport security. They have no ongoing training; there was no on the job training. Thought was given to it after the events of September 11.

This all dates back to 1987, with the beginning of deregulation. The administration of ports and airports was entrusted to the private sector. All the companies that would benefit from these infrastructures had to meet their costs, so obviously they opted for the cheapest, and this had the effect of providing less security. We know what happened as a result.

Today, efforts are being made to remedy this. National security policies are wanted. The Bloc Quebecois says again: if there is a national security policy, it must not encroach on the rights and freedoms so dearly won over the entire course of the history of Canada, and of Quebec in particular.

This is a challenge for a great government, which leads me to conclude that the Liberal Party will never be a great government. It has always governed full speed ahead, but what will always differentiate it from a great government is that it has never been, and will never be, capable of making the right decisions at the right time.

Once again, this is what the motion put forward by the Progressive Conservative Party and the coalition does. As an opposition party, they do not yet know how to move a real motion, which might have resulted in some money for the whole security issue, both in ports and in airports. Port and airport workers could then be given more responsibility, decent pay and appropriate training. It would ensure that all those working in security services would have a chance to

Supply

live in a safe environment, with respect for individual rights and freedoms.

It is with regret that the Bloc Quebecois will be voting against the motion put forward by the Progressive Conservative Party and the coalition. In our view, this motion does not go far enough to protect individual rights and freedoms. Nor does it go far enough with respect to the contribution that should be made by the Government of Canada, which is building up a surplus in the billions.

In answer to the questions asked by the Bloc Quebecois yesterday, the Minister of Finance was unable to forecast the surplus for the period ending three weeks from now. We will see in a few weeks. He refused to answer the question. As we well know, the surplus will be over \$9 billion. This amount, or at least a good portion of it, could have been used for such things as security, thus making it unnecessary to impose a \$12 and a \$24 tax on air travel, which will once again overtax the regions of Quebec and of Canada.

I repeat, when the government wants to discourage people from smoking, it increases tobacco taxes. In this case, it is increasing taxes on air travel. It creates a tax on air travel and thinks that it will encourage people to take the plane.

The Bloc Quebecois will therefore have no choice but to vote against the motion put forward today.

Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC/DR): Madam Speaker, my question is quite simple. My hon. colleague from the Bloc Quebecois knows very well the role municipalities play in security matters. Does he think that municipalities should play a major role in port security for instance?

Does he agree with the Senate committee calling for a public inquiry on security? We have heard claims that some employees have criminal records. Is it true or false, and what percentage are we talking about? Would he agree to a formal public inquiry, sponsored by parliament, to examine the issue of port security?

• (1305)

Mr. Mario Laframboise: Madam Speaker, the issue raised by my colleague is quite relevant. To restore public confidence, we need to set up a new structure for port security personnel. It is wrong to broad-brush everyone working in our ports and airports.

For all those who have to enforce security measures, it would be normal and even acceptable to have the RCMP or CSIS create a committee that would bring together all the various stakeholders, including representatives from municipal, provincial and national police forces, with the consent of the unions involved. I do not think the port and airport workers' unions would disagree with that. They could even attend the committee proceedings. We should not do what the government tried to do yesterday, which is to exclude security personnel from the committee proceedings.

If we can work with the national, municipal, provincial and federal security authorities, with the workers' supervisors, I think we can come up with a policy that would raise the levels of efficiency and probity of security personnel at ports and airports.

*Supply**[English]*

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC/DR): Madam Speaker, just a supplementary to that question: With respect to the level of security that currently exists, or, one might say, the lack thereof, it became very obvious in the study put forward by the Senate, but other inquiries into the issue of security on the ports revealed that many private security companies, port authorities, stevedores and, as he mentioned, unions, had a disproportionately high number of employees with criminal records. That is not to suggest that anybody who has a criminal record is a security threat. However, it certainly highlights the need for a certain standard to be applied, and I would suggest nationally.

The concern here was that many of those individuals might also be susceptible to intimidation because their criminal records could be used against them or subsequently they may have had past affiliations with organized crime. I know that in the port of Montreal this is particularly acute, as we have seen in other ports as well, including those in my home province of Nova Scotia.

I would suggest that municipal police and the RCMP can and do play an active role in background checks, but does my colleague agree that a national standard has to be put in place with respect to background checks to ensure that for those who are working on the ports, whether they be in that capacity for the port authority or for the company, there has to be some standard applied to ensure that those individuals, because of their past affiliation with criminal activity and their links to organized crime, are not vulnerable either to being brought into the process of theft on the port or to becoming complicit and simply being paid not to be at a certain point at a certain time?

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Laframboise: Madam Speaker, I will repeat what I said earlier.

We must always keep in mind that, at ports and airports, there are people responsible for security and then there are people who do other jobs. If the hon. member is asking whether we should ensure that the employees responsible for security are honest and do not have a criminal record, I say that there should be a committee or a national standard to ensure that all those involved in security—we know what the QPP, RCMP and other police officers must go through—at ports and airports should also be required to show that they have a perfect record.

We must always keep in mind what these men and women do. Therefore, it would be normal, in the case of those who are responsible for security, to have such a process, and we would agree with that.

● (1310)

[English]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on behalf of the NDP caucus today.

I begin by saying, with respect to the controversy earlier today about whether or not this motion by the Conservative Party should be votable, that one wonders whether or not, as someone who contests whether or not the motion should be votable, we will in fact actually vote.

However the matter before us is the motion and, I would say, without prejudice to whether or not we should be voting on it, that the motion is far too general to elicit the kind of support that I think perhaps the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough might have been looking for from all opposition parties.

While there are certainly things for which we would want to be critical of the government and criticisms that we might well share with the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, there might be other criticisms that we do not share. The member cannot simply ask us to sign on to a general condemnation of the government for its failure to implement a national security policy to address the broad range of security issues when we do not know the list of issues that the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough wants the government to address. I realize that he outlined some of those things in his speech but the motion, as it reads and if it were to be passed or, for that matter, approved by any party or individual, would be open to interpretations.

For instance, the NDP was critical of the government, not for its failure to implement a particular security policy when it came to anti-terrorism legislation but for, in our judgment, going too far when it came to anti-terrorism legislation. Therefore it would be difficult for us to support the motion because it seems to imply that, with respect to a broad range of issues having to do with security, the government has not gone far enough.

When Bill C-36, the anti-terrorism legislation, was before the House, one of our criticisms was that we felt the government had come too far. We also felt that way with respect to Bill C-35 and we feel that way with respect to Bill C-42, which now seems to be on the back burner but which is nevertheless still on the order paper. Is it the position of the Progressive Conservative Party that Bill C-42 is part of the government's failure, that it does not go far enough?

These are all the kinds of interpretations that could be attached to support this particular motion because it is in fact so general. It is one of the reasons why I do not see how we could support this particular motion as it stands.

Because it has come up in debate, is the motion intended to refer in some codified way to the Senate report on security? If that is the case, perhaps a motion saying that we adopt the recommendations of the recent Senate committee on security would have been in order. At least we then could have debated what was in that particular report.

Having listened to the debate a bit today, it seemed to me from time to time that we were vicariously debating the report that was brought forward in the Senate with respect to security. The allusion in the motion to ports of entry and borders, for instance, is clearly a reference to a subject matter of concern that the Senate committee report addressed itself to.

Having said that, with respect to ports and security matters having to do with ports, I would like to put on the record once again that the NDP felt at the time and feels still that the privatization of ports and the elimination of the national harbour police were serious mistakes.

Supply

•(1315)

Addressing whatever security concerns there may be with respect to our ports would be to reinstitute a police force dedicated to port security, instead of having the municipal police and the RCMP trying to do a job that in our judgment should be done by a police force dedicated to that particular purpose.

To me, it always makes sense to have people who are vocationally attached to a particular task. I think that is the way the members of the national harbour police worked when they were in existence. They were not municipal police who might be looking after port security this year, looking after the vice squad next year and looking after something else the next year. Their job was port security and they were there for the long haul.

However it has become a fad in the last 10 to 20 years to do away with dedicated services of any kind and to turn everything over to—I am not sure what to call it, but nobody ever does anything for the long haul any more. They are just in there for the duration of a contract when things are privatized, or in the case of what we are talking about here in terms of ports police, we do not have a police force dedicated to port security but we have a number of police officers in various police forces who are assigned from time to time to port security. This is not a criticism of them. They are put in a very difficult position and, as the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough and others have said and quite rightly, are often asked to do the job without adequate resources.

We cannot have security on the cheap. Yet in some ways we are reaping now what was sown over the last 10, 15, 20 years whereby governments, through various public policy initiatives, generally in the way of deregulation, privatization, contracting out and doing away with things that were directly funded by government, tried to do things on the cheap that they used to do in a dedicated way and they used to do by way of paying whatever it cost to get the job done and to have the job done well.

Now the chickens are coming home to roost. It was fine as long as, to put the obvious, everything was fine, but now that things are not fine we find that there are all kinds of holes in the system.

It will not do, while we are alluding to the Senate report, to impugn the integrity of a lot of people who work at the ports.

There seems to be an underlying theme in the Senate report that is of concern to us and I think of concern to many others that somehow its the workers in the ports who are the problem.

A very good article in the *Province* by Christina Montgomery talks about some of the things wrong with the Senate report. She highlights, for instance, the disbandment of the ports police which I have already mentioned. She also takes issue with the way in which the report implies that somehow its the unions that are at fault for whatever security problems there may be at our ports. I would like to put that on the record.

Returning to the matter of resources, the fact is that a lot of our ports are underpoliced. Whether we return to a national harbour police, a national ports police or however we do it, we will need a lot more resources at our ports, along the borders. Others have spoken

of the longest undefended border. It is undefended and that is part of the problem. It is undefended from a lot of things.

I do not, and I do not think anybody does, want to see the border become a difficult place for ordinary Canadians and Americans to go back and forth and for commerce to transpire. The fact is that we have been under-resourcing our security personnel wherever we find them, whether we find them at customs, in the ports, in the RCMP or wherever Canadians are called upon to engage in security tasks for the public there has been a pattern of underfunding and under-resourcing these tasks for a long time and it is coming home to roost.

•(1320)

If the government is serious about security, I would urge it to get serious about funding security. Its only major initiative so far, which I think was wrong, has been to bring in the anti-terrorism legislation which I think, in some respects, goes beyond targeting terrorists to making it possible to make life miserable for legitimate, democratic dissent in this country.

A couple of weeks ago I had an opportunity to meet at a forum with the United Steelworkers of America which has many thousands of members in the security industry. The United Steelworkers were saying to the Deputy Prime Minister, who is in charge of security, that they wanted to sit down and talk about the security industry and talk about national standards for training, certification and pay.

One of the problems in the security industry, particularly as it pertains to the private security industry which guards much of our infrastructure, which we are now told we should be worried about in terms of possible terrorist attacks, is that a lot of that infrastructure is provided on a private for profit basis. It is also not necessarily the best kind of security that we could ask for. People in the security industry know that. They would like to see higher standards, better training and the kind of pay that would create in that industry people who would be dedicated to that particular task. If they were paid well enough they would stay at it and do the job properly. They would not feel that they had to move on because of an offer of a better paying job somewhere else.

All these things are on our mind as we reflect upon the Tory motion that we have here today. We cannot support the motion as it is. We reiterate our contention that part of the solution for addressing the security problems at our ports is the reintroduction of a dedicated national harbours or ports police.

We agree with others who say that the resources are a great part of the problem and that there is a need for the government to make sure that our police and security forces, in the broadest possible sense of the word, have the resources to do the job that they are being asked to do.

The NDP cannot support the motion because we find it to be too general. We do not want to condemn the government holus-bolus or support the government holus-bolus on this. It has done some things right and some things wrong. Simply to have a motion which condemns the government without saying what it is that is being condemned for does not provide the opportunity for the kind of detailed debate that we would like to have in the House.

Supply

I remind hon. members that even though they might not have supported the NDP motion during the week before we broke, there were 12 things that we thought the government should be doing. Members could get up and disagree with those 12 things but they knew what we were talking about. We do not have a similar kind of motion before us here today.

With respect to the final phrase in the motion calling “on the government to reassert Parliament's relevance in these and other public policy issues”, I am not entirely sure what the member means here. If this is a general call for parliamentary reform, which would restore parliament's relevance in these and other public issues, of course we support that. I would say that as an individual member of parliament I have supported this kind of effort all the time I have been here.

However I am not sure whether this final phrase was supposed to entice people to vote for the rest of the motion, in spite of the fact that it had so little content, out of our love for parliamentary reform, or what effect it was supposed to have on us. In any event, we certainly would like to see parliament's relevance reasserted in these and other public policy issues.

• (1325)

With all due respect to the members of the PC/DRC coalition who are in the House now, and I know none of them were here when what I am about to speak of happened. One of the reasons why parliament suffers from a lack of relevance in these and other public policy issues is because of what was done to parliament between 1984 and 1993 when the Conservatives were in power.

Much of what we now experience in opposition, the frustration and powerlessness, the feeling of being left out of decisions taken in the Prime Minister's Office and elsewhere, a lot of these trends, if not begun, were solidified and consolidated under the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party between 1984 and 1993.

What is of course tragic, ironic and, in the final analysis, despicable is that the party that in its days as official opposition that opposed these measures has now been in power for nine years and has done absolutely nothing to undo the damage that it so loudly protested at that time.

I certainly join with members of the PC/DRC in calling once again on another government, in another time, in the same place, to reassert parliament's relevance in these and other public policy issues.

Mr. John O'Reilly (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I always listen with great interest to my colleague from Winnipeg—Transcona. He always adds a lot to the debate in the depth and wisdom that he has.

We are in a period where the opposition is in disarray. It cannot seem to get its act together, and leadership contests may be interfering with it. This type of motion by the PC/DR coalition is probably one of the failures of the opposition because it is so broad that one could actually get up and talk on almost anything, as the member so rightly said.

When will we talk about addressing security issues? No one, to my knowledge, other than perhaps the member for Saint-Jean, has

indicated anything about defence. This is where a lot of our responses to the terrorist activities are taking place.

We should be very proud of our response. We were one of the first nations to commit to the American coalition. We committed five ships, four transport aircraft, two patrol aircraft, an element of JTF2, a battle group and a fifth ship, the HMCS *Ottawa*, currently en route to the Arabian Sea, and more than 2,500 men and women from the Canadian forces deployed in Operation Apollo.

We are putting our deeds into action. The government has made it clear that Canada will stand with its allies in fighting terrorism. We are making progress in that mission to identify and defend against terrorists. We are degrading their network, bringing them to justice, and working to improve humanitarian situations that exist in Afghanistan.

Could the hon. member take some time to comment on that because that is something that all Canadians want to know about and all Canadians are very proud of.

Although there was no military involvement in the terrorism, it was a matter of hijacking aircraft and crashing them into buildings that set it off, it was an act of terrorism. In response to that, a lot of the good work that is being done by Canada is being done outside of Canada. Our military involvement is something that we should be proud of. I wonder if the member could comment on that.

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Madam Speaker, first of all I take issue with the general description of the opposition that the hon. member offered, that the opposition is in disarray. It may be that some opposition parties are in disarray. We may be small but we are not in disarray. I ask that the hon. member not attribute characteristics which are obvious in some other opposition parties to all opposition parties. It is a generalization that is unwarranted in the circumstances. However, I agree, as he suggested, that this motion in its generality may reflect some form of disarray in the caucus from which it originated.

The hon. member alluded to what Canada is doing to fight terrorism in the military sense in participating in the American led international coalition in Afghanistan against Al-Qaïda and the Taliban. The member knows how we feel about this. I am not sure why he wants to turn the debate, which is about national security, into a debate on Canada's involvement in that particular coalition.

In spite of whatever disagreements we might have in the House about how we came to be involved and about the terms and conditions of our involvement, that all of us are proud of the dedication, the work and the courage of Canadian men and women in the Canadian Armed Forces who have been asked to do a particular job by their government and from all reports are doing it well. We wish them well and we wish them all home safe. Particularly as somebody from Winnipeg, where members of the PPCLI recently deployed for Afghanistan, I am very mindful of all the families in Winnipeg and friends who are concerned about their loved ones who have been sent off into a very dangerous situation.

I am not sure if this is what the member was looking for. We can certainly disagree in this place whether certain things should take place, whether certain decisions should be taken and under what auspices they should happen. Certainly there is a disagreement between us and the government as to the extent that things should happen under the auspices of the United Nations and not simply under the auspices of the White House.

This is a disagreement which may extend in the coming weeks and months if the government decides to back an American action against Iraq without the approval of the United Nations security council or without engaging the United Nations on it, but it does not take away in any way from the respect and the view that we have of Canadian men and women who are involved in the Canadian Armed Forces and doing what their government is asking them to do.

● (1330)

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC/DR): Madam Speaker, prior to six months ago, whenever members would stand in the House to call on the government for increased security and better national defence, they were told that they were alarmists. That is what we were if we asked for anything for our defence. We were told in no uncertain terms that in the post-cold war world there was no need for the kinds of precautions we were advocating. How wrong they were.

Only six months ago we were shown in the cruellest fashion imaginable the cost of not being diligent. The hon. member who just spoke asked about our defence and whether or not it has the equipment it needs to do the job for security. I can tell the House that we do not have the tools. Our military does not have the tools to look after our harbours at both ends of the country and all across the nation.

The vice admiral has spoken out that he does not have supply ships and he needs them right away. We have been up in the House since 1993, at least I have, asking for replacement of the Sea King helicopters. What has happened to the Sea King helicopters? They are outdated. Some of the pilots have lost their lives. They cannot look after our harbours out there. In Newfoundland they cannot fly out to the 200 mile limit and look after the situation at that end of the country. We know that in B.C. they cannot look after the borders there either. This is a disgrace.

In 1999 I was told that CSIS came to the government and asked for an increase in its budget because it thought there were 350 terrorists in Canada. It needed to hire more people. What did the government do? The government cut its budget and did not give it a penny. What did the government do in the last budget? It turned around and gave CSIS money but not enough money.

I just had the representatives of the Canadian Police Association in my office. They said they and the RCMP need more money. They did not come in for themselves. They said that if Canadians are going to have safety and security in the country then the police must have the tools to do that job.

When I was mayor of Saint John, New Brunswick, I fought tooth and nail to save our port police. When I heard that the government was going to take out the port police I could not believe it was going to happen. Having been the mayor of a port city and now the representative of a port city, I know exactly what is needed for security.

Supply

Police departments, with the cuts they have had because of cuts in the transfer payments to the provinces which are then downloaded onto the municipalities, have had to make cuts. Instead of having men and women looking after the security of the ports, they have a drive-through once or twice a day. That is it for security.

Let me tell the House something. I want Madam Speaker and the rest of my colleagues in the House to know this. Port police must take seven courses. Everyone who becomes a port policeman must take and pass seven courses. Port police are trained in a different manner. I would not say that our local police are not trained, they are, but port police take different courses. They know what to look for when cargo is coming in. They know that there is a possibility that people may be hiding on some of those cargo ships. That was my major concern about our harbour.

Our port police are gone now. Our docks, wharves and waterfronts have become a favourite point of access for drug cartels, smuggling rings and illegal immigrants. There is no question that the minute the port police were gone there were more drugs in the community and in the whole area than ever before.

● (1335)

There was a time, only a century ago, when our ports were the places that people came to when they wanted to build Canada. Now they are used by those who would tear down what has been built. Local law enforcement, the RCMP and even the coast guard have been hit hard and cut back, even the coast guard, and they unable to divert enough resources to replace the first line of defence that was offered by our ports police.

Here we are with our ports police gone and we have severe problems. I am saying that we have to look at where we are going in the future. This is Canada and we should be seeing that our defence people have more money in their budgets. They need it. I say, give them the tools and they will look after us, give the coast guard the tools and money and it will look after us, and put our port police back at every port in Canada. I cannot imagine having a government in Canada that would take out the port police and not even monitor what happens afterward. The government took out the coast guard and did not even monitor what it did. We have people from Newfoundland, people from New Brunswick, people from Nova Scotia and people from B.C. who are saying "You've got to do something here. We have a problem".

When one represents what I represent in my city, and when there is a nuclear power plant, then one has major concerns. We have been monitoring what has been happening even though the government has not. I can tell members that they just have to take a look at the number of people who have come in hidden on the cargo ships. Members just have to take a look at Quebec, which also has concerns. Quebec is worried, as are all our people across the nation.

What happens? The government does absolutely nothing. It did absolutely nothing. Did it put more money in? Did it put back the port police? Did it put more money into defence? Did it put more money into the coast guard? No.

Supply

When I had representatives from the national police association in to see me today, I was really proud of those men when they talked to me because their hearts are in this. They said they were not here just for funding for their own pockets. They said they were here because they are worried about their children and grandchildren, worried about their parents and worried about everyone because of this situation.

We only have to take a look at what happened on September 11, just six months ago. That has not gone away. I have to say that when we look at President Bush and see what is going on in the United States, because there will be more involvement in other countries as well, not just in Afghanistan. When it comes to our military, will we be able to send more troops? These men will be burnt out by the time they come back because of the cutbacks in our military and defence.

We need to take a look at what we are doing. I have children and grandchildren and I want to make sure that their future is here in Canada. I want to make sure they are safe and sound. Just this week I had a fax sent to me by a gentleman who is worried because two of his sons are on one of our frigates going to Afghanistan. There is a policy in the U.S.A. that two brothers cannot go out on a ship because if it is torpedoed the family may lose both sons. Why do we not look at a policy like that, separating the brothers so that one could go on one ship and the other on another ship?

These are concerns. These are the kinds of letters and calls I get every day in my office, steadily, because people know that right now we have problems in Canada like never before. They were never worried before. They did not worry that their two sons were in the navy together, but they are worried now and rightfully so. They should be, because it is not over. We have to find the terrorists and those people who come into our ports who should never, ever be on a cargo ship. We have a lot of work to do.

● (1340)

It is time now for the government to sit down, look in the mirror and ask itself what it has to do to correct this situation, what it has to do to make Canada the safest country in the world, which is what it always was and what we want it to be again. That will only happen when the government starts doing what is right: putting back our port police, putting the money back into defence and putting the money back into the coast guard. We will not give up until we get it.

Mr. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am always delighted to hear the member. I congratulate her for her years of passion for our military and our defence. I am delighted she is in the House continuing to maintain that stance and hopefully she will for a long time.

I want to ask a couple of questions. First, as we know, we have put substantial funds and measures toward security since September 11 in the budget, et cetera, and a number of constituents have written in, saying that this is good but this is enough. I am curious as to what the member tells those constituents.

My second question may be just a clarification because I am not sure I heard her correctly, but it is related to the comment on nuclear power. I gather that the comment is related to security where we have nuclear power sites. If that is the case, as we know, the Minister of Natural Resources earlier in question period announced that several months ago he announced the comprehensive strategy we had in

place for that. I want to make sure the member is aware of that if she is commenting on it. Second, there was a comment that they were monitoring that situation and I am curious as to the details of how that monitoring is being done.

● (1345)

Mrs. Elsie Wayne: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments and questions. I just want to say that when it comes to the budget that just came down for security, I was informed of some things and I will give you an example. We need more RCMP officers. As I have stated, my riding is a port city but there is also a port in Belledune in the centre of my province and another in the northern part of the province. We needed more RCMP officers because of the cutbacks over the years.

I want to ask the hon. member if he knows how many RCMP officers were hired with the money that was put back. Does he know how many officers the RCMP was able to hire? One. Does he know why? Because they have cut back on all the equipment that they needed to do their jobs. Everything was outdated, so they took the money that the government put in the budget for hiring more men in uniform for the RCMP and put it into equipment. We need a whole lot more.

When it comes to nuclear power plants, we have been informed that terrorists have a list of every city in Canada that has a plant and one of them is mine. President Bush, as I am sure the hon. member knows, just in the past month came out with a policy that said no airplanes will fly over any nuclear power plants in the U.S.A. and no ships will be allowed in the vicinity. Ships will not be allowed to sail by. I was asked what I thought about that kind of policy. I have to say I am really worried and concerned when we look at the nuclear power plant and the fishermen in my riding that are out there earning their living. If we say no ships can sail by, or the nuclear power plant is off to the side, then it will create a major problem for fishermen. Also, the largest and most modern privately owned oil refinery in Canada is in my riding and the largest oil tankers in the world come in. Ships would not be able to sail by. It is a very serious situation.

I sat down with the officers and the CEO at the nuclear power plant in Saint John to talk about security. I want to tell the hon. member it is very important that the government makes sure we get our port police back so that those coming in who are looking at the nuclear power plant cannot even get into the harbour. That is the number one issue. If we keep them out of Canada by not allowing them to enter in the first place then we will have safety and security. That will only happen by putting back our port police and putting more money into the RCMP, local police departments and all our security departments.

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, PC/DR): Madam Speaker, the government's obvious omission is the lack of a plan that encompasses all security issues. What we have seen over the past six months is a government that has piecemeal policy and that reacts to situations rather than looking at the whole and having a widespread, overall security plan in place.

Since 1993 we have seen continued reductions not only in our police forces across the country, but in our military, CSIS and anything else that has to do with the security of our country. We have seen an orchestrated reduction of the resources put into those agencies that are responsible for the protection of Canadians.

The response from the government since September 11 and the terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C. has been very piecemeal. The government has been reactive.

I will briefly mention aviation security because I spoke at length about it yesterday. What is this piecemeal reaction to aviation security? The government's response is the implementation of an airport security tax, another tax on Canadians.

The government quite rightly says that Canadian airports had a higher degree of security than American airports had prior to September 11, but we have to wonder when the Canadian government feels it has better security in place yet is charging Canadians five times what the Americans are charging American travellers. Canadian airports already have more equipment and more security measures in place than American airports do. One has to wonder at this reactive policy of the government in response to September 11.

Being from a constituency that has two of the busiest border crossings west of the Windsor-Detroit border crossing, I also have to bring up the piecemeal response the government has to border crossing security measures. The government has been remiss in acknowledging the fact that increased traffic is going across the Canada-U.S. border as a result of the Canada free trade agreement and NAFTA. In the last 10 or 12 years there has been an increase of almost 10% per year in traffic across these borders.

In a trade corridor report that I did for the Canada-U.S. interparliamentary group in May 2000, I recommended that part of the way of dealing with the problems at various port entries was to share responsibilities by having U.S. counterparts in Canadian ports and Canadians in U.S. ports. It is interesting to note that one of the piecemeal responses of the government is to do precisely that two years later. The government reached an agreement with the Americans to have Americans in the Vancouver, Montreal and Halifax ports and Canadians in the Seattle and Newark ports to help with pre-clearance and with fulfilling regulations of both countries when container goods enter the North American continent.

One of the things the government could be proactive in is supporting the concept of a North American security perimeter. This idea frightens the government for some reason. The government seems very unwilling to have Canadians be the leaders in this kind of concept. The piecemeal reaction of just sharing customs agents at a few ports does not quite meet the grade.

• (1350)

The government also has an agreement to extend the NEXUS program, a pilot project at the Sarnia border crossing, to three border crossings in British Columbia. As I mentioned, two of Canada's busiest border crossings are in my riding. I look forward to having the NEXUS program at our Peace Arch, Douglas and Pacific border crossings.

Supply

Again, it is a reactive approach. The government should have a proactive security program that uses the same system at all border crossings in Canada. The system used at border crossings should also be used at airports and marine entry points. We should have a systematic way of recording and monitoring the entry and exit of individuals into our country and onto the North American continent.

This is what the PC/DR coalition proposed on November 1. The government should be proactive. It should be a leader in this kind of program. It should put something on the table that will work efficiently to monitor and control the entry and exit of people into Canada and the United States while allowing pre-cleared individuals and goods to move freely.

We have looked extensively at border management and security measures and have come up with a comprehensive plan to deal with the issue across the country. Our plan includes the establishment of a new ministry. More importantly, it takes into account that whatever happens must be a shared responsibility with our neighbour and partner the United States. We must share information in an efficient manner that is acceptable to both countries.

We were concerned that parliament should be brought into the package. Parliament must be held accountable and responsible. Parliament should make the decisions. Parliament should be relevant to decisions pertaining to security and the protection of Canadians.

We recognize the need to make parliament relevant and bring it into the process. We recognize the need for a parliamentary committee to oversee the new department that would be responsible for Canada's security and border management. The committee should have access to the necessary information to hold the government accountable and make sure the programs it presents to Canadians on behalf of Canadians are carried out in an efficient and proper manner.

We not only recognize the need for the government to be efficient in managing the agencies responsible for border management and public security. We need a parliamentary oversight committee. We need to communicate and co-ordinate with our American neighbours.

The PC/DR coalition has been able to put together a comprehensive overall plan looking into the future. The Liberal Government of Canada is responsible for doing this. Why does not find it possible? Why does it always react in a piecemeal fashion? It does a bit here and a bit there but has no comprehensive, forward looking, organized and efficient method of providing Canadians from one end of the country to the other with secure and properly managed border entry points. Why does the Liberal government seem incapable of doing the logical and responsive thing? Why does it not put forward a comprehensive plan to deal with the issues?

It is encouraging that the government is listening albeit two years too late. It removed the 10% share ownership limit on Air Canada. It has allowed for shared customs officers at Canadian and American ports. I hope the government will react quickly to our recommendations for a new security ministry, an oversight committee and a program for sharing information with the Americans to ensure better border security and safety for all Canadians.

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•(1355)

I hope the government is listening. I hope it will review the plan we put on the table November 1 and move quickly to implement it.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

MONT-MÉGANTIC PARK

Mr. Gérard Binet (Frontenac—Mégantic, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Mont-Mégantic provincial park is characterized by an imposing rock outcropping composed of eight distinct peaks. It offers an extraordinary venue for outdoors enthusiasts, mountain climbers, people interested in flora and fauna. It is an ideal site for snowshoeing, hiking, cross country skiing and a number of other activities relating to nature and nature interpretation.

Thanks to its astronomical research centre, its interpretive nature centre, and an observatory open to the public, it is also the ideal marriage of terrestrial and celestial pursuits. This year, it recorded a new high of more than 10,000 visitors.

Whether visitors are interested in a hike, or a ski or snowshoe outing, activities led by a nature or astronomy interpreter, or an evening spent looking at the night sky, this, the most snow-covered provincial park in the southern part of Quebec, invites them to come and discover it, and to come away with an unforgettable experience of nature in winter.

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•(1400)

[*English*]

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to an anonymous but true Canadian hero known only by his code name: OmniPotent.

He is a computer hacker from Langley, B.C., who uses his talents for good to expose child predators on the Internet and he has produced some spectacular leads for police who have dubbed him Citizen Tipster.

He has penetrated up to 3,000 computers in search of child predators. Recently the hacker turned over to a U.S. detective an electronic sex predator diary he had retrieved. It caused a search warrant and helped unearth over 100 computer images of child pornography. As a result, a 61 year old U.S. judge is under house arrest awaiting trial on 6 counts of possessing child pornography.

The work of this scourge of the web has already led to the arrest and successful prosecution of a number of Internet based pedophiles. This gentleman is truly an example of a hero of the information age and I offer him my thanks on behalf of our children.

* * *

2002 WINTER PARALYMPIC GAMES

Mr. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour today to rise in the House

to acknowledge the accomplishments of two great Canadian athletes who earned medals yesterday, March 11, at the Salt Lake City Paralympics.

I am of course referring to Lauren Woolstencroft of Calgary, Alberta who brought home the gold medal in the Women's Super-G event; and Karolina Wisniewska, also from Calgary, who earned the bronze medal in the same Super-G event. The Canadian team now has a total of six medals including two gold medals.

I congratulate these athletes for their great victories and thank them for making us so proud.

* * *

LITERARY AWARDS

Mr. Tony Tirabassi (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on March 5 the Writers' Trust of Canada handed out more than \$75,000 in prizes at the first Great Literary Awards. The Great Literary Awards is one of the richest awards galas in Canada with prizes ranging from \$1,000 to \$20,000. Established well known writers, those just starting out, and some not yet published were honoured.

Norman Levine received \$20,000 for the Matt Cohen Award; Elizabeth Hay received \$15,000 for the Marian Engel Award; Clark Blaise received \$10,000 for the Pearson Writers' Trust Non-Fiction prize; Ken McGoogan received \$10,000 for the Drainie Taylor Biography prize; Margaret Sweatman received \$10,000 for the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction prize; Kevin Armstrong received \$10,000 for the Journey prize; and Alison Pick received \$1,000 for the Bronwen Wallace Award.

I congratulate them and offer best wishes for their future literary works.

* * *

BULLYING

Ms. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, during this week of awareness toward bullying and violence issues it is important that we recognize all forms of bullying that take place. Most people will conjure an idea of a larger boy beating up a smaller child when they hear the word bullying. While this is not inaccurate it is only one of the manifestations.

Many bullies rely on physical intimidation or harm. Other bullies, both male and female, employ a more social and emotional method of bullying. They use cold, harsh and hurtful words toward one another rather than fists but the impact is just the same if not greater. Lives still become torn apart because of this terrible activity. Sadly, there are children in many of the schools across Canada who have to put up with this daily scorn. Much of the bullying goes undetected because it is not identified as such.

Education to recognize social bullying is a key to prevention. We must support efforts to intervene, educate and avert at an early stage with these young people in order to stop this very harmful activity.

CANADIAN POLICE ASSOCIATION

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, once again it was a privilege to meet with representatives of the Canadian Police Association, especially in light of the recent tragedies their brotherhood has endured.

Violence toward our officers seems to be reaching epidemic proportions with two of the four police shootings since January allegedly having been committed by convicted offenders on parole.

Although I was pleased to hear our solicitor general once again offer sympathies to the families, I am sure every police officer would have preferred to hear that our government is finally going to take a stand and form a national agency to hunt down these convicted violent offenders on parole like the animals they are.

My blood boils when the solicitor general dismisses the direct link between parole violators and violence against police officers, saying he needs statistics to verify this. How many police officers must die before the solicitor general gets his head out of the bureaucratic fog and realizes our front line officers are far more important than the fragile souls of today's criminals?

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• (1405)

[Translation]

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wish to draw hon. members' attention to the fact that March 1 to 16 is the Semaine québécoise de la déficience intellectuelle.

The theme of this year's week is "Believe... and grow together". It focuses on the importance of integrating the intellectually disabled into the community. In Quebec, there are more than 224,000 people of all ages who are intellectually challenged. A number of events during the special week will draw attention to this issue.

Recently, a Laval group called Option Travail received funding from Human Resources Development Canada to assist it in helping 24 Laval young people who are intellectually disabled to acquire some work experience. With it, we hope they will be able to take their rightful places in the workforce and in society.

I invite all Quebecers to take time to participate in the activities planned in their community to celebrate the week, because integration is a collective opportunity for us all.

* * *

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

Ms. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Sunday March 10 marked the beginning of the 14th Intellectual Disability Week in Quebec. The purpose of this week, with the theme this year of "Believe... and grow together", is to educate all of Quebec about the ability that people with intellectual disabilities have to meet incredible challenges and impress us with their courage and determination, which they demonstrate on a daily basis.

In Laval, thanks to the remarkable co-operation of the Mouvement Personne d'abord, the Centre de réadaptation Normand-Laramée and

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the Association lavalloise pour la déficience intellectuelle, there will be a number of activities presented throughout the week.

This is an opportunity for the people who take part in the activities being planned to discover and appreciate differences. It is also a great opportunity to thank the many volunteers who have chosen to contribute to the growth and development of people with intellectual disabilities, because they believe and grow together.

* * *

ROLAND PINSONNEAULT

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great Canadian, Roland Pinsonneault, who died March 2. Over the last 60 years of his life, his activism helped contribute to the development of the Franco-Saskatchewanian community.

Born in Saint-Cyprien de Napierville, Quebec, he moved to Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan, in 1913. He studied at Collège Mathieu. He became a farmer, and in the 1940s, embarked on a career of activism within the Franco-Saskatchewanian community.

He worked with many organizations, including the Conseil de la coopération and the Association des commissaires d'écoles franco-canadiens. He helped in the struggle to keep *L'Eau vive*, the French language weekly, alive. He also played an important role in setting up the University of Regina Language Institute and served as President of Collège Mathieu. In the summer of 2000, Roland Pinsonneault was named a member of the Order of Canada.

Roland Pinsonneault's contributions have been enormous. On behalf of the Government of Canada, I offer my condolences to his family and to the Franco-Saskatchewanian community that he so loved.

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[English]

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Blackstrap, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, it is high time the Liberal government acted to make our communities safer and put resources into the apprehension of parole violators and escaped prisoners.

Only one province has put together a special squad of police officers to catch violent offenders who have contravened their parole or, worse, escaped from correctional facilities. The federal government needs to put resources, money and personnel into catching these offenders.

Experts tell us that there are almost 1,000 escaped prisoners, parole violators and other unlawfully at large federal offenders on our streets at any one time. Last month in Manitoba a parole violator shot RCMP Constable Mike Templeton. I urge the government to follow the lead of Ontario and invest in a marshal style police effort that hunts down and arrests violent repeat offenders.

Despite the rhetoric of the solicitor general, parole violators are a threat to the safety of Canadians. CPIC alone will not do the job.

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CANADIAN POLICE ASSOCIATION

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to members of the Canadian Police Association who are in Ottawa this week for their eighth annual legislative conference.

In just the past few days and weeks Canadians have seen terrible acts of violence that have severely injured or killed police officers in the line of duty. These sad events serve as a constant reminder that the men and women of our police forces continue to put their lives on the line to serve our country and protect our communities.

I salute and provide my full support to the Canadian Police Association in its continuous effort to help reform our justice system, to uphold the rights of victims and to act as an active voice for 29,000 members who serve Canadians all across the country. I congratulate them and thank them.

* * *

•(1410)

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, New Democrats are very concerned about the U.S. defense department document called the nuclear posture review which threatens to end a consensus about nuclear weapons as weapons of last resort, as weapons of deterrence, and redefine nuclear weapons as part of an integrated war fighting strategy.

This policy breaks with the commitment made by the U.S. in 2000 for an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of its nuclear arsenals. Together with the Bush administration's rejection of the ABM treaty and the earlier rejection of the comprehensive test ban treaty, the United States appears determined to pass up the possibilities offered by the end of the cold war for a world that is less threatened by nuclear war and eventually for a nuclear weapons free world.

It would be ironic indeed if in pursuit of legitimate safety and security goals occasioned by the September 11 act of terrorism the world actually becomes a more dangerous place. The doomsday clock has been moved up by two minutes and we are closer than we have been for some time to the ultimate act of terrorism which is the use of nuclear weapons.

The NDP urges the Prime Minister to keep such a perspective in mind when he goes to Washington later this week.

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[*Translation*]

CANADIAN POLICE ASSOCIATION

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, allow me to salute the delegates of the Canadian Police Association, who are holding their eighth annual meeting with parliamentarians today, on Parliament Hill.

As the Bloc Québécois critic on justice, I have the pleasure of working with them on a regular basis throughout the year, and I can attest to their professionalism and to the quality of their commitment.

While we do not necessarily share their vision of criminal law, which is significantly influenced by westerners and by Canada's

right wing, I can say that there is very good co-operation between the Bloc Québécois and the CPA, particularly the Quebec chapter of that association. Our objective is to fight all types of crime effectively.

Therefore, the Bloc Québécois would like to take this opportunity to thank the CPA for its work and availability. I also want to stress your determination in achieving your objectives, which are, in many cases, the same as ours. Thank you, and I look forward to working with you.

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[*English*]

SPORTS

Mr. Julian Reed (Halton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, congratulations today to Becky Kellar of Burlington, Ontario, for her stellar performance in the 2002 winter Olympics. Kellar and her teammates showed true passion and enthusiasm for hockey throughout the Olympics.

Kellar's athletic career began with ringette as a child, but by age 12 she was playing hockey. The 1998 Nagano games marked Kellar's first major international event and she has played in every world championship since.

Kellar's success extends beyond sport. A graduate from Brown University in 1997 with a degree in psychology, she is currently working toward a master's degree in business at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario.

We salute Becky Kellar of Burlington and the rest of the Canadian women's hockey team on their gold medal Olympic win as well as all Canadian athletes both Olympic and Paralympic for excellent performances.

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CANADIAN POLICE ASSOCIATION

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, members of the Canadian Police Association are here today to ask their government for help. I call on the Solicitor General of Canada to listen to members of the CPA, to crack down on lax prison and parole rules and to put an end to club fed.

We must protect the lives of Canadians and frontline police officers, investigate statutory release and repeal section 745 of the criminal code.

As the solicitor general knows, there have been four shootings of police officers since December, two fatally, and at least two of the four police shootings since January are alleged to have been committed by offenders on parole.

The solicitor general must change the philosophy of Correctional Service Canada and put greater emphasis on the safety of the public and police officers rather than on the comfort level of offenders.

Spending two years in a maximum security institution is not enough. Life should mean life. It is time for the solicitor general to listen to the CPA and the Canadian public and to put an end to club fed.

* * *

● (1415)

[Translation]

SAGUENAY—ST. LAWRENCE MARINE PARK

Mr. André Harvey (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Canadian Heritage, I am very pleased to announce to the House the adoption and implementation of the regulations on offshore activities in the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park. These regulations, which focus on the observation of marine mammals, are a first in Canada.

As the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, I am particularly proud, because these regulations were developed in co-operation with the offshore activities industry, local conservation groups, and the community.

I salute stakeholders, who are currently gathered at the Fjord museum, in Ville-de-la-Baie, to celebrate the adoption of these regulations. I thank them for their commitment in supporting the Government of Canada in the achievement of its objectives concerning the conservation of nature and its resources.

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[English]

CANADIAN POLICE ASSOCIATION

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton Centre-East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, each year the Canadian Police Association brings its concerns to Parliament Hill to be heard by all members of parliament. This valuable opportunity allows elected officials to share ideas and information with those who are on the front lines protecting our families and homes.

This year it asked for our support to protect police officers and victims, to close club fed prisons, for greater protection for children and for increased police funding.

Seven hundred million dollars was wasted registering duck hunters and shotguns while police officers need funding. The official opposition stands with them on these issues.

On behalf of all Canadians I acknowledge those noble custodians of law, order and public peace, some who have paid the supreme price with their lives in serving the citizens of Canada. More than ever their motto "To serve and protect" accurately describes their daily duty.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Mr. John Reynolds (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, when will the government's waste and

Oral Questions

mismanagement end? After losing a half million dollar report from Groupaction the government gave the same firm another \$575,000 for a second report that consisted of a single trivial list of cultural events that the government wants to throw money at. Then we learned that Groupaction received \$62 million in contracts during the last five years in violation of its own contracting rules.

In light of the waste perhaps the Prime Minister could explain how he could not find any wasteful spending in the last budget to cut. Could he not have started with Groupaction?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the information given by the hon. member is simply inaccurate. He is referring to a document which is to be tabled tomorrow as being a single sheet of paper. As a matter of fact it has hundreds of pages.

He is referring to \$62 million that have been given to Groupaction. That is absolutely wrong. That is the value of the placements, not the value of the commission. I am sure the hon. member must know something about the difference between these two endeavours.

That is not accurate on the part of the hon. member. I will gladly co-operate with him and the entire House to provide all the documents.

Mr. John Reynolds (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is funny how one day it is missing and now they can find it. Tax dollars were frittered away on a report and other deals with the firm that gives thousands of dollars to the Liberal Party. Contracting and tendering rules are stretched or even broken.

At the same time the auditor general says there is \$16 billion of waste that the government could cut. Could the Prime Minister explain to hardworking taxpayers that it is all right to send billions of dollars to its friends and produce reports the government does not even bother to keep or conveniently loses for a while?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again the information of the hon. member is inaccurate. He is mixing up two different reports. One of them will be tabled in the House tomorrow, the 1999 one. The other one, and I am sure if he asks his critic he will gladly inform the hon. Leader of the Opposition, refers to a different document altogether.

That is the one for which I have offered to table all the supporting documentation: the treasury board agreement thereto, the agreement under the Financial Administration Act of the senior government official who has seen the report and who has said that in fact the report was presented to him. I have offered to make all of that available this morning before a parliamentary committee.

Mr. John Reynolds (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, where is the report? He has all the surrounding documents but the report has gone missing. How can the government stand in front of the Canadian people and say it gave someone half a million dollars to produce a report and now it has lost it, conveniently lost it maybe?

Oral Questions

Forget about all the documents around it. We want to see the real document and we want to see it in the House now.

•(1420)

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have indicated to all hon. members yesterday that the report as far as I am concerned, a report that has been produced and paid for by the taxpayers of Canada, should be available. That is the first premise.

If anyone provides me with that report I will table it immediately in the House of Commons, but like the hon. member I cannot table a report that I do not have. I will not invent a fictitious one to please anyone. I will say the truth and nothing else before the House of Commons.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the report was ever commissioned in fact.

[*Translation*]

This government spent a great deal of money and energy with “group inaction” in order to buy itself visibility in Quebec. Instead of spending the funds of all Canadian taxpayers in ways that are both misleading and insulting to all Quebecers, this government should concentrate on renewing the federation.

Instead of wasting our money on Groupaction, is the Prime Minister going to put an end to his inaction and table the report?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member over there can choose to play at being outraged, if that is what he wants to do.

Nevertheless, the Government of Canada's sponsorship program, its communications program, has the support of the very great majority. I have, moreover, received inquiries from all sides of this House about it.

As for the report, I will of course table it as soon as I have it. I assure the hon. member that this is what I will do.

[*English*]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, maybe the dog ate the report. Canadian taxpayers are tired of their hard earned money being spent to promote the Liberal government. It would not have to improve its image if it were not swimming in controversy and scandal.

Canadians spent over a half a million dollars on this report and now nobody can find it. Will the minister table the report today, or did it get shredded with the rest of Gagliano's files?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can say to the hon. member, as I have told all other colleagues before the parliamentary committee this morning, that a contract was signed to produce the report.

Under the Financial Administration Act a senior government official has signed to the effect that progress payments were produced. I have the supporting documents for the final report right here in the House of Commons. All those documents exist.

In terms of the final report, I do not have it. When I do I will table it in the House and I will not invent one. I will produce the original document when I get it and nothing else.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a half a million dollar report prepared by a large Liberal supporter in order to boost federal visibility disappears two months after it is written, and the Minister of Public Works is not launching any independent investigation.

The least that can be said is that the minister who promised to sort out the mess left by Alfonso Gagliano is not hampered by transparency.

Will the minister admit that he cannot simply bemoan the report's disappearance and that, in the interests of good management, an independent investigation is called for to shed light on this whole business?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this question is getting repetitive. Perhaps the member needs a shot of oxygen to help him come up with new questions to ask in the House.

The fact remains that, as soon as I have a copy of the report, I will table it in the House of Commons.

In the meantime, I have promised all members that I will provide them with all the documents I have in my possession regarding the 1998 contract. The 1999 contract will be tabled in the House tomorrow, pursuant to the standing orders. If the House gives its unanimous consent, I am prepared to table it today.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, speaking of air, I get the feeling that the minister is breathing the same air as Alfonso Gagliano. Since he has always followed in his footsteps, he will probably end up in Denmark.

If he does not want to clean this mess up, is it not because he wants to keep the same system that suits the friends of the regime and because what he is ultimately doing is maintaining what Alfonso Gagliano put in place, which was a patronage system to fill the Liberal Party's coffers?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I think that the comments about my predecessor, who served this House and his country with honour, are completely disgraceful.

Second, I wish to point out to the House the measures taken under the Communication Canada program in the last few years in connection with transparency, because that is what the hon. leader of the Bloc Québécois is asking about.

Information regarding our sponsorship contracts is available on the Internet. It is transparent. Information regarding all services—

•(1425)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Roberval.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the entire contract award process at Public Works and Government Services Canada is problematic, and this missing report is but the tip of the iceberg.

Will the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada admit that only an independent investigation into how contracts are awarded, the billions of dollars worth of contracts awarded by Public Works Government Services Canada, will get to the bottom of this issue? If he refuses, then he is helping cover up the system and he will be an accomplice.

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these questions are hardly more generous than the prior ones. Allow me to continue to talk about the transparency that we have developed.

Earlier, I spoke about the sponsorship contracts that are available on the Internet. Our sponsorship action plan is on the Internet. All our reports, investigative reports that have already been carried out, at the request of Canadians, are available online, on the Internet. So, the information is public.

An investigation has already been done by the auditing board of Canada. Measures have been taken to improve the system. The system is a good one, and of course, Communication Canada is doing good work.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister should admit that since he has been with the department, since January, one out of every two contracts awarded by Public Works and Government Services Canada—one out of every two, this is no small number—has been awarded without any call for tenders.

My question for the minister is this: since he has been there and he claims to be beyond reproach, what has he changed in the system to help the cronies? He has changed absolutely nothing. If he refuses to call an independent investigation, he is an accomplice and is helping to maintain the system that was in place before his arrival, under Alfonso Gagliano.

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois' House leader is no better informed than the Bloc Québécois critic on this, because in fact, his numbers are just as wrong.

Since becoming Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, I have signed five contracts, not 2,000 or anything near that. When it comes to awarding contracts, 92% of them, the highest rate of all of the G-8 countries, are awarded through a competitive bid process.

[English]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Prime Minister. I am sure the Prime Minister will want to comment on this before he goes off to Washington.

Is the Prime Minister himself not concerned about the unavailability of this report, a report that the Canadian taxpayers paid for and which is now unavailable? Could he tell us whether or not he is concerned about this? If he is, what does he intend to do about it, short of ordering a search of the miscellaneous files of the Canadian embassy in Copenhagen?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have already indicated to a colleague of the hon. House leader for the New Democratic Party in committee this morning that the report, although unavailable—and I

have denounced that and have said that in the House both yesterday and this morning in committee—in fact was commissioned, that interim payments were made pursuant to the Financial Administration Act, that a senior civil servant signed for both the interim payments, and that the same senior civil servant said both in media reports and to my own officials that he had received the document in question.

I do have in hand and am ready to table the supporting documentation even though the report itself has not yet been made available to me.

* * *

TERRORISM

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister on a different subject.

Could the Prime Minister tell us when he goes to Washington what position he will be taking in his discussions with President Bush with respect to the obvious plans of President Bush for an expansion of the war on terrorism with respect to Iraq and possibly other countries? What position will he be taking with respect to the “Nuclear Posture Review” document which proposes to transform the status of nuclear weapons from weapons of deterrence to part of an integrated nuclear war fighting stance on the part of the Americans?

These are important questions. Canadians need to know what he is going to say.

● (1430)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that was a lengthy supplementary question and not very related to the first one.

I just want to say that of course I will be there. On the question of a nuclear discussion, we have asked for clarification because it is a document that has leaked from somewhere in the public administration. I am sure it is not a document that is subscribed to by the administration, but I will raise it with the president.

As far as Iraq is concerned, everyone knows that we and the Americans are fighting against terrorism. We have 3,000 troops in Afghanistan at this time. We are making a contribution.

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GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Public Works and Government Services about the invisible disappearing Groupaction report.

Why has the report not been made available to him? Did his predecessor take it with him to Denmark?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the right hon. member asked why do I not have the report which I do not have. What a question from someone who used to be the prime minister of Canada. It is a small wonder he did not stay there very long.

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, we have here on the record that the Government of Canada has been paying for the report. We have here on the record that some anonymous public servant has seen the report. Yet the minister who answers to the House of Commons claims he has seen nothing at all. He said it might come, and if it comes he will give it to us.

Where is the report? Why does the minister not have the report? What is he hiding?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us start by the last allegation made. Obviously I am not hiding anything. I have no interest and no desire to hide anything from any hon. member of the House.

There were two reports. One of them, when I become acquainted with it, will be tabled in the House tomorrow. I even offered to have it tabled as early as yesterday with unanimous consent and I am still willing to do that today.

In terms of the second report, the one I do not have, it may shock the right hon. member but I will not table the report that I do not have.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, section 19(3) of the EI act has paved the way for the government to take millions of dollars from hard working part time, seasonal or laid off workers.

We have completed an intensive study of how the government ripped off workers and covered it up hoping the issue would go away.

Could the minister explain to Canadians the financial implications of section 19(3) of the EI act from July 1996 to August 2001?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. In this case we are talking about individuals who are working while in receipt of employment insurance benefits and choose not to declare those earnings in accordance with the law.

The hon. member will know that last summer we made administrative improvements to the provision for undeclared earnings. There is a 30 day period for consultation. At that time we did not hear a word either from that member or from his party.

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the minister is not going to get off that easily with this issue. Those statements will be questioned in the House.

The changes to section 19(3) of the act required that overpayment be calculated over an entire benefit period, not on a week by week basis as before, resulting in penalties that were too high, unfair and punitive.

Could the minister give me one good reason why Cher Kinamore who was overpaid \$600 had to pay back \$3,227 because of the legislation?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this line of questioning gets more and more interesting. In fact, it is quite disingenuous.

Last year when we were discussing in the House the question of undeclared earnings, the then chief critic for that party said about this very issue:

We will not be supporting that amendment. We find it very difficult to justify supporting somebody who deliberately scams the system...We are not prepared to support this.

What has changed?

* * *

● (1435)

[Translation]

**PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES
CANADA**

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a very large proportion—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. We must hear the hon. member. With all this noise, it is impossible to do so. I implore the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford. The hon. member for Chambly.

Mr. Ghislain Lebel: Mr. Speaker, a very large proportion of the contracts awarded by Public Works Canada are given without any call for tenders. Things have hardly changed with the arrival of the new minister. Since January 15, 2002, one contract out of two is awarded and one dollar out of four is spent without going through to the normal bidding process.

Will the minister recognize that extending contracts to avoid the bidding process can lead, and has indeed lead to the worst possible abuse?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning in committee, the hon. member made an allegation that was similar, if not worse. He gave two examples. In both cases, he claimed that the contracts had been awarded without a call for tenders, and in both cases he was wrong.

With 92% of the value of its contracts awarded through a competitive process, the Government of Canada ranks number one among G-8 members. I mentioned it in committee this morning. The answer is the same in the House this afternoon.

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister is contradicting a list that comes from his own department.

Will the minister admit that it is easy to change the nature of the bidding process by asking his supplier and bidder friends to propose a low price and telling them not to worry because, later on, their contracts will be extended?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker. Again, the hon. member's claim is absolutely false and he knows it.

What I want above all is transparency in the public bidding process for all contracts awarded by the Government of Canada.

Oral Questions

This is what we are doing as a government, and this is what we intend to do, for reasons of transparency and in the best interests of the Canadian taxpayers who, after all, are footing the bill.

* * *

[English]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mrs. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, not only is the government ripping off workers and employers by making them overpay \$43 billion in EI payments, now we have learned that this uncaring government then forced the unemployed to pay back overpayments that were calculated using assessment guidelines it knew were wrong.

Why does the minister not care that her government owes millions of dollars to those who need it most?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as fantastic as this sounds, this is the first opportunity I have had to congratulate the hon. member on becoming critic of my portfolio. Her lack of questions suggested to me that perhaps she agreed with her predecessor, the member for Richmond who, with the ultimate support from my department and the government, decided that if one cannot beat them, one might as well join them.

Mrs. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her congratulations. We just received the information yesterday from access to information and I think that answers her question.

The principle of overpayment is a good one. If Canadians receive government benefits to which they are not entitled, they should pay them back. No one argues with that. Now the shoe is on the other foot. If the Liberals through their unjust law get more than they are entitled to get, will they do the right thing and pay back the money?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are two things I would like to make clear.

First of all, and this is important, it is only in cases of fraud when EI claimants are required to pay back more than what they have taken. This is an administrative penalty.

The other important aspect is if the hon. member has individual cases that she would like the department to review, we would be glad to do that. I would also remind her that every EI claimant has the opportunity to participate in the full appeal process that is part and parcel of the overall employment insurance system.

* * *

• (1440)

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, all of the political parties in Quebec, and all provincial first ministers and finance ministers acknowledge the existence of a tax imbalance in Canada. Only the federal Minister of Finance is denying the evidence everyone else acknowledges.

Is the Minister of Finance going to acknowledge that there will be a major surplus in two weeks, not twenty months but two weeks? Can he just tell us what he assesses the figure for the surplus to be?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is not only the Canadian finance minister who does not recognize this imbalance. Neither do the Conseil du patronat and the Chamber of Commerce.

Moreover, when we are looking at the next five years, there is also the Conference Board of Canada, according to the Séguin commission.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): I will tell him, Mr. Speaker, what the figure for the surplus is going to be in a little less than two weeks: approximately \$9 billion.

He has never been able to give us figures. For five years now, we have been making forecasts, and we have never been wrong.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Yvan Loubier: Let them laugh if they find that funny.

I am calling upon him to make a solemn commitment, from his seat, to hand over within two weeks half of this surplus to the provinces in transfer payments in order to allow them to finance essential services to the population, that is health and education. Let him put the public interest ahead of his own popularity.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if there is a surplus, it is thanks to good management of the Canadian economy. If there is a surplus, it is because jobs have been created; there has been economic growth. And it is thanks to that surplus that we have been able to transfer \$23 billion to the provinces, a year ago, a record figure.

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[English]

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Dan Brisson, Dennis Strongquill, Mike Templeton and Benoit L'Ecuyer were all police officers. All were shot, two fatally, and all were victims of the government's lax prison and parole system. There are 812 dangerous offenders unlawfully at large.

How many other police officers have to fall and how many other court challenges and lawsuits have to be launched before the solicitor general puts an end to the early release of these dangerous offenders?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is nothing more horrible than an individual giving his or her life in the line of duty for the nation. I can assure my hon. colleague that the government has ensured that our police forces in the country have the proper tools to do the job, and we will continue to do so.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is bad enough that police officers are being shot and killed by parolees. Like I said, 812 dangerous offenders are unlawfully at large. Now murderers are being housed in facilities that offer all the comforts of home.

Oral Questions

Will the solicitor general put an end to this appalling charade by ensuring that all first degree murderers are kept in maximum security facilities where they belong?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thought my hon. colleague would be aware that we passed a rule about a year ago that all first and second degree murderers would spend a minimum of two years in maximum security. The average is 8 to 10—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. We are wasting time in question period. We have to be able to hear the solicitor general and his answer, which we cannot with all of this noise. The hon. solicitor general has the floor.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: My hon. colleague is also well aware, Mr. Speaker, that they spend an average of 8 to 10 years in maximum security.

For his information in the United States, which it is quick to announce, people who are convicted of life in prison spend an average of 18.5 years before they receive parole. In this country they remain in prison an average of 28.4 years before—

• (1445)

The Speaker: I am afraid we have run out of time. The hon. member for Yukon.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, persistent organic pollutants or POPs threaten the health and well-being of humans and wildlife in every region of the world. Canada played a leadership role in the development and was the first country to ratify the Stockholm convention on POPs.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment tell the House what actions the government is taking to address this important issue globally?

Mrs. Karen Redman (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is most fitting that my hon. colleague from Yukon would ask a question about persistent organic pollutants, as they pose a serious threat in Canada, especially in our north where pollutants have led to the contamination of the traditional foods for aboriginal peoples.

The majority of POPs enter Canada's environment by being transported through the atmosphere from foreign sources such as China and other countries in south and southeast Asia. That is why \$20 million was committed to Canada's POPs fund at the Royal Bank to help countries address POPs issues. Yesterday we announced the contribution of \$316,000 through joint funding to the Royal Roads University—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

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BANKING INDUSTRY

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the banks have been overcharging consumers with record interest rate spreads on a \$50 billion credit card debt. Banks have also been

gouging consumers by charging them interest on money that has not yet been advanced to the vendor.

The government certainly uses its power to keep its junior ministers and backbenchers in line. Will it use its power to intervene on the side of consumers in their struggle against these huge banks that are gouging the public with these interest rate spreads?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to allow consumers to check exactly what their costs are and to ensure that Canadians are able to monitor these kinds of charges, we set up the Financial Consumer Agency which is in the process of doing exactly that.

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[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with regard to interest, the employment insurance surplus is now at \$42 billion. There is a rumour to the effect that the Department of Human Resources Development will impose interest on overpayments, which will increase even more the employment insurance fund.

Could the Minister of Human Resources Development tell us whether this rumour is true or not? The employment insurance program is already a thorn for workers. Does the government really need to take what little they have left?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my department is reviewing a proposal to charge interest on employment insurance debt related to fraud only and not to debt accrued as a result of mistakes. This intention was signalled in our report on plans and priorities last year.

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GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, when he was in opposition, the current minister for public works said that allegations of conflict of interest should be investigated. In fact, he asked the following question in the House:

Can (the minister) specifically tell the House whether he is willing to refer this matter to a parliamentary committee? There have been a number of such allegations made by very credible sources. Isn't that enough?

Why was it a good idea to investigate corruption when he was in opposition, but not now that he is holding the levers of power? Why is the minister ignoring his own advice?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning the hon. member asked me in committee whether I would appear in committee to talk about the issues involving my department. I had to remind him that I actually was there in front of him. I do that now again. I remind the hon. member that I am here just as I was in committee this morning.

Oral Questions

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, PC/DR): Check the record, Mr. Speaker, that is not what he said. He avoided the question just like he avoided it now. The issue is this minister's double standard on integrity.

The scandal surrounding Liberal pork and patronage at public works continues to grow. Since the sponsorship slush fund was put in place by this government, Liberal friends at Groupaction have billed Canadian taxpayers \$60 million and kicked back \$100,000 in political donations to the Liberal Party.

Why is the minister adopting the ethical standards of Alfonso Gagliano instead of the standards he demanded when in opposition?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no such thing as a sponsorship slush fund. There is a sponsorship program of the Government of Canada. It is available on the website of the Government of Canada. Members from all parties across the House come to see me to lobby about sponsorship initiatives within their constituencies. I thank them for that. I support the initiatives. It is a well run program and done in a truly competitive manner. The accusations of the hon. member should be withdrawn.

* * *

• (1450)

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, our borders are not just for keeping criminals out, they are also to protect vulnerable people from being exploited by criminal elements here at home.

The U.S. state department is saying that over 15,000 Chinese women have been smuggled into Canada in the last decade to work in the sex trade. How can this government say our borders are secure when international people smugglers are using Canada to make a fortune by sexually exploiting women?

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has security as its priority, but it is also clear that human smuggling does not occur only in Canada.

[English]

Human smuggling is not just in Canada, it is all over the world. We have invested more and more money since December 10. At the same time, what we have accomplished with Bill C-11 and regulations, is that we now have the proper tools to answer those needs.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, that was a pretty weak answer. Understandably the U.S. is very nervous about our leaky international ports. In its report it pointed to the ease with which these illegal immigrants can come into Canada and then cross into the United States across our vast undefended border.

Why is the minister continuing to jeopardize our open border with the U.S. by refusing to take seriously this important issue of illegal immigrants making their way into Canada?

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to understand why the official opposition voted against the budget for security. Why did they vote against Bill C-11 at the time? All these tools were helping us and were allowing us to address these issues.

We took our responsibilities. They should now apologize.

* * *

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the situation is critical in the softwood lumber dispute, with the intensive round of negotiations now under way and the March 21 deadline approaching.

One day, the government is optimistic, the next it is less so. This has not prevented the government from returning to the table without obtaining guarantees from the Americans concerning unfettered access to their market.

As he prepares to meet with President Bush two days from now, could the Prime Minister tell us what kind of guarantees he intends to seek from the Americans in order to ensure the unfettered access of our softwood lumber to the American market?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am obviously always extremely pleased that the Prime Minister himself takes the opportunity of these exchanges with President Bush to show that the number one priority of the Canadian government is to find a solution to the softwood lumber dispute, which has been dragging on for a very long time.

It is absolutely obvious that what our government wants, and what the Canadian provinces and the industry want, is guaranteed access to the U.S. market. That is the goal of the negotiations, and that is the goal that we will be working extremely hard to achieve in the coming days.

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this still does not tell us what guarantees the government is going to go after.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade mentioned in the House that an assistance plan was being implemented in the softwood lumber industry.

I ask the Minister for International Trade to confirm this statement and to tell us what form this plan to help the industry will take.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, right now, we are not aiming to fail in these negotiations.

We are being asked what we will do in the event of failure. What I can say is that, tomorrow, our government will sit down with the Canadian provinces, with the Government of British Columbia and the Government of Quebec. The industry will also take part in this meeting.

Oral Questions

In the days to come, we will be making a tremendous effort to obtain what we have never obtained before, which is access in the form of guaranteed free trade with the U.S. market, under a system which we are negotiating in Washington.

* * *

[English]

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health refused to criticize the Canadian Institutes of Health Research for the power play on stem cell research. In fact she commended it for putting the rules in place.

It is interesting. The minister thinks it is important enough for the provinces to wait for the Romanow commission, so why should her own bureaucrats from the CIHR not wait until legislation is in place?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated, the CIHR guidelines relate to publicly funded research, research funded by federal tax dollars in this country. It has every right to issue guidelines in terms of how that money is dispensed.

I have made it very plain in this House and before the Standing Committee on Health that I will be introducing legislation in the House before May 10.

• (1455)

Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the minister thinks ignoring parliament is acceptable, but not all of her colleagues do. The member for Mississauga South said “The CIHR doesn't have the right to make policy”.

Does the minister agree with her colleague and will she suspend the new rules until parliament passes the legislation?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the CIHR is not ignoring parliament. This government will introduce legislation. Parliament will decide the content of that legislation. At that time, if there is any inconsistency between the CIHR guidelines and the legislation, the legislation applies.

* * *

TRADE

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade. It relates to investor rights under the free trade agreement and specifically chapter 11.

As members know, last July a commitment was made to deal with the thorny issue of compensation to multinational corporations suing governments. Could the minister inform the House what progress has been made in addressing this intractable problem?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the question from my colleague from Davenport. Indeed, when a country like Canada exports 46% of GDP, it definitely needs to have predictable rules and effective dispute settlement mechanisms, so all three NAFTA parties are advocating for the NAFTA chapter 11 clarification process. I have also asked my trade officials to continue their work examining the implementation and operation of chapter 11.

I can therefore report to the House that trade officials are engaged with their NAFTA colleagues on an ongoing review of the chapter 11 operation.

* * *

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the U.S. response to the Canadian proposal to resolve the softwood lumber dispute is not encouraging. The Prime Minister has made light of the situation by suggesting that Americans burn our softwood lumber rather than our oil and gas. This behaviour is alarming.

Given the seriousness of the gulf between the Canadian proposal and the U.S. response, why is the Prime Minister making light of this situation?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have always made the point that we want the same free trade agreement on softwood lumber as we have on oil and gas. This is a very serious problem. I have made sure the Americans understand that if they want free trade it should not be at their choosing but that it should be according to the agreement.

* * *

[Translation]

CBC

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago, I asked the Minister of Canadian Heritage about the unfair situation of women employees of the CBC. We have learned that, with similar levels of seniority, there could be up to \$16,000 difference between men's and women's salaries. Today representatives of the communications union are in fact meeting with some MPs to seek a solution for this deplorable situation.

Since the situation is not yet settled, can the Minister of Canadian Heritage tell us in concrete terms today what she intends to do to settle this deplorable situation, as far as female employees are concerned?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am totally in agreement with the hon. member. This is an unacceptable situation. It amazes me that it has taken 16 years to get to the negotiating table, and I am anxious to see it settled promptly.

* * *

[English]

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, Correctional Service Canada has budgeted close to \$350 million for the construction of new condo style prison accommodations. History has proven that the open style of incarceration is less secure, more luxurious but done in the name of rehabilitation.

Oral Questions

Could the solicitor general explain to the House and to members of the Canadian Police Association who are visiting today what he learned from his meetings with the police, not what he told them, and why his department and his government continually put public protection behind Liberal policies like statutory and early release, cascading prison classifications, prisoners' rights and club fed conditions?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I did have two meetings with members of the Canadian Police Association. I met with them a number of times and they had very important input into policies with this government.

What needed to take place was the building of five maximum security institutions for women in this country. That has been done. We needed to make sure we had secure facilities for maximum security female offenders.

* * *

• (1500)

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry.

As the knowledge of humanity grew and we discovered elements and their properties, I do not believe we allowed private interests to hold patents on oxygen, hydrogen, plutonium or the other elements, yet that is what we are doing with the human genome.

Why does the government maintain a policy that gene by gene is transferring the basic building blocks of life from the public to the private domain?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that genes in their natural form are not capable of being patented. I think the public policy question is whether when someone through ingenuity isolates a particular gene which is then applied for a specific purpose that innovation should be capable of being protected by our intellectual property laws.

The member for Ottawa—Vanier has done a great deal to increase public understanding of this complex issue. As he knows, the Canadian biotechnology committee has been asked to look at this, consult broadly, look at what happens in other countries and come back with sound recommendations. That process continues. We expect those recommendations later this year.

* * *

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, whether it is softwood lumber or anything else, any good negotiator knows that one cannot unilaterally be in a hurry for a deal. A good negotiator must also have a contingency plan in the eventuality there is no deal.

The government has failed on both counts. It promised to assist forest workers and companies but there has been no change to EI rules and no workable programs for tariff assistance.

When can we expect an EI and tariff contingency plan?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, HRDC has done an extraordinarily good job by

working closely with the workers of this industry in the last year and we should commend the Minister for Human Resources Development for having paid close attention to the workers of the softwood lumber industry.

The date of March 21 is a very useful date. It is the date of the final determination that we want to avoid. We are using this date very much in our negotiations with the Americans to reach an agreement for unfettered market access in the United States before the final determination. The objective is to use that date as a target, and I hope it works for Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a number of members of the international community have expressed concerns about the American plan to attack certain predetermined countries with nuclear weapons.

Since the Prime Minister is scheduled to meet with President Bush in Washington this week, does he intend to voice the concerns we, and the official opposition in particular, have about this?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, this is a nuclear matter.

We have asked the U.S. government for explanations. Too much importance must not be attached to a document that comes from the administration, unless we are sure it really represents government policy.

We have done our duty. We have asked for an explanation and, if none is forthcoming, I will have an opportunity to raise the problem with the president as early as this Thursday.

* * *

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of a delegation headed by the Hon. Namik Dokle, Speaker of the People's Assembly of the Republic of Albania.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

• (1505)

[Translation]

POINT OF ORDER

ALLOTTED DAY MOTION—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: Order, please. I am now ready to rule with regard to the point of order raised this morning by the hon. House leader of the Bloc Québécois relating to a decision made yesterday concerning the votable status of the PC/DR motion to be debated today.

Supply

[*English*]

I want to thank the hon. member for Roberval, the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona, the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford, the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader and other hon. members who contributed to the discussion.

I have carefully reviewed the interventions of hon. members and the procedural authorities that govern our deliberations. I would like first to review the current situation in which the House finds itself.

Standing Order 81 lays down the rules for consideration of the business of supply. I need not remind the House of all the provisions in the 22 sections of the standing order. Let us simply look at those sections that need concern us.

[*Translation*]

Standing Order 81(10)(a) states, in part, “twenty-one days are to be designated as allotted days”.

Standing Order 81(16) provides that: Not more than fourteen opposition motions in total shall be motions that shall come to a vote—

[*English*]

There are, as we can see, two aspects to any allotted day: first, a motion is put forward by the opposition party; and second, the motion may be designated votable.

• (1510)

[*Translation*]

The standing orders clearly provide for the Speaker to resolve any disputes arising about the first aspect, namely which opposition party’s motion is to be considered on a given day. Standing Order 81 (14)(c) states: When notice has been given of two or more motions by members in opposition to the government for consideration on an allotted day, the Speaker shall have power to select which of the proposed motions shall have precedence in that sitting.

By contrast, should a dispute arise on the second aspect, namely designation of the motion as votable, the standing orders are silent.

[*English*]

Our practice provides guidance in these matters. Marleau and Montpetit states at page 726:

The allocation of the 14 votable motions is worked out in an informal agreement among the opposition parties.

In their remarks earlier today, some hon. members have suggested that by the ruling yesterday the Chair intervened in a matter in which it had no place and, by implication, had unfairly sided with one of the parties to the dispute. I trust that the House will agree that the Chair never intended to do any such thing and sees matters from an entirely different perspective.

Yesterday the Chair was asked to decide whether the PC/DR motion was properly designated a votable motion. Given no authority by the standing orders to judge the matter, except insofar as to determine whether the maximum number of votable days had been used, the Chair would ordinarily turn, as indeed I did, to see what was provided in the usual informal agreement among the parties. It is to be noted that no agreement signed by all parties was ever given to the Chair. It now transpires, as the exchanges this

morning amply demonstrate, that the very existence of such an agreement is in dispute.

[*Translation*]

In the circumstances, I decided yesterday that I could not intervene to reverse the designation of the motion as votable given to the Chair by the sponsoring opposition party when the motion was put on notice, in keeping with the usual practice in these matters.

I could not find any authority for so doing since only 8 of 14 votable motions have been used to date and so I declared that, unless a contrary agreement were reached by the House leaders, the motion would go forward, as requested by the sponsor, as a votable motion. This morning, I find that this decision is interpreted as exactly the kind of intervention I sought to avoid.

[*English*]

I can find little comfort in the choices that the House leaders presented to me this morning. If the Chair persists in the view that it has no authority to refuse a sponsor putting forward a votable motion before the full 14 votable motions have been used, it may be viewed as being complicit in what some have characterized as parliamentary mischief that violates an informal agreement. If the Chair is persuaded by the interventions of three of the four opposition leaders to abide by an informal agreement from which the fourth dissents, it may be viewed as interference by the Chair and the prerogatives of the House leaders by the interpretation and enforcement of their agreements.

The circumstances underlying the exchanges this morning leave the Chair in a difficult position. I do not think the interests of the House will be well served if the Speaker is drawn into disputes among parties. I would therefore again urge the hon. House leaders to resume constructive dialogue in the management of the business of the House.

I understand that they will be meeting this afternoon. I would ask that the matter of the allocation of opposition days and the matter of the allocation of votable motions be addressed anew. I hope that they will reach agreement on these matters and that they will inform me of their conclusions in writing, duly signed by all opposition House leaders.

In the meantime it seems to me that it would be most prudent for the Chair not to accept the designation of any motion as votable either today or until such time as I have received an agreement.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1515)

[*English*]

ALLOTTED DAY—NATIONAL SECURITY

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Chatham—Kent Essex.

I was a little surprised to read the content of today's motion because anyone who says that the government does not have a national security policy either has not been paying attention to the actions taken by the government over the past six months or just plain does not know what they are talking about.

We know that Canadians have been paying attention because they have voiced strongly and clearly their consistent approval of the government's actions since September 11.

The government's response to the tragic events of September 11 reflects the principles of our national security policy. Our response was immediate and it was co-ordinated. It was driven by the continued need to ensure the national and economic security of Canadians.

Canadian response to September 11 was immediate. About 250 flights and 33,000 airline passengers were diverted from U.S. destinations to Canadian airports. Officials from the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the RCMP went on a heightened state of alert at all border points. Security and law enforcement agencies went into a full court press to investigate terrorism in co-operation with their U.S. counterparts. Ships were put to sea, aircraft was put on alert, and the military was put on standby.

On October 1 the Prime Minister established the ad hoc committee of ministers on public security and anti-terrorism. This committee was tasked with ensuring and building, where necessary, a rapid and co-ordinated response to the new threat environment. Some of the key elements that have been advanced include the following: identifying an initial programming package for this current fiscal year of \$280 million for security, intelligence and law enforcement departments and agencies to heighten border security and to undertake initiatives to enhance the security of Canadians; passage of the anti-terrorism act, Bill C-36, to put the communications and security establishment on a legislative footing with a mandate to collect intelligence on international terrorism; and the tabling of Bill C-42, the public safety act, primarily aimed at implementing international conventions on controlling biological weapons and enhancing air transportation security.

[*Translation*]

The 2001 budget clearly identified the two interrelated challenges which are to maintain a strong and stable economy and to protect Canadians.

These goals have been partly achieved by strengthening personal and economic security and by keeping terrorists out of the country and maintaining an open and efficient border.

In all, the budget has committed a total of \$7.7 billion over the next five years to enhance the security of Canadians by increasing resources to our intelligence and police agencies, by enhancing screening of new entrants to Canada and by strengthening air security.

Moreover, \$1.2 billion will be invested in border security, not only to address the concerns about security but also to improve long term economic opportunities by maintaining a more open and efficient border between Canada and the United States.

Supply

Of the more than \$1.2 billion to be invested in border infrastructures, \$646 million will be used to enhance security at the border and facilitate the movement of people and goods between Canada and the United States.

● (1520)

[*English*]

In particular, the focus of the budget is on: new technology to help Canada Customs and Revenue Agency facilitate the passage of goods and people at border crossing points; new Canadian multi-agency integrated border enforcement teams to co-ordinate intelligence and enforcement efforts along the Canada-U.S. border; advanced information sharing technology to help customs officers screen travellers arriving at airports and other border entry points; better equipment for detecting explosives, firearms and other dangers without delaying the flow of legitimate commerce and tourism; and new secure Internet-based technology to ease customs compliance for small business.

We must remember however that our concern for public security is matched by and intrinsically linked with our concern for economic security.

With almost half of our GDP dependent on access to the U.S. market, it is imperative that our shared border be kept open, even as we make it more secure. Most people are aware that Canada and the United States have been working on the smart border action plan since December 2001. My U.S. counterpart on this initiative, Governor Tom Ridge, has stated:

This Smart Border declaration is an agreement between two independent sovereign nations to work together—to solve problems of mutual interest that affect the security and safety, as well as the economic well-being of the citizens in each country.

These issues however are not new. We did not discover border security and border management on September 11. It is an integral part of the government to government relationship that operates every day in hundreds of ways. In fact, Canada and the U.S. share the most extensive bilateral co-operation in the world focused on managing our borders and mutual security.

The action plan that Governor Ridge and I agreed to on December 12 recognizes that link between public and economic security. We cannot adequately protect our citizens if our economies are barricaded. Likewise, our economies cannot function if our citizens do not have confidence in their security. The smart border discussions, which are frequent and productive, build on a long history of border co-operation between Canada and the United States.

All steps that we have undertaken, both before and after September 11, recognize that the guiding principles for a 21st century border include streamlining and harmonizing border policies and management, expanding co-operation at and beyond the border and collaborating on common threats outside of Canada and the United States.

Supply

They demonstrate our shared belief that the border should support open trade and travel while defending its people and economies against threats to the social and economic well-being of both countries. We are developing risk management solutions that facilitate the flow of low risk people and goods while concentrating greater resources on flows that may pose a threat to our two countries.

Last Friday in Washington, D.C., Governor Ridge and I announced the expansion of NEXUS, the risk management system for processing travellers. Our customs agencies are working out the details of a similar system for commercial goods.

[*Translation*]

These initiatives will benefit from a new \$600 million program to improve the infrastructure, including highways, commercial vehicle processing centres and the technology needed at the major entry points.

This program will be implemented with the cooperation of public and private partners from both sides of the border.

[*English*]

September 11 showed us that even in an age of globalization we need to remain vigilant that our borders continue to meet our security needs while allowing the growing transborder trade to move swiftly and efficiently.

The smart border that we are building with the United States through strategic planning, risk management and co-ordinated infrastructure will serve as a model to the world. Combined with the new security measures that we have introduced in legislation and in the budget, our border innovations demonstrate that the government is fulfilling its responsibility to protect the security of Canadians and the open economy upon which our way of life depends.

•(1525)

Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, PC/DR): Madam Speaker, I thank the Deputy Prime Minister for his speech. While the government is doing some positive things such as looking at expediting low risk travellers and goods, which we applaud it for, there are many things that have happened during this government's watch that we want to hold it accountable for and that it needs to be held accountable for.

It has cut the ports police. It has shut down customs offices, particularly in eastern Canada where people coming by ships are asked to phone in to a station 14 miles inland. How can that possibly provide a secure perimeter to our country? As well, obviously there is the whole issue of RCMP funding. I mentioned earlier in the House that we have four RCMP officers who patrol the border from the west coast of B.C. to the Alberta border, and that is it, four. So certainly there are some things that need to be addressed.

I remind the minister that this motion flows directly out of a report from the Senate, a joint report that was agreed to by our colleagues in the Senate. Is the minister suggesting in regard to the recommendations, which are very positive and were agreed to in a non-partisan way, that our colleagues in the Senate are wrong and that they have not been paying attention? He did submit at the

beginning of his speech that those who bring questions forward have not been paying attention. Is he saying that our Senate colleagues, in producing this report to address the serious issues of security, have not been paying attention?

Hon. John Manley: Madam Speaker, the point I am trying to make is this: There has never been such concentration on issues of security in Canada, including resources for police, resources for customs and resources for immigration, particularly in the months following September 11. Both the \$280 million expenditure package that was introduced for the current fiscal year and the many billions of dollars that were included in the budget on December 10 indicate the realization that things did change. Unfortunately they changed on September 11 and the case is that the realization is that the risks we face in the world are perhaps more immediate than would have been expected prior to September 11.

In trying to deal with the border, we have an 8,000 kilometre border with the United States and we take pride in the fact that it is the longest undefended border on earth. The reality in approaching the issues dealing with border management is that it is a matter of trying to do risk assessment. We cannot police 8,000 kilometres. Therefore, we have to determine where the risks are and we have to use customs officials in the appropriate manner. Again, in some ways the borders reflect the 19th century need of governments to raise all of their revenue out of customs, whereas today a very small proportion of our revenue is raised out of customs, the bulk both in Canada and the U.S. being from income and consumption taxes.

Therefore, what we are trying to do is not only reflect the new realities as a result of the security risks that September 11 made evident, but also deal with the risk management system in order to ensure that the economic flow across the border is not impeded by our need to ensure security and safety.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I thank the Deputy Prime Minister for his speech. First, it is sad that we had to have something like September 11 before the government really started to take the issue of security at all seriously.

Having said that as an aside, my question has to do with an issue that really does fundamentally affect our ability to keep the border with the United States open. It has to do with refugees who are ultimately denied refugee status in Canada. We have something like 27,000 refugees about whose whereabouts we are uncertain. I wonder if the minister can tell us what specific actions the government is taking to ensure that when refugees are denied refugee status in Canada we know that they actually leave the country.

Supply

• (1530)

Hon. John Manley: Madam Speaker, additional resources were provided to the department in order to facilitate detention and removal when refugee claimants are unsuccessful in their claims, but I also point out that if September 11 was a surprise to us, it did not occur on Canadian soil and it was a surprise to the United States as well. The perpetrators of that incident did not enter the United States from Canada. They entered legally into the United States. If there was a lack of awareness of the nature of the risks we faced, that lack of awareness was not unique to Canadian authorities. It was shared by authorities around the world and together we are all trying to make the world a more secure place.

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to be able to use this House as a vehicle to explain what the Canadian government has done and what directions we have taken since September 11. No one really anticipated what happened on September 11, but what it did was highlight the concern of terrorism, highlight the concern of safety and highlight the concern of economic stability in Canada.

Quite frankly, in my area in southwestern Ontario I believe we were affected very dramatically by the events of September 11 and we had to respond in a way that was difficult. However, when I saw lines of traffic some 40 kilometres long leading to the bridge, when I saw we could not have our flow of goods back and forth, when I realized merchants had difficulty getting their products back and forth between Detroit and Windsor or areas in the United States and Canada, I certainly realized how important the border is to economic stability in Canada.

The questions that were raised on security and safety in Canada were certainly questions that needed to be raised, but I believe that questions which at some point suggested Canada was a haven for terrorism were very unfair, invalid questions. If we look at the real statistics of the border, I think it will answer some of those issues.

We have a border that is 8,800 kilometres long. Shared between Canada and the United States, it is the longest demilitarized border in the world. Over 200 million border crossings took place in 1999 between Canada and the United States. Two billion dollars a day in trade goes back and forth between Canada and the United States.

There were questions about Canadians and how secure we had made our border. Canada already had at that point deployed far more people at the border than the United States had. In fact, Canada had 350 citizenship and immigration inspectors and 2,400 customs inspectors, while the United States had 700 customs inspectors and 515 immigration inspectors. Canada had twice the number of people securing our border at that time that the United States did. Last year Canadian officials stopped 21,000 criminals from entering Canada from the United States, while the American agents stopped 14,000 criminals from entering the U.S. from Canada.

These numbers tell a pretty important story: that our borders were secure. Our borders were looked upon as relatively secure in comparison to all nations. However, as we all know, September 11 created a new problem that had to be intensively looked at, looked at in a more serious way, and a great deal more effort had to be made.

As the Deputy Prime Minister just pointed out, several groups in the House and in the Canadian government started to look very

carefully at our immigration policies and our points of entry, at what we could do to secure the nation and what we could do to make sure goods and services flowed back and forth across the border in the most secure way, while still making sure that trade between Canada and the United States was not interfered with so that the intense economic loss of jobs would not be felt as strongly in Canada as it could have been.

Canadians have groups abroad that screen and check people when they get on airplanes coming into Canada. Last year alone, agents stopped 6,000 people with fraudulent, forged documents from coming to Canada. In the past five years, 33,000 people have been stopped from entering Canada.

• (1535)

Canada and the United States are both committed to travel between our countries being as open and as secure as possible. At the same time, we have to make sure that the economic stability of both countries is maintained.

We have introduced legislation to make sure that we are diligent in dealing with terrorists and terrorist activities. As a matter of fact, in last year's budget we included some \$6.5 billion in security measures.

We talked about airport security and the security required in airports. We took several measures that were very important to all of us with regard to airport security: armed officers on aircraft flying in Canada and into Canada; better trained personnel to screen passengers and carry-on baggage; new state of the art explosive detection systems in Canada's airports; enhancing policing in airports; permanent modifications to secure aircraft cockpit doors; and enhancing the security zones at airports for better handling of passengers and facilities.

There is no question that when we look at the security in airports things have been very much increased. I believe that was because of September 11, but for someone to say that before September 11 many Canadians would have expected those issues to be necessary, again, I do not believe it is accurate.

Quite frankly, September 11 did change the ball game. I can remember going to meetings in Windsor and talking with those folks involved in the Ambassador Bridge, with people involved in Ford, General Motors and Chrysler Corporation, and with tool and die operators, people who were all very involved in having a free flow of goods, information and people back and forth across the border to make sure our economies continue.

One of the major problems that did come up when a businessman from Dearborn, Michigan had a meeting with business people in Windsor was that a delay of an hour, two hours or three hours at the border was unsatisfactory and would not allow that trade to go back and forth, would not allow those meetings to go on. Therefore, initially for the first month after September 11, we were very much hamstrung by our ability to have meetings and carry on different operations.

Supply

When I look at questions about business in Windsor, a lot of the business community in Windsor was very concerned, from the retail aspect to all the aspects of casinos and the auto industry. The businesses were being curtailed in their ability to compete on the same basis as they could before September 11. Their main plea was "open the borders so that we can have secure travel back and forth, put the resources in place that are required for safety, but make sure that we do not infringe upon the business movement in our community". I believe the Canadian government did just that in its budget for security.

On top of that, many dollars were put into the military to make sure we could move those troops into Afghanistan that were required to help in the battle against terrorism. We did a fair amount for a nation of 30 million people. I believe Canada has a tremendous track record of providing military support. As the Prime Minister said earlier, there are some 3,000 troops in Afghanistan today. That is considerable for a nation our size.

Our dedicated work with the Americans is documented very well at every step along the way. The Deputy Prime Minister, with Governor Ridge, has carried on discussions from the beginning of October, moving forward. I believe that the primary target of the Canadian government has been to ensure that we have safe, secure borders and at the same time, regarding the economic concerns for Canadians trading with our American partner, which takes over half of our goods every year, make sure that lines of communication, security and trade are maintained, because the U.S. is our major partner.

• (1540)

Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, PC/DR): Madam Speaker, I have a couple of comments in response to my colleague across the way.

First, there is nothing in the motion that specifically refers to September 11 although that has certainly framed a fair bit of our comment and understandably so. I believe the government is a little sensitive because in many ways it has been sleeping on many of these issues. Yes, it has embarked on some steps since September 11 but it was certainly woefully unprepared prior to September 11. Now we are in the act of trying to play catch up in many of these areas.

My colleague from Medicine Hat mentioned that there are about 27,000 failed refugee claimants in the country. We do not know where they are. That is a security issue. We know that terrorists have come through Canada before. The Ressam case is well documented.

We know that we have a long undefended border. We also know that because our neighbour to the south implemented a border patrol it catches many people crossing our borders all the time. The Americans intercept those smuggling guns, people and drugs across the undefended border. We have very limited resources in that particular area of border security. If it were not for the help provided on the south side of the border by our American friends, we would see more difficulties in that particular area.

I also want to point out that the government has cut spending to the military. The auditor general has said billions of dollars need to go back in just to get back to the point where it once was. It is the same government that cut the ports police prior to September 11. By attrition it has been responsible for many of the security issues we

are now dealing with that have been highlighted by the September 11 incidents.

Would my colleague agree that prior to September 11 we were woefully unprepared and there is still lots of work to do in the area of national security for which the government is accountable?

Mr. Jerry Pickard: Madam Speaker, obviously there is a great deal to do.

There is no question that September 11 was a point of critical change. I do not believe that anyone anticipated what would happen on September 11 and that is very unfortunate.

The member mentioned that we do not know where some refugees are in the country. We do not have an exit policy. When refugees are sent from this country it is true we do not keep track of everyone who leaves, nor did the United States, nor do most countries in the free world. It is common among most nations of the free world. Canada was exactly the same as other nations in the free world.

The member made a point about criminals moving into the U.S. I believe he said the Americans capture people carrying drugs, and others. At our borders, 21,000 criminals who were attempting to come into Canada were stopped last year alone, while there were only 14,000 going from Canada to the United States.

That would say to me that we are stopping more criminals coming from the United States than the U.S. is from Canada.

A third fact relevant to the comments made is that 40% of the refugees coming to Canada come from the United States. Why? Because it is easier for people from many countries of the world to enter the United States than it is to enter Canada. They enter the United States and come to our borders for entry.

I believe a lot of the member's facts need to be researched a great deal more than they have been before being put forward in the House.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am sorry to see that there does not appear to be a quorum in the House to continue such an interesting debate.

And the count having been taken:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The House does not have quorum. Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Since we now have quorum, we shall resume debate.

[English]

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, the member for Chatham—Kent Essex mentioned that post-September 11, given the new airport security regime that has been put in place, the security guards at airports have been replaced. I have been paying very close attention to this file. The member said that a number of airport security guards and baggage screeners have been replaced at airports. That was in the member's speech. I want to ask him exactly how many have been replaced because I do not know of a single one.

Mr. Jerry Pickard: Madam Speaker, I did not say that many security guards have been replaced. The fact that I made was there is much more equipment in airports and in the airports themselves we have a lot more security equipment that is coming in for the protection of passengers and travellers.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam.

I have to say at the outset that I think my friend from Chatham—Kent Essex really did gild the lily a little bit today in his defence of the government over the last number of months as it tries to respond to what occurred on September 11. I mean that in a couple of senses.

First, I do not think anyone would question that the primary role of government should be to provide protection for citizens of the country and their property. That has to be the first role of any government. There is no question that the record of the Liberal government since it has been in power since 1993 is lamentable when it comes to protecting the lives and property of citizens.

I point to when there was a financial crunch, the first things that got cut were the things that were necessary to protect the lives of Canadian citizens, for example the funding for the RCMP. There was a 28% cut in funding for CSIS. Even now with the new money that has come back in there is less money than there was at the beginning of the Liberal government's reign. The Department of National Defence has become a story of almost mythical proportion. The government has savaged national defence and has failed to back it in many respects.

I simply have to say at the outset that the Liberal record when it comes to providing any kind of support for national security is terrible.

I remind members that a couple of years ago the Deputy Prime Minister was in charge of running a security task force that was to meet periodically to discuss security issues. It met once or twice and then due to lack of interest, it did not meet again. That is simply inexcusable.

My friend from Chatham—Kent Essex who just spoke a few minutes ago said September 11 was a wake up call for us. In a sense he is right but there were many wake up calls along the way that should have alerted the Canadian government to the fact that this is a dangerous world and that there are terrorists around the world who mean to do damage to countries like Canada.

In 1993 there was a bombing at the World Trade Center. Maybe that should have been a little hint that some of those people were out there operating. My friend from Dewdney—Alouette mentioned the

Supply

Ressam case, a terrorist who came through Canada, lived in Montreal and then tried to enter the United States on a ferry from Victoria and was ultimately caught. He had plans to blow up LAX, Los Angeles airport. He had been living in Canada. Subsequently an associate revealed that there were plans to set off a bomb in Montreal in a section where a lot of Jewish people lived.

That should cause us some concern. I am simply arguing that it is improper, it is not correct to say that we did not have any warning signs before September 11 that this is a dangerous world. We had lots of warning signs.

I point to the fact that I and many others raised concerns in the House about government ministers attending fundraising dinners sponsored by a group that CSIS and the Canadian high commissioner in Sri Lanka said was a fundraising group for the Tamil Tigers terrorist organization. We raised it in the House. How did the government respond? It accused us first of all of being racist because of course that is the catch all now. If the government wants to dodge or cut off debate about serious issues, it just hurls out that racist accusation and hopes that everybody runs for cover instead of taking it seriously as it should because it is a serious issue.

CSIS warned the government over and over again well before September 11 that Canada was a home to a number of terrorist organizations. The former chief strategist for CSIS commented before a Senate committee saying that there were 50 terrorist organizations operating in Canada well before September 11.

I am afraid it simply does not wash to say that there were no indications before September 11 that this was a serious problem.

• (1550)

I have laid out some of the warning signs. I will argue that the government has still not done enough. I hope other members will flesh that out. I want to talk about where we go in the future.

This motion condemns the government for its failure to present a national security policy. It is absolutely true that the government has failed to do that. How do we protect our country properly in the future? I will answer that question in part by telling the House about my recent journey to Cheyenne Mountain in Colorado which is where we, along with the United States, run Norad, the North American aerospace defence command.

Since 1958 Canadians and Americans have worked together at Norad to jointly provide a defence of North American airspace. Believe it or not, on September 11 it was two Canadians who were in charge at Norad. One of them was Captain Mike Jellinek who was at the helm of the command centre when the first of those planes went into the World Trade Center. It was Captain Jellinek along with Major General Eric Findley who were in charge at Cheyenne Mountain on September 11 making the calls along with the Federal Aviation Administration in the United States to get planes and commercial jetliners out of the air to ensure that no more of them would fly into buildings. Those two Canadians were involved in helping scramble jets to make sure there were no more problems with more aircraft.

Supply

It is a wonderful model of how Canada and the United States can work together on so many other issues. Those issues range from security sharing right through to things like a joint integrated northern command to protect the entire North American continent not only from attack by air but from attack by sea and land as well. It is a fantastic model which is now 43 years old. There is no question that it works. We saw it when we were there. Every member who joined us, Liberal and NDP as well as a Conservative senator, agreed that it worked extraordinarily well. It should be a model for the future.

My former leader, Preston Manning, on his last day here, spoke about the fact that in the future we will need to think about forming strategic alliances in a lot of ways in order to solve the problems that we face. He is absolutely correct. It makes so much sense to work with our closest ally, our largest trading partner, the United States, to protect the North American continent.

I was happy to hear the Deputy Prime Minister suggest that harmonization of some laws was needed as well as some agreements on information sharing and that kind of thing. I fear that the government will not go far enough in ensuring that happens.

I need to remind members across the way who are concerned about sovereignty that the greatest threat to our sovereignty occurs when terrorists and dangerous criminals come into our country and threaten the lives of our citizens. That is the greatest threat to our sovereignty; it is not being overtaken by Americans. We already know we can work very well with the Americans through Norad and a dozen other security agreements which are already in place. We should be expanding it so we can take advantage of the vast resources the U.S. has to offer to protect our country. I will make one final point with respect to that.

In the very near future we will be discussing in Canada not only the idea of an integrated northern command to protect the North American continent, but we will also be talking about ballistic missile defence. When we were at Norad we saw the fantastic facilities it has to detect ballistic missile launches anywhere in the world. It tracks a couple of hundred a year. Canadians are very involved in this. As I pointed out, the fellow in charge of the command centre is a Canadian, a navy captain, Mike Jellinek.

• (1555)

If we agree to move forward with ballistic missile defence then Canada will undoubtedly sit at the table when decisions are being made about protecting the North American continent through the new ballistic missile defence shield. It is important to keep that in mind when we are discussing this issue. Canada will have a major say in how ballistic missile defence works and in how it will protect the North American continent if we say yes to BMD when the Americans ask us for co-operation.

I will close by simply urging Liberal colleagues across the way to remember that the first priority of any government is to protect its citizens and their property. I would argue the government has failed completely to do that in the past. Since September 11 it has awoken to the necessity to start doing that, but we urge it not to fall asleep again as time passes by.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to my colleague with great interest. He brought

forth a bunker mentality which says that we need ballistic missiles. I am not sure where he was going, but I remember the Normandy invasion in the 1940s and the bunker mentality of the Germans. It was like everybody is coming to get us.

Does my colleague have a vision that Canada is a country which is at the brink of being invaded and that the folks across the way are pointing thousands of missiles at us?

It is one way of saying we want the protection of the Americans. We have to co-operate with the Americans but in Canada we have an autonomy. We have something that is uniquely Canadian: our great country has not been at war for the last 200 years.

Is my colleague proposing that the great plains of midwest Canada have the mentality of silos and minutemen ready to go up?

Mr. Monte Solberg: Madam Speaker, I am afraid my friend betrays his ignorance. Ballistic missile defence has nothing to do with putting ballistic missiles in Canada, or for that matter in the United States. It has to do with defending against ballistic missiles from aggressive countries outside the North American continent. A cursory reading of the newspapers would reveal that to him.

When he says that we have not been at war in 200 years, perhaps he forgets the Korean war, the Persian Gulf war, World War I and World War II. Perhaps a reading of a history book would equip him as well.

Canada already works closely with the United States to protect the North American continent through Norad against air attack from unfriendly countries. That was especially necessary during the cold war. There is no question that to a big degree, now that relations have warmed with the former Soviet Union, now Russia, we do not face as big a threat but we still face a threat.

There are still concerns, for instance, about mainland China and the capacity that it has to deliver ICBMs to the North American continent. We have to worry about North Korea which is now developing a missile that can come close to reaching the North American continent.

Many people at Norad are very concerned about cruise missiles which could be delivered from ships off the North American continent that could carry nuclear warheads.

The idea is not to have ballistic missiles launched from North America to knock them down. That is not what we are talking about. We are talking about a missile defence shield that would use conventional missiles which do not have warheads on them but would simply run into other missiles coming our way. It is a dangerous world out there. After September 11, I am surprised my friend does not recognize it.

Supply

• (1600)

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I want to refer to the last comments of my colleague from Scarborough—Agincourt in concert with what was said by my colleague from Medicine Hat. If the Liberal mentality is that we wait for a disaster to happen to set up parameters to defend against the disaster, it is no wonder the government has been in such a rush to set up even basic security parameters post-September 11.

That exact mentality causes Canada to be weak and causes Canadians consternation about the future of the country and our capacity to defend ourselves. Because something has not happened in the arena of ballistic missiles does not mean that we should not then therefore defend against it. That sort of mentality is frankly frightening for most Canadians.

We are debating the Progressive Conservative motion that reads:

That this House condemn the government for its failure to implement a national security policy to address the broad range of security issues, including those at Canadian ports of entry and borders, and call on the government to reassert Parliament's relevance in addressing these and other public policy issues.

I agree wholeheartedly with the motion. I encourage all members of the House including all backbench Liberal members to agree with it. I know a number of Liberal members in the House are not happy with the way the government is being led certainly by the frontbenches on the issues of national security and so on.

One particular event happened in the House, but because I only have about nine or so minutes left I want to specifically circumscribe my comments to the issue of the \$24 air tax, how it relates to airport security and what the government has done in that area.

The government said after September 11 that our security was not where it should be given the new realities of airport and airline security and what we need to be doing. It also said at the same time that our airport and airline security standards, however, were still higher than those of the United States.

The government then asked those of us on the transport committee to hear witness after witness, hour after hour, and spend tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars. It asked us to travel across North America to hear from witnesses and to look at different ways of improving Canada's airport and airline security. We did that. We went to Washington, D.C., and to Pearson airport. We took tours of airports all over the country, heard from countless witnesses and drafted 14 recommendations.

They included the idea that we had to increase airport security, that the new improvements in airport and airline security should be financed by a group of financiers including airports, airlines, general revenue and passengers, and that the cost of improved security should be dovetailed so that no one specific element of the transportation sector or one branch of Canadians would get nailed harder than another. The cost should be spread out.

Recommendation No. 14 of the transport committee was supported unanimously by every member of the committee including every Liberal present at the committee and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord. We all said that this was how it should come forward.

What happened? Lo and behold we tabled our report and half a week later the government came down with its budget which said that it would impose a \$24 air security tax specifically on passengers. To heck with what the transport committee said. To heck with what its own Liberals said. To heck with what the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport said. It nailed consumers only, travellers themselves, with a \$24 tax.

That was utter disrespect of the committee system. For that reason alone I would think that certainly members of that committee would support the motion we are discussing today.

There are many problems with the \$24 tax, which is one of the reasons the government has been pilloried on radio talk shows, in the newspapers and everywhere else about it. No real Liberal is standing to say the \$24 tax is a great idea and that we have to do it. There are many holes in this policy. I have raised this a number of times in the House in question period.

Among these problems is the fact that last year Canada's airlines paid \$72 million in airport screening. They cut cheques to the government saying that they understood they benefited specifically more than other people in this regard. The government mandated that they spend \$72 million for airport screening. As of the December budget the government has said it did not want the \$72 million. It has the \$24 tax. It has the taxpayers in its line of sight and is going after them. Why is the government not asking air carriers to pay the extra \$72 million they used to pay and lowering the \$24 tax a bit?

• (1605)

Another problem is that last year prior to September 11 per passenger screening was \$1.10 per emplanement. It is now \$12 or 10 times the amount. When average Canadians go to the airport I do not think they will see 10 times the number of security guards, 10 times the number of metal detectors or 10 times the number of baggage screeners. It is just will not happen. However the government is asking taxpayers to pay tenfold the amount they paid last year.

In the United States the government said that its security was here and that we were ahead of it. The United States implemented airport security to raise it up to the Canadian standard and maybe even exceed it. With the variation between Canadian standards and American standards and given that we were further ahead, Americans are charging \$5 for a round trip or, adjusted for Canadian dollars, \$8 for a round trip. What are we charging? It is \$24. This is defeating the government's own logic.

Supply

The Liberal government says that our security is better than that of the Americans. We have a higher starting point but it will charge Canadians triple to improve it so that we meet American standards. How does that square? Average Canadian citizens think it is just a bunch of blarney. It is and they are right.

The \$24 tax will finance \$2.2 billion in aviation security needs. The government said that \$2.2 billion was the number it would finance over five years. It picked a number out of the air. Thus \$2.2 billion divided by the average number of passengers that flew over the last couple of years adds up to \$24. That is what it put in the budget so that bang, it would become law.

It did no impact study whatsoever on what it would mean to regional carriers or to low cost carriers in small communities. It did not even listen to the transport committee. It did not consult a single air carrier. It just said that \$2.2 billion over five years divided by the number of passengers was \$24. That was the number.

It is nonsensical. Of the \$2.2 billion in airport improvements over \$1 billion is to buy EDS or electronic bomb detecting type equipment. That is fine. The official opposition supports purchasing the new and best equipment possible because Canadians should be safe when they are flying. However the problem is the government will pay upfront cash for all that equipment in year one.

There are two problems in that regard. The first problem is that the equipment will not be available for one to two years because there is a backlog of American airports that are already ordering this stuff. We are paying cash up front for a service, for technology that we will not see for another year.

The private sector, and this is where the Liberal government does not get it, has some lessons to teach the government. Once in a while it would be helpful if the government would listen.

Dentists and chiropractors are two examples. Dental chairs cost roughly \$20,000 to \$25,000. A chiropractic table costs about the same. When they buy those as small business people, which is what they are, they amortize the cost of the equipment over the life of the equipment. They say the equipment will last them roughly 12 to 15 years so they amortize the cost of it and keep their payments down.

The government is doing the opposite. This equipment, the EDS, the bomb detection equipment, should last 10, 15 or maybe up to 18 or 20 years and the government is paying cash up front in year one. What kind of nonsensical fiscal irresponsible financing is that and at what cost so that it can meet its target of \$2.2 billion over five years without having done a single impact study?

Even worse is if we consider the numbers and how it arrived at the amount. The 43 million passengers that were screened last year do not include connecting passengers. The government has said that 43 million passengers flew last year. It divided the 43 million over five years at \$12 per emplanement and reached the \$4.5 million number for new improvements per year.

There are a number of problems in that regard. Among them is the fact that last year was the worst year on record for commercial aviation in terms of emplanements at 43 million people flying. In March of this year Air Canada and WestJet have both reported that their passenger numbers are back up to normal. In fact Air Canada

just rehired a few hundred of its former employees. WestJet has just purchased two brand new 767s. They are back. Things are improving. Air traffic is coming back. The numbers will go up. The number of 43 million passengers was the real low ball number.

What has the government done? It has taken 43 million passengers and has dropped the number to 36 million. It is assuming that only 36 million passengers will fly next year, so 36 million times the \$12 over five years equals \$2.2 billion. What the government will not admit but should admit because it is so painfully obvious is that more than 36 million people will fly. More than 43 million people will fly, which was the number for last year. It could be in the neighbourhood of 50 million people. If we take 50 million people times \$12, all that money and all those tax dollars will go straight to the finance minister and to the Liberal government.

● (1610)

What is even worse, that money is supposed to go toward creating a new air security independent authority that will not be set up until November or December this year. People will be paying for a service that they do not get and, of course, as is the Liberal way, all the money will not go to the authority. It will go straight into general revenue and the government will get to do what it wants with the massive surpluses. It is totally irresponsible. The motion speaks to it and I support it.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague across the way started by speaking about some comments I made previously. I wonder whether he really lives in the 21st century or whether he still uses a donkey to come to work. He wants to have security at the airports in 2010 the way business was done in the 1900s, which is like having a donkey to come to work.

He said that when a dentist buys new equipment it is amortized over the five or ten year period that the dentist's chairs might hold up. I go to a dentist and his chairs are probably about 15 years old. If he paid \$1,000 about 15 years ago, over the last 15 years, that would be about \$50 or \$60 a year. The hon. member says that the equipment we will use at the airport will be good for the next 20 years so we should amortize it over 20 years. In the year 2020 my colleague across the way wants to have the equipment we have today. That is like telling me that I have to use the 286 computer in my office that I had when I was first elected to the House and not a Pentium 2. I was wondering how his staff would feel if they were still in the stone ages of computer programming and had to use a 286 computer. When we are talking about equipment—

An hon. member: They work for dinosaurs.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis: My colleague from Mississauga said that they work for dinosaurs. This is exactly what my colleague across the way wants us to do in the year 2010 or 2020. He wants us to use dinosaurs. He wants us to have equipment at our airports that will be 20 years old.

Supply

He himself said today that the Americans are behind us. He went on to say that we are here, the Americans are there and now they want to catch up to us. Because we are here and the Americans are there, we have seen fairly well what happened on September 11. What happened on September 11 was not some terrorists coming from overseas that hit the twin towers. It was not planes coming from Canada that hit the twin towers. That happened internally. That country is supposed to have the most up to date security in the world. It happened internally.

Does my hon. colleague want to be up to date or does he want to use a donkey to come to work? What he is alluding to is certainly not simply the use of a donkey, the wheel has not even been invented yet according to my hon. colleague.

Mr. James Moore: Madam Speaker, no rhetorical farce is ever fully complete without a cameo appearance by the member for Scarborough—Agincourt.

Speaking of donkeys coming to work, the idea of amortizing the cost of the equipment over the life of the equipment is standard practice in the private sector. I am not saying we should have 20 year old security equipment at airports 20 years from now. It would be up to the government to decide what constitutes the life of the equipment.

If the member believes that the airports should replace this equipment after five years, then the government should set it at five years and scale the cost of the equipment over five years, not in year one. All I am advocating is that anything would be better than paying it all in year one, which is what the government is planning to do.

It can scale it or pick a number but it should not pay all the cash up front. I will tell the member why. He is from a constituency in Toronto. Toronto has a lot of airline competition and it will continue over the years because of the size of the population. However I would invite the member to go to Grand Prairie or to Prince George. In fact, he might want to bring the former secretary of state for multiculturalism, the member for Vancouver Centre, when he goes to Prince George and investigate those supposed cross burnings while he is at it. He should go to Prince George, to Vernon, to Grand Prairie, to places in Saskatchewan, to Churchill Falls and tell the people that the government should pay cash up front for all this equipment, which it does not need to do, and that they have to pay a huge tax up front which could drive small, local, regional air carriers into the ground and people will not have jet service.

The member can make glib comments all he wants about donkeys, dinosaurs and all that nonsensical stuff, but it is a substantive policy question that will have a real impact on small communities and local small regional carriers. I would encourage him to take a plane outside of Toronto or Ottawa, because the impact is real. I do not say that as some rhetorical slap, I mean that sincerely. He should fly to remote parts of this country and tell them there that there will not be an impact from this tax, because they will tell him a very different story.

• (1615)

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to have all my colleagues here today and to address this issue.

It is interesting that the one thing I have not heard in here today is perhaps a little mention of what has gone on in the last couple of days in relation to why we are even having this debate.

I would not say that we enjoyed it, but for many of us it was an incredibly moving experience to watch some of the programs on television and read some of the articles about some of the survivors, and to see the demonstration in New York City with the pillars of light reaching up to the sky. The commentary was that they were reaching up close to where the heroes are at the present time.

We have had six months to digest what actually happened. It is such a remarkable time to be in public office and involved in positions of leadership in our community, to try to discuss the plan and how we should be reacting. Someone said in here that we were not prepared for 9/11. I have to say that probably is true. I cannot imagine that anyone was prepared or had a plan in place to deal with the scope of what we witnessed on September 11.

For members to stand here now, six months later, and hurl accusations across the floor that we were not prepared, frankly seems somewhat trite and a waste of our time. On the other side of the coin, I hear little snippets of comments being made by members opposite indicating that they support many of the actions taken by the government, that they recognize that there have been some very tough decisions around new bills for security, potentially infringing on people's rights and their ability to move around this country, never mind crossing the border into the United States or flying overseas.

We live in such an incredibly different world. It is something that we could only have imagined in a fiction novel or an Arnold Schwarzenegger movie or something like that but it is here and it is every day. MPs come and go from this place on a weekly basis. On a Thursday afternoon or evening we go to the airport in Ottawa where we face lineups sometimes for more than an hour just to go through the security.

An hon. member: Shame.

Mr. Steve Mahoney: My colleague says shame but I am not going to complain about it, not when I am there. I want to make sure they are doing everything they have to do. If it means a bit of a delay, then so be it.

I have some trouble understanding why it is so difficult to leave Ottawa through the airport as opposed to Pearson where I find the flow is quite easy and back to normal. It is still secure. The staff certainly check everyone and all the electronics but there is not a lineup for 45 minutes or an hour to get on an aircraft. I am not totally clear as to why that is.

I am used to getting heckled from the other side but not from my own colleagues. This is quite an experience but if that is how I have to debate I am quite prepared to do that as well without a problem.

I just raise the point that when I hear the criticisms I try to read between the lines. I have seen a little softening because members opposite realize that Canadians expect tough security now. They understand the importance of it. They understand that we live in a different world. Maybe there is a bit of this 9/11 fatigue but I do not think so.

Supply

•(1620)

I have heard some in the media say that people are feeling fatigued about the whole issue. However I think it is still something that burns in the soul, in the heart and in the mind of every person in the world who saw the horrific calamity that occurred on September 11.

There are some costs that go with these issues, these problems. Some of the difficulty frankly that I have with some of my friends opposite, particularly, is that they seem to want action and solutions, but they do not want to pay for it or they do not like the way the government has decided to pay for it. I have heard nothing but criticism of the tax at the airports in the last two days of debate.

Let us have an alternative because we have to pay for it. I am sure no one on the other side of the House is suggesting that we should not have the security in place at the airports. If indeed we are going to have that, we have to pay for it.

We can bash our airlines all we want. I for one am a little tired of the hits on Air Canada. It is just struggling to survive like everybody else. The impact on that airline is no less significant than the impact on every airline in North America. Yet we tend to want to shoot the messenger or we want to pick on something that is most unpopular because perhaps it is seen as a monopoly.

I personally am proud of Air Canada. It offers a fine service. As Canadians we need to ensure that the airline continues to be profitable and is able to service all communities. At the same time it has to be safe and secure. The people at Air Canada know that, and we have to pay for that.

The solution I hear from the opposite side is that they want all these security issues and they want us to go to war. I think there was a time when one of the leaders of the opposition, I cannot remember which one, stood up and demanded that the Prime Minister send our aircraft off to war. I remember the Prime Minister asked that the hon. member to please tell him exactly where they should be sent. The opposition had no idea. It just wanted them to get out there, mount their horses and go get those guys.

I am afraid it is just not that simple. This is an extremely sophisticated world we live in with a lot of difficulties. As a result of that, we have to find new and creative ways. The most important thing that I believe the government and the Prime Minister did immediately following 9/11 was not to have a knee-jerk reaction. They calmly surveyed the situation, studied what had to be done, talked to our friends in the United States and developed a plan that made some sense.

I have heard very little criticism from the opposition or anywhere in the country about the appointment of our new Deputy Prime Minister to head up our homeland defence along with the governor of Pennsylvania in the United States. These two men have been working very hard over the last several months and as recently as in the last couple of days to develop an action plan. It is a 30 point security action plan to deal with the borders.

Instead of focusing on all the good things, which I will try to do in a moment, what do we hear from the opposite side, and I am talking about the Alliance? We hear that it is terrible and that we have terrorist cells operating in our country. We hear that we have

refugees that are sneaking in in the dead of night across an undefended border. Our immigration system is a disaster.

I remember turning on the CBC news in my hotel room in Saint John, New Brunswick. A congressman from Texas by the name of Lamar Smith was being interviewed. He said that he thought the big problem that led to September 11 was the leaky Canadian border. I am quite sure that Lamar Smith has never been north of the Mason-Dixon Line. Good old Lamar said that he had figured out what the problem was. Guess who buys into that. All the folks with pickup trucks outside with curtains in the windows. They are buying into that kind of attitude and mentality.

•(1625)

It is absolutely disgraceful. It is almost as if some people are disappointed that we have not been able to link at least one of the 19 terrorists who carried out that deed on September 11 to Canada. It would be great theatre in here if we found out that one of those people came out of this country or had actually lived here.

To finish that thought, the other thing we hear is that we should harmonize our borders and do everything the Americans do. Excuse me, I do not want to be hard but I wear a pin on my lapel that has both a Canadian and American flag. I feel the same kind of warmth and friendship to our neighbours in the United States as others feel. I went to a boarding school 100 years ago where many of my classmates were from the United States. I have a lot of friends on the other side of the border.

It was not our immigration system that broke down. It was theirs. It was not our security system that broke down. It was theirs. It was not our flight instructors who enrolled these people in educational programs to teach them how to fly an aircraft. It was theirs. Does that mean that all of a sudden they are bad people or they did not do their homework?

We know Americans are very conscious about security and their position in the world. Long before 9/11 we saw on the news people burning American flags. We know the U.S. is a controversial nation throughout the world. However, on balance, it does a lot of good as the largest, most powerful nation of democratic freedom loving people in this world. I stand shoulder to shoulder with my American friends.

I reject anyone who either criticizes this government for not somehow cozying up to them or who says that we need to do more and meld all our policies together. I reject that because there is one thing I am proud of, in spite of the fact that I am proud to be a Canadian next door to the United States. I am proud to see the good hard work that our Deputy Prime Minister is doing in a calm, reasonable fashion to put together a 30 point action plan.

Our immigration committee toured the borders shortly after 9/11. The chairman of the committee took half the committee out into western Canada and as vice-chair I led the rest of the committee into eastern Canada. We went to St. Stephen and to Woodstock, New Brunswick; to Lacolle, Quebec; to Compton—Stanstead, Quebec; and to the airport in Dorval. We did not just stay on the Canadian side. We walked across bridges and through checkpoints. We met with Americans who did the same kind of work as their Canadian counterparts.

Across our border of 8,800 kilometres, Canada already deploys more people at the border than the United States. That is not what Lamar Smith would tell us and it sure is not what we hear from our friends in opposition, but it is a fact. Canada has 350 citizenship and immigration inspectors and 2,400 customs inspectors. The U.S. has 700 customs inspectors, 512 immigration inspectors and 310 border patrols.

Am I here to criticize them, to say that they are not doing enough to secure their border? No. I want to find out what the problems are. How do we bring a sense of confidence to both nations? We have to realize something. We are not just talking about people here. Eighty-seven per cent of our exports out of this country go to the United States. Canadians might be surprised to know that 25% of American exports come into Canada. It is not only people we are talking about, although obviously that is a critical factor. We are also talking about the flow of goods both ways.

• (1630)

The United States cannot afford to close the border any more than we can. What would happen to that country if it lost some large percentage of 25% of their exports into Canada? That is not in the cards and the Americans know that. That is not what we want to do.

How do we develop policies and programs that will secure the flow of goods and ensure that people can cross as freely as possible, as long as proper checks have been put in place?

I will briefly tell a story about a place called Lacolle, Quebec. It is on the Quebec-Vermont border, unlike the *West Wing* show that said it was the Ontario-Vermont border. That locale does not exist but it does exist if one goes to Vermont and the province of Quebec.

Lacolle is at the end of I-95 in the United States, which runs from the south end right through the states. People come up in buses who are not American citizens, but they are in the United States on legal visas. They are there studying or visiting or working in some capacity. They get off the bus and walk across the border into Canada and declare themselves to be refugees. How many are there? There are 5,000 people per year.

How many do the opposite? How many go from Canada and walk across the border into the United States in the same timeframe? There are 58. Someone might say that that is crazy and ask why it is happening. It is a thing called a safe third country agreement, which does not exist between our two nations and has been resisted up to now by the Americans.

It basically says, pursuant to the commitments of both countries under the Geneva convention, that we agree to provide safe harbour to people who are legitimate refugees. Our deal is to ensure that they are safe. We both accept refugees. If they are in the United States they are safe and no one would argue that they are not or that they are subjected to persecution or some kind of political difficulty or things of that nature. If they are in the United States, why are they allowed to walk across the border into Canada, 5,000 strong at one place in Quebec, and claim refugee status? It makes no sense at all.

We and the Americans can live up to our commitments under the Geneva convention by simply saying to those 5,000 people that we are sorry but if they want to come to Canada, the route is that they

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must apply for landed immigrant status in our country and it can be done right back from where they came.

That is not being cruel to those people. That is not subjecting them to some kind of cruel and unusual punishment. They are simply going back into the United States of America, a safe third country, at which time they can apply to come to Canada.

In spite of the perhaps lack of total understanding of the relationship between the two countries by some of our political colleagues in the United States, hopefully we will arrive at an agreement fairly soon which will see both Canada and the U.S. not allowing refugee claimants to come from either country, Canada to the U.S. or the U.S. to Canada. Why is that important?

It seems to me that it is fairly obvious. What that then does is free up the resources that are needed to process these people on either side of the border. This is not a unique problem to Lacolle, Quebec. The committee that went to western Canada, led by the chairman of the committee, found that the same thing happening out west.

There are some things we can do and are doing as it relates to immigration. We need not throw out the fearmongering of refugees and all these people coming through in the night. In spite of the fact that we have all of these border crossings and unpatrolled areas, we entered into an agreement called the IBET agreement. We recently expanded it to the marine sector as well.

Teams of Canadians and Americans will work together along the undefended stretch of border. They will patrol on horseback, not donkeys as the member from Scarborough talked about earlier, on ATVs, on snowmobiles and in boats. Our two countries are working together.

• (1635)

In spite of the fact that in this hallowed place we from time to time have difficulty working together we can be assured that our men and women on the frontline, at the borders, in border patrols, and in the IBET system are working hand in hand with their counterparts in the United States. They even actually intermarry and develop families together, live together and work together.

We have a safe and secure border that can be and will be improved with our 30 point action plan led by our Deputy Prime Minister.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, every now and then I find myself, to my surprise, agreeing with the member for Mississauga West. I completely agree with him about the issue of a safe third country. I also agree with the start of his speech where he talked about the fact that the government was not prepared for September 11. During the course of his dissertation I was wondering what he had against people who owned pickup trucks. In my constituency we call them country limousines.

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It was the former Reform Party, now the Canadian Alliance, who was driving home the issue to the government that the refugee determination system was completely broken down. It was this party that was driving home the fact that the ports police should never have been disbanded. It was this party that finally forced the solicitor general into giving some funding and some upgrade to the CPIC system enabling it to track criminal activity.

The minister for international financial institutions, who is in the House with us today, said yesterday that there had not been any kind of study relative to the cost or the benefit or how much profit there would be as far as the airport tax was concerned. That \$24 charge would take a highly creative and inventive airline like WestJet to its knees because of its low cost and the fact that it was tacking an additional \$24. The minister admitted yesterday that he and his government had no idea how bad this was going to be for WestJet.

Apart from the \$24, considering that his government has finally, as a result of September 11, decided to put between \$200 million and \$250 million into security, how does he feel that \$200 million to \$250 million measures up to the \$700 million and counting that the government has already put into a useless gun registry that simply registers duck hunter's guns?

This is the most ridiculous comparison in the world. The government is putting three times as much money and taxpayer resources into a useless registry system as it is putting into a system that would give Canadians safe and secure borders in our country. Would the hon. member care to comment on that?

• (1640)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Before I allow the hon. member to answer the question I remind all hon. members that we do not mention the presence or the absence of any member in the House.

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Madam Speaker, it never fails. In any debate, no matter what it is, it could even be health care, we somehow come back to gun control from Alliance members. My only advice is they should get over it, register their guns, stop the whining and deal with the real issues.

I hear suggestions that the Alliance has had some ideas that it has put into the mix. I have spent some time travelling with this member and he does have good ideas. Some of his colleagues have also actually put forward good ideas. It is unfortunate that from time to time everyone starts elbowing to get up on the stage so they can all take credit instead of working together in a co-operative and responsive way.

I could come back and tell the House that it was the Alliance that demanded that we close down CIDA, for example, during the election and now it supports giving money to the Afghani people. There are all kinds of positions that we could discuss in terms of its responsibility. However that is not really what I wanted to do here today.

Some of our airlines are doing well and starting to do better. WestJet has recently made some announcements. It has acquired some new aircraft. I hope it burns up the skies because the more planes we have going the better opportunity we have to create increased competition and lower prices and move Canadians around.

It is time we stopped bashing Air Canada and started realizing how important that company is to the future economic success of the country.

We have to pay for these security measures one way or another. This is in fact a user pay fee and I am astounded that the party that would be if nothing else a party of user pay is opposed to this. However I guess it has run out of things to be opposed to.

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Madam Speaker, I remember my hon. friend making a speech in the House against the idea of a flat or single rate tax that was advocated by the Alliance, previously the Reform Party, prior to the last election campaign. Is this tax of \$24 a trip not like a single rate or flat tax? Is he not now supporting something he actually spoke against prior to the last election campaign?

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Madam Speaker, I am astounded that the member remembers any of my speeches. If I actually said that I am impressed that the member would actually remember it.

We all know we live in a different world since 9/11. We have all made speeches about the changes in the way we do things. We all realize that it has been absolutely necessary to respond in as broad, comprehensive and tough way as possible while maintaining the identity of being Canada. I think we have done that.

We see the airport security tax everyday as we travel across the country. We have increased security. The Canadian public supports it. The only people who do not support it are the people on the other side of the House.

Mrs. Betty Hinton (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I am not certain who the member across the way has been talking to. Certainly no one in my riding supports adding \$24 onto an airline ticket. In my riding we are asking why the government is putting the cost of security onto the public.

The idea behind travel is to get us from one end of the country to the other and to make us know each other better. When a \$24 tax, and that what it is, a tax, is added on top of this, it is unfair. If we made it a reasonable tax there would be more money than could possibly be needed for this in the first place. The government should take responsibility for the security of the air and not put that on the people who are travelling. If part of it has to be put on then it should be a reasonable amount of money.

I listened to the hon. member across the way say that we wanted Canada to go to war. We on this side of the House did not want Canada to go to war. We wanted to honour our NATO agreement and help our neighbours. When we did send our troops to Afghanistan we wanted to make certain that they were there equipped, not painting sheets so that they would be able to hide, and not one guy having a gun and other guy having the bullets. We wanted them equipped. What is wrong with sending an army and a navy that is equipped? Could the hon. member explain that to me because I do not understand it?

• (1645)

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Madam Speaker, let me deal with the issue of the security tax. I suppose we could have announced that there would be an increase in, for instance, the GST. We could increase that, or increase income tax, or do something more broad based, but the important aspect of this tax is that it pays for a service that is absolutely vital.

I assure members that I talk to people as I travel and to people in my community. They say to not quibble over \$12 or \$24. They want to make sure that their loved ones return and that they can move anywhere in this country or this continent and feel safe. That is the message that I have received quite clearly.

The hon. member said the Alliance did not want the country to go to war. This was not a debate about whether we should or should not go to war. We did not know where the war was. That was the issue. However that did not seem to matter to the leadership in the Alliance. It wanted us to send our troops off in the early days, to just get them going. Every day in question period it urged the government to just get them going, to get them over there and start fighting. That is the kind of lack of preparedness and lack of thought that the government thankfully has avoided in its policies.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, as you probably know already, I will be sharing my time with the member for Berthier—Montcalm. I rise today on this opposition day of the Progressive Conservative/Democratic Representative Coalition whose motion deals in part with national security.

At the outset, I would like to say that in spite of the fact that the last part of the motion is of some interest since it calls for greater involvement of parliament, the Bloc Québécois will not support the motion.

We are not questioning the appropriateness of looking at the need to put in place new measures to improve and enhance public safety.

Our message to all those who were expecting to tear a strip off the Bloc for its position on national security is that, contrary to what the Prime Minister dared claim before the House not so long ago, the fact that the Bloc is refusing to give free rein to the Liberal government on defence and national security issues does not mean that we are taking the side of terrorists nor that we are more concerned about their fate than about the protection of honest citizens. To claim such a thing is pure demagoguery.

First of all, either I do not quite understand the scope of the motion before us or my Coalition colleagues were asleep last fall. As it stands now, their motion states that the House of Commons should condemn the government for its failure to implement a national security policy.

I will refer to Bill C-42, the Public Safety Act, and to Bill C-36, which became the Anti-terrorism Act. I hope this will juggle their memory.

I am willing to believe that, with regard to this last bill, the opportunity for the Coalition to speak on the topic was substantially limited by the passing of a time allocation motion. However, I find it rather astonishing that they managed to forget the theme which

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captured the attention of parliamentarians, the media and the population as a whole from September to December.

Moreover, the Anti-terrorism Act was, in terms of its impact on individual rights and freedoms, the most significant piece of legislation on any legislative agenda since the notorious and now infamous War Measures Act, from which Quebec suffered the abuse in October 1970.

We must be careful and not agree too quickly with the coalition when it states that the government has not implemented a public security policy. I think it is appropriate, indeed necessary, to put things into perspective.

First of all, let me go over some of the security measures included in Bill C-42, which is still before the House at second reading.

First, the bill authorizes ministers and delegated officers to make security measures and interim orders in order to respond to security threats.

Second, it implements the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunitions, Explosives, and Other Related Materials.

Third, it provides for better control over the export and transfer of technology.

Fourth, it allows a senior immigration officer to suspend the consideration of a refugee claim.

It also creates military security zones.

Furthermore, it extends the powers of the National Energy Board to include matters relating to the security of pipelines and international power lines.

Finally, it authorizes the Superintendent of Financial Institutions to disclose information to the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada.

Now, in the Anti-terrorism Act, the government took the following measures.

First, it created a whole series of offences related to terrorism.

Second, it created new offences to counter intelligence gathering activities, including the unauthorized communication of special operational information.

• (1650)

Third, the rules of evidence were changed so as to allow the non-disclosure of evidence that could be prejudicial to national defence or to national security.

Then there is the possibility of intercepting communications without prior judicial authorization. Lastly, the Minister of Justice has the discretionary power to exempt information from the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act.

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Obviously, these measures were not taken under a national security policy, but the fact remains that these are 12 major measures, some of which went so far that we had to vote against the Anti-terrorism Act and we will have to do the same for Bill C-42. Moreover, there is a most important point that needs to be mentioned. Members should not forget that, in the most recent budget, which was tabled in December of last year, security got the lion's share with \$7.7 billion over five years.

The fundamental question we must ask ourselves is not whether the government should have taken or should be taking these security measures under a comprehensive, integrated, national policy or something like that. In fact, what is important is not the colour of the envelope but its content.

Therefore, we must ask ourselves if the government is showing initiative and if it is taking the appropriate measures. The answer to both these questions seems obvious to me. It is no in both cases.

With regard to the level of initiative shown by the government, one cannot escape the fact that this government is constantly in reactive mode. Seeing how it runs the country on a piecemeal basis, one does not have to look any further to find the reasons why the Americans are dictating the approach we should be taking with regard to security.

The Liberals have no idea what the term "proactive" means. The recent events that unfolded just confirmed what we already knew.

Furthermore, we have denounced the relevance of these measures on countless occasions throughout the legislative process involving Bills C-36 and C-42. We repeat this again today: the measures proposed by the government do not establish a fair balance between security and freedoms.

Some will say that, contrary to what we fear, Canada has not become a police state. However, even if the debate remains purely in the realm of the theoretical, the problem lies not in the fact that there has not yet been any abuses of wiretapping or any arbitrary arrests. The problem is that this possibility exists within the text of the bill. Also, it is helpful to remember that since Bill C-36 was passed, the crisis has subsided to a large extent and these measures have yet to be put to the test. The situation could be quite different if there were another crisis.

As well, if the measures proposed were as effective as the government claims, how can it explain the backlog at the borders and the fact that drug imports have not diminished since Operation Printemps 2001 and the tightening of border security since September 11?

In its February 2002 report entitled "Canadian Security and Military Preparedness", the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence examined the most vulnerable elements that the terrorists could make use of. The committee heard a wide range of witnesses including representatives of organizations responsible for the various aspects of security in the Montreal-Dorval and Vancouver international airports and in the maritime ports of Halifax, Vancouver and Montreal. In so doing the committee had the opportunity of examining the capabilities and security plans of these organizations. Moreover, the committee based its discussions and conclusions on the following premises:

1. The efficient use of security intelligence can help reduce the risks to society.
2. The limited resources available force us to discriminate in favour of cooperation both internally and externally.
3. The use of technology can enhance the effectiveness of security measures exponentially.

On the other hand, solutions as simple and affordable as the erection of a fenced security perimeter and a monitoring system could certainly increase port security. I cannot believe we needed the Senate to come up with that.

In conclusion, while this motion has a certain interest, the Bloc will not support it essentially because it is vague, ambiguous and too general to risk tying our hands for.

• (1655)

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, before I proceed, I want to say that I totally agree with what my colleague had to say about the motion.

For those who are watching, it might be interesting to read the motion once again, to fully appreciate the comments that can be made throughout the debate. It was not supposed to be a votable motion, but it will be following a decision made by the Speaker of the House.

The motion reads as follows: "That this House condemn the government for its failure to implement a national security policy to address the broad range of security issues, including those at Canadian ports of entry and borders, and call on the government to reassert Parliament's relevance in these and other public policy issues".

There is a part of this motion that we cannot disagree with, but there is also another part on which we cannot agree and, since this motion has been made a votable item, members will understand that we have to vote against it.

In the last few weeks, even the last few months, the Bloc Québécois has made its position clear on the bills the government introduced to address the events of September 11 and the issues of international crime and terrorism.

I said at the time, and it still holds true, that we do not have any real example of how this policy has been implemented or abused. As my colleague mentioned earlier, there will always be the potential for abuse as long as the legislation opens the door to certain things, and the legislation in question does open the door to this kind of abuse. I remember stating very clearly in this House that, if the government had a clear vision on how to fight terrorism, it should have submitted its anti-terrorism legislative agenda.

What did it do? First, it introduced Bill C-36, which provided for a whole series of new powers for police and law enforcement officers. It included very broad definitions and infringed upon rights and freedoms, all under cover of ensuring national security.

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I remember saying it. The police, the government and the ministers, to whom Bill C-36 gives great powers, bragged about these new powers. Twenty-four hours before this bill was introduced, one could not have imagined that such a piece of legislation would be introduced in this parliament, in a country called Canada. Canada is not a police state, as other countries may be.

Using as an excuse the events of September 11, the need to protect national security and the fact that the public was concerned, the government introduced Bill C-36. Even then, I had concerns about its application, and I still do. The fact that there has not been any abuse of these new powers so far does not mean that it will never happen.

In its great wisdom, the government did not unveil its entire legislative menu to fight terrorism. First, it put Bill C-36 through the House, and then it introduced another bill, Bill C-42, which went a little further. Unfortunately for the government, it went too far and met resistance.

We already had Bill C-36, which allowed electronic surveillance, gave increased powers to the police, and authorized arrests without a warrant. Then there was the whole issue of the sunset clause in the bill, which finally became a review clause. These powers already exist. Bill C-42, without giving increased powers, without providing for the establishment of military zones or something of the kind, went much too far, and it was just unacceptable.

• (1700)

Again today, we are debating Bill C-42; we are talking about it, but we have not adopted it. When will the government bring back Bill C-42? We will see.

However, we know that because of pressure from the United States, part of this bill was passed before Christmas because the U.S. had finally decided that no Canadian plane would be allowed to land in the U.S. if this part of the bill was not passed. We had no choice, economically, from the point of view of travelling and all that could result from refusing to pass that part of the legislation. We therefore had a vote and passed that part.

As for the legislation, as my colleague said earlier, the government seems to deal with in a piecemeal fashion. If the government really had a clear vision of the type of legislation needed to deal with terrorism effectively, it would not have gone about it this way. It would have introduced legislation as a package that we could have analyzed on the basis of our own experience and of the case law that exists in this country, with our way of doing things and with our charter of rights and freedoms. We could have analyzed the whole range of government initiatives to fight organized crime. Instead, it has been done bit by bit.

Worst yet, on top of giving excessive powers to some categories and putting forward legislation that is going too far, which I hear even from the police, the money is not forthcoming to make sure the act is implemented properly. It is all very nice to give powers to the police, but if we want these powers to be exercised properly, if we want that there be monitoring, to prevent abuse and to fight efficiently against terrorism, we must make sure we have the money to implement the act.

I can already hear the government say "We have allocated the money; we made an announcement". Indeed, it announced it would invest \$576 million over six years in national security, \$21 million of which had already been announced even before September 11. However, it lumped it all together to make the amount look bigger, to make itself look good and to score political points. It said "Five hundred and seventy-six million dollars over five years".

However, if we take away what had already been announced for various programs, we are left with \$87 million a year of new money to implement the Anti-terrorism Act, increase monitoring at borders and in ports, when we know that the government's position on ports is to cut personnel. Indeed, there have been layoffs in major ports, in the ports of entry for containers and ships coming from abroad. The government has made cuts when it was supposed to enhance port security.

It is so true that, in this respect, I read recently in the paper that the Americans were going to put their own people in Canadian ports to monitor everything heading for the United States through Canada. This is going too far. Canada is losing its sovereignty to foreign countries. On top of this, the border will be just about 100% monitored by the Americans.

Mr. Speaker, you seem to be in agreement with what I just said. I realize that what I am saying does not please the Liberals, but that is the reality. If Quebec were sovereign, we would have done things quite differently from the government across the way. This is another reason why Quebec must be sovereign, because we do things differently from the people across the way. Furthermore, it is the only way for Quebec to develop as it should.

However, I did not intend to talk about Quebec's sovereignty. Let us talk about Canada's sovereignty and the great Canadians opposite who kowtow to the Americans and give away a little more of Canada's sovereignty every day. One of the latest compromises is to allow Americans in Canadian ports to rule the roost with respect to the containers in transit to the United States.

• (1705)

This is the vision the members opposite have of Canada. I could have talked about this for hours, but it would seem that my time is up. This is a very interesting topic, but as my colleague said previously, we cannot support this motion for the reasons I mentioned and many other reasons, whether it pleases the government or not.

[English]

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his participation in the debate. He always brings an interesting perspective to this. I want to draw his attention back to the subject at hand, and that is this issue of port security, not just maritime ports but all ports of entry.

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I want to draw his attention to the Senate committee report, which I think he is familiar with. In that report, after the committee heard from a number of informed witnesses on the ground, it mentioned that organized crime was flourishing at many Canadian ports. The report stated specifically that it creates “fertile ground for terrorist activity...and shipment of weapons and other agents of mass destruction”. The issue was so serious that it was unanimously recommended that an immediate public inquiry into select ports be done and be done quickly.

I wonder if my colleague would agree that a broad public inquiry, wherein we could hear from the interested parties, from those actually carrying out the day to day administration of justice at ports, at our border and in airports as well as other aspects of national security, including our military, would be a useful exercise. Would it be a useful exercise to call for a public inquiry and would his party would support that call?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: Mr. Speaker, indeed I am aware of the Senate committee that studied this issue. If we really want to be successful in fighting organized crime and terrorism, perhaps the time has come to look at what is going on in our ports, since Canada has major ports on two oceans. Perhaps the time has come to review the whole issue of recruiting practices, of the influence of organized crime on people who work in our ports, the effectiveness of ship inspection procedures, and available resources.

I said earlier that the number of people working in Canada's ports has been reduced, and I was not joking. Despite everything that happened, the government felt it necessary to make cuts in terms of inspecting ships and checking containers and goods arriving in Canada by ship. I think it is a serious problem. If it takes an inquiry to find a solution, then it should be carried out, because everything that has to do with what can land in our country through these points of entry is very important.

• (1710)

[*English*]

Mr. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to pick up on that point about the Senate report looking at security in Canada's ports.

Many years ago, as a university student, I had a job at the port in Montreal. I was a security officer. In fact, I was an officer of the Canadian Pacific Railway police. I saw firsthand what was going on in the port. Those were the days before containerization. There was a lot of pilferage.

I think we should be careful when we make these broad-brushed statements. Certainly the people who work as longshoremen and stevedores are some tough dudes, if I can put it that way.

Many of them worked in the Montreal port and of course the port shut down in the wintertime and they were able to do other things or go on UI.

I think we should be careful if clearly people are trying to get their lives back in order. Maybe they do have a history of some criminality, but I think to make the jump between criminality and terrorism is a stretch because many of these criminals really would

have no time for terrorist activities. I think we need to be careful when we make those big shifts in assumptions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: Mr. Speaker, if the member says that he is familiar with the problems in our ports, then he must realize that things are not going well in that area, that organized crime is very present there, that the number of inspectors has been reduced and that the technology used for checking containers is outdated. Canada has not come out of the 1950s yet with regard to that technology. There are problems.

The member says that he is very familiar with the situation. He is a government member, so he can pass along messages. He can tell the Minister of Finance to put money into ports and national security and to give police forces adequate funding. It is one thing to have legislative tools, but it also takes money to be effective in our fight and to ensure that a complex piece of legislation is properly implemented.

There can be abuse. This is why we must target our efforts, and I think Canada's ports deserve our attention, considering everything that is going on and the information we have in that regard.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Ottawa Centre has approximately two minutes left before we move on to the recorded divisions.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to remind my colleagues that September 11 made us realize that the use of commercial passenger aircraft as weapons required us to re-examine security in all modes of transportation. Clearly our environment—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I am sorry to interrupt. I have just been informed that it is not votable any more and therefore we will go until 5.30. The hon. member has his full ten and five.

Mr. Mac Harb: Mr. Speaker, after my ten minutes I would like to give the remaining time to my colleague from Scarborough—Agincourt.

As I was saying, clearly our environment has changed dramatically. We have turned our attention to a new range of possible threats to other modes of transportation, including threats to cargo shipping.

Canada's actions since last September have focused on new threats to and vulnerabilities of the marine transportation sector. While the primary focus has in the past been on passenger services, including cruise ships and their terminals, the federal government is aware that terrorist activities could expand to threaten other marine activities. Of particular concern are: U.S. destined containers handled in bond at Canada's three major ports; cross-border ferries; the St. Lawrence Seaway system; and cross-border cargo movement.

The new age of terrorism has caused an anticipated increase in security costs for the marine transportation sector. As new threats and vulnerabilities are identified, the marine transportation sector is taking the necessary steps to enhance its security.

The Canadian marine industry has been very proactive following the September terrorist attacks and is working in close co-operation with the government. For instance, the Shipping Federation of Canada and the Chamber of Shipping of British Columbia have put in place measures to ensure that their members are advised of increased security actions to be taken.

Also, the Canadian Lake Carriers Association and the Canadian Shipowners Association have issued a communication entitled "Guidelines for the Protection of Great Lakes Commerce during Periods of High Risk to National Security". This publication provides the Great Lakes shipping industry, in particular the officers and crew on board U.S. flag and Canadian flag Great Lakes vessels, with recommended actions that can be taken on board ships to combat sabotage of vessels, docks, terminals, locks and channels.

In the immediate aftermath of the September attacks, the government increased mandatory reporting time for arriving vessels to 96 hours from the previous 24. This increased time period permits more effective evaluation of available information such as cargo manifests, crew lists and other ship information.

The government has also responded to the marine security challenges by forming the interdepartmental marine security working group, chaired by Transport Canada. This working group will co-ordinate the efforts of federal departments and agencies related to marine security. It has created a panel of intelligence experts from various departments to prepare new threat assessments in the marine sector. In addition the government has formed regional working groups to co-ordinate security efforts on the Pacific, Atlantic and Arctic coasts.

Budget 2001 provided \$60 million, allocated as follows: \$15 million to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the coast guard to enhance coastal surveillance; \$6 million to Transport Canada to conduct risk and vulnerability assessments and to develop mitigation programs; and \$39 million as a contingency reserve to fund other necessary improvements to marine security. One of the first budget expenditures has been the allocation of funds to the RCMP to acquire additional equipment and specific training for its marine emergency response teams.

The St. Lawrence Seaway represents a critical maritime access to North America's heartland around the Great Lakes, including major cities, nuclear energy sites and international bridges. The St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation, in co-operation with its U.S. counterpart, took early action to ensure that vessels and their crews, cargo and passengers transiting the seaway and moving about the Great Lakes are adequately screened and monitored.

• (1715)

Currently, as a result, basic security functions and bylaw enforcement in port areas are the responsibility for individual Canada port authorities. Police forces of local jurisdictions, generally municipal forces in major urban areas and provincial or RCMP forces in smaller communities, ensure standard police services at the port authorities.

Federal law enforcement remains the responsibility of the RCMP and Canada Customs and Revenue Agency for such crimes as unlawful interference, smuggling and illegal immigration.

Supply

Also, Canada's port authorities are responsible for arranging police services that extend beyond those services provided by police forces of local jurisdiction. Major ports in conjunction with their terminal operators and local police have undertaken and continue to make major improvements to security.

For example, Halifax is enhancing its perimeter fencing and installing additional security cameras. Best practices in the national ports systems are being closely examined to ensure that the highest possible security standards are being met.

Montreal on the other hand is improving lighting in certain sectors to increase the effectiveness of its closed circuit television camera network. It is installing an integrated identification and access control system for its container terminals.

Vancouver has already installed a state of the art container and vehicle mobile screening unit that will significantly increase the container inspection rate at that port.

At ports with cruise ship facilities, regulations pursuant to the Marine Transportation Security Act require that all embarking cruise ship passengers and their goods must be screened. These regulations have been developed in consultation with port and vessel operators and are based on guidelines developed by the International Maritime Organization.

In addition, Transport Canada has signed memoranda of understanding with cruise ship operators and with the facilities that handle them to outline responsibilities and requirements on a number of security related items, including training for security personnel, emergency exercises and participation in security committees.

Internationally the Government of Canada continues to work with other states, as well as with international and regional agencies including the International Maritime Organization and the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation to identify new and emerging threats to marine transportation.

For example, Transport Canada currently participated in an APEC sponsored conference in Singapore which is working toward regional improvements to both aviation and maritime security. In February Canada co-chaired the International Maritime Organization ad hoc security conference in London.

Furthermore, Transport Canada, the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, the Canadian Coast Guard and other federal departments and agencies are working closely with their U.S. counterparts to co-ordinate their approaches to marine and border security.

This collaboration will help to ensure the safety and security of passengers, as well as the effective flow of passengers and goods essential to our national economy.

Transport Canada continually reviews the entire transportation security system as part of its ongoing commitment to the safety and security of the system. It will make further changes as necessary.

Canada has a strong compliance monitoring program in place to monitor marine security requirements. Adjustments will be made to that program as circumstances warrant.

Private Members' Business

• (1720)

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I listened very closely to my colleague when he outlined some of his government's responses.

Some of his comments run directly contrary to the findings and recommendations of the Senate report. In particular it speaks of the hiring and handling of shipments at ports not being in the hands of the port authorities and often not in the hands of individual companies. In many cases it is in the hands of the union. There is literally no guarantee of a national standard if there is no national standard pertaining to security at the ports.

I am glad he mentioned the port of Halifax. Given the downloading of responsibilities and the cuts to Ports Canada, policing, the military, our coast guard, all of it has an eventual cost in terms of our ability to provide security.

The municipal police in Halifax have been doing an extraordinary job under the circumstances. The reality is they have responsibilities for the entire municipality of Halifax. If they get a call about a break and enter they are going to leave the port.

The direct involvement of a full time ports police presence with specialized training that has jurisdiction from customs and revenue, immigration, the criminal code and jurisdiction over the court itself, to mention but a few, would surely provide a better level of security. The member also mentioned fencing and some of the other physical barriers that could be put in place, as well as cameras.

Does the member not agree that a specialized police force could provide a service tailored to ports and the specific threat that is posed at the ports?

• (1725)

Mr. Mac Harb: Mr. Speaker, Canadians have told us over and over again that their two main priorities are economic security and personal security. With that spirit in mind, the government came forward with its security agenda. With that spirit in mind, the government embarked on a plan that is in the process of being implemented.

It is imperative for us to have the co-operation of all the different authorities in different parts of the country. The creation of another entity may or may not be the answer. The government is working within the existing system and with the existing agencies and organizations, including police forces and the RCMP, in trying to coordinate efforts collectively. That is the best approach at this point in time.

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, prior to September 11 we had already established the ports police. I would like to ask the hon. member, have you heard from any port authority that the new arrangement with city or municipal police is a better arrangement than what they had previously? That question should be answered. I have yet to hear a port claim that existing police services are better than what they had before.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I would remind members to address their comments to the Chair.

Mr. Mac Harb: Mr. Speaker, I know it is hard for my colleagues on the opposite side to give credit to the government when credit is due and it is due.

We have a very comprehensive strategy on the part of the government, including the Minister of Transport. We have a complete and comprehensive plan which responds to the needs of Canadians.

Two days ago in the House I spoke about government investment in the areas of airports and road transportation. Today I say to my colleagues that when it comes to the marine system and the security the government has put in place, it is an excellent strategy. The authorities all across the country in all of the different ports are working very closely with the government to ensure the safety and security of Canadians as well as the safety and security of our neighbours.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The hon. member for Scarborough—Agincourt on debate. There are two minutes remaining.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are here to discuss a very important issue, the security of our country Canada.

We as a country have been involved in every global conflict which has transpired since we became a country, for example, the Boer war, World War I, World War II, Korea, the gulf war, Kosovo and today the conflict in Afghanistan.

There has not been a conflict on our shores in North America since the day we became a nation. We have the longest undefended border in the world and we get along with our neighbours to the south. Unfortunately however, our friends in the United States had a knee-jerk reaction and automatically responded by wanting to have more security at our borders. Some of them even said to close the border after what happened on September 11.

Many politicians in the United States automatically blamed Canada for what happened in their country. To date, no terrorists who contributed to the events in the United States on September 11 have been linked to Canada. It was not our immigration system, our national security system nor our airline system which was to blame for what happened in New York on September 11, 2001. That is not to say we could not also be victims of such an event.

• (1730)

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): It being 5.30 p.m., it is my duty to inform the House that proceedings on the motion before the House have expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

The House resumed from February 21 consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Pursuant to order made on Thursday, February 21, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 296 under private members' business.

Call in the members.

• (1750)

And the bells having rung:

Mr. John Williams: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like it to be noted that the motion we will vote on this evening is called the Catterall-Williams report.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I would call that a self-inflicted wound.

• (1800)

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

(Division No. 245)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Anders
Asselin	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bailey
Bellehumeur	Bennett
Benoit	Bergeron
Bigras	Blaikie
Brien	Brisson
Bryden	Calder
Cardin	Carroll
Chamberlain	Chatters
Clark	Comartin
Crête	Cullen
Cummins	Dalphond-Guiral
Desjarlais	Doyle
Dubé	Duceppe
Duncan	Elley
Epp	Folco
Forseath	Fournier
Gagnon (Québec)	Galloway
Gauthier	Girard-Bujold
Godfrey	Godin
Goldring	Grewal
Grey	Grose
Guay	Guimond
Hanger	Harris
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hinton
Ianno	Jaffer
Johnston	Karygiannis
Keddy (South Shore)	Laframboise
Lancôt	Lavigne
Lebel	Leung
Lill	Lincoln
Loubier	Lunn (Saaneich—Gulf Islands)
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mahoney	Malhi
Marceau	Mark
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Mayfield
McNally	McTeague
Ménard	Meredith
Merrifield	Nystrom
O'Brien (Labrador)	Pankiw
Paquette	Parrish
Penson	Perron
Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
Proulx	Rajotte
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)	Ritz
Rocheleau	Sauvageau
Schmidt	Skelton
Solberg	Sorenson
Spencer	St-Hilaire
St-Julien	Strahl
Ur	Vellacott

Venne
Wappel
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Williams

Volpe
Wayne
White (North Vancouver)
Yelich — 112

NAYS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Assad	Assadourian
Bagnell	Bakopanos
Bames	Bélangier
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Boudria
Bradshaw	Brown
Byrne	Cannis
Castonguay	Catterall
Charbonneau	Coderre
Collenette	Copps
DeVillers	Dhaliwai
Dion	Discepola
Dromisky	Drouin
Duplain	Eggleton
Eyking	Finlay
Fontana	Fry
Goodale	Graham
Guarnieri	Harb
Harvey	Jackson
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Keyes	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Lastewka
Lee	Longfield
MacAulay	Macklin
Manley	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews	McCallum
McGuire	McLellan
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)	Minna
Mitchell	Murphy
Myers	Nault
Neville	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Owen
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Peric	Peschisolido
Peterson	Pettigrew
Phinney	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pillitteri	Pratt
Price	Provenzano
Redman	Regan
Richardson	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Savoy	Scherrer
Scott	Sgro
St-Jacques	St. Denis
Stewart	Szabo
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Tirabassi
Tonks	Torsney
Valeri	Vanclief
Whelan	Wilfert
Wood — 103	

PAIRED

Members

Anderson (Victoria)	Augustine
Bonwick	Bourgeois
Gagnon (Champlain)	Lalonde
LeBlanc	Maloney
Roy	Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis) — 10

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I declare the motion carried.

Supply

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1805)

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—BUDGETARY POLICY

The House resumed from February 28 consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Pursuant to order made on Wednesday, February 27, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion relating to the business of supply standing in the name of the hon. member for Halifax.

• (1810)

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

(Division No. 246)

YEAS

Members

Blaikie	Comartin
Desjarlais	Godin
Lill	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Nyström— 7	

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Adams
Alcock	Anders
Assad	Assadourian
Asselin	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bagnell
Bailey	Bakopanos
Barnes	Bélanger
Bellehumeur	Bennett
Benoit	Bergeron
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Bigras	Binet
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Boudria	Bradshaw
Brien	Brisson
Brown	Bryden
Byrne	Calder
Cannis	Cardin
Carroll	Castonguay
Catterall	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Chatters
Clark	Coderre
Collenette	Copps
Crête	Cullen
Cummins	Dalphond-Guiral
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Discepola
Doyle	Dromisky
Drouin	Dubé
Duceppe	Duncan
Duplain	Eggleton
Elley	Epp
Eyking	Finlay
Folco	Fontana
Forsyth	Fournier
Fry	Gagnon (Québec)
Galloway	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Godfrey
Goldring	Goodale
Graham	Grewal
Grey	Grose
Guamieri	Guay
Guimond	Hanger

Harb	Harris
Harvey	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hinton	Ianno
Jackson	Jaffer
Johnston	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keddy (South Shore)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Keyes	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Laframboise	Lanctôt
Lastewka	Lavigne
Lebel	Lee
Leung	Lincoln
Longfield	Loubier
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Lumney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
MacAulay	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Macklin	Mahoney
Malhi	Manley
Marceau	Mark
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Matthews
Mayfield	McCallum
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	McNally
McTeague	Ménard
Meredith	Merrifield
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)	Minna
Mitchell	Moore
Murphy	Myers
Nault	Neville
Normand	O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Owen	Pagtakhan
Pankiw	Paquette
Paradis	Parrish
Penson	Peric
Perron	Peschisolido
Peterson	Pettigrew
Phinney	Picard (Drummond)
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pillitteri
Plamondon	Pratt
Price	Proulx
Provenzano	Rajotte
Redman	Regan
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)	Richardson
Ritz	Robillard
Rocheleau	Rock
Saada	Sauvageau
Savoy	Scherrer
Schmidt	Scott
Sgro	Shepherd
Skelton	Solberg
Sorenson	Spencer
St-Hilaire	St-Jacques
St-Julien	St. Denis
Stewart	Strahl
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Tirabassi
Tonks	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Vellacott
Venne	Volpe
Wappel	Wayne
Whelan	White (Langley—Abbotsford)
White (North Vancouver)	Wilfert
Williams	Wood
Yelich— 215	

PAIRED

Members

Anderson (Victoria)	Augustine
Bonwick	Bourgeois
Gagnon (Champlain)	Lalonde
LeBlanc	Maloney
Roy	Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)— 10

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I declare the motion lost.

Private Members' Business

[Translation]

Order, please. It being 6:13 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

VERBAL ABUSE PREVENTION WEEK ACT

Mr. Shawn Murphy (Hillsborough, Lib.) moved that Bill C-414, an act to establish Verbal Abuse Prevention Week, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am standing before you today to present my private member's bill, Bill C-414. As the record indicates, Bill C-414 is an act that would designate the first week in the month of October each year as verbal abuse prevention week in Canada.

Verbal abuse is often a large component of emotional abuse and includes, but is not limited to, blaming, ridiculing, insulting, swearing, yelling, humiliating and labelling.

My reason for putting forward the bill is to raise awareness of the impact that words have in our society.

What we must recognize is that verbal abuse has emotional, educational and health costs and is often a precursor to other forms of abuse.

With the recent suicides and school shootings of young people in Canada and abroad being directly connected to verbal abuse and bullying, we as parliamentarians are compelled to raise awareness and develop prevention and educational efforts on this issue with the communities of the country.

The creation of a national verbal abuse prevention week would address the first part of this necessary sequence of events, that is raising awareness about the fierce power of words.

Much of the national interest in this issue began as a result of initiatives in Prince Edward Island, my home province. In 1998, Tami Martell from Milltown Cross, Prince Edward Island, and founder of Walk for Talk, received provincial and national attention through her decision to walk across the province to raise awareness about the seriousness of verbal abuse. By the fall of 1999, P.E.I. had its first verbal abuse prevention week in schools across the province and since then it has become an annual event.

When I initially undertook this issue as a private member's bill I received many letters of support from organizations, legislators and citizens.

If I could summarize the whole intent of the bill, it goes back to a nursery rhyme that we all heard in the playground, "sticks and stones will break your bones but names will never hurt you". Since then there has been a lot of research, knowledge and wisdom on the whole issue, and sticks and stones will still break our bones but names can also hurt us.

Verbal aggression often has no outside witnesses. There are no black eyes and no broken bones. Private behaviour can be very different from public behaviour which makes verbal abuse easy to deny and very difficult to prosecute.

Verbal abuse leaves invisible scars and is often used as a form of control to make the victim dependent on the aggressor, such as in parental or other social relationships.

Some researchers argue that physical abuse is not as prevalent as other types of abuse in abusive teenage relationships and that abusers usually begin with demeaning verbal abuse that then may proceed to unwanted physical advances, date rape and other physical violence.

While there may be no bruises, broken bones or black eyes, verbal abuse still has an impact on physical health.

Terry Kinney, a professor at the University of Minnesota, has researched the effects of verbal aggression on people and found that the stress caused by verbal aggression can make a person physically ill as stress can weaken a person's immune system.

A recent study reported in *Psychology Today* showed that emotionally abused women were more likely to report poor physical health than other women and that these medical problems were remarkably similar to those affecting women who were physically abused.

One research scientist at the Institute for Work and Health has argued that health care workers call in sick more often and stay away longer than people in other jobs partly because of the high levels of verbal abuse that health care workers experience on the job.

• (1815)

The result of verbal abuse of children is especially devastating. Children depend on those closest to them for their own self-image. If they are told at an early age that they are worthless they will believe it to be true. These negative feelings can be very difficult to discard later in life. Children who experience verbal abuse may develop an impaired ability to perceive, feel, understand and express emotion.

Research indicates that abused children are more likely to become victims of abuse later in life, become abusive themselves, and/or become depressed and self-destructive. A 1991 study on the effects of verbal abuse on children indicated that more frequent rates of verbal aggression by a parent result in a greater probability of physical, aggressive or delinquent behaviour by the child. That study also revealed that these problems affect all age groups, both sexes, and all families regardless of socioeconomic status.

Private Members' Business

One Maine research project reported that children at age eight who were identified as frequently bullying others are six times more likely to be convicted of crimes by the age of 24. Furthermore, these same children are five times more likely than non-bullies to end up with serious criminal records by the age of 30.

Last night on CTV there was an excellent program on bullying. It gave an excellent perspective on the whole problem, which is being experienced right across the country. This private member's bill relates very much to that issue. Exposure to bullying by peers has also been linked to increased dropout rates, lower self-esteem, fewer friends, declining grades and increased illnesses, and these were some of the issues that were being discussed last night.

This issue also affects the workplace and may cause increased stress and anxiety, loss of self-esteem and of belief in one's professional competence, avoidance behaviour, which may negatively affect performance of duties, including increased absences from work, a negative effect on interpersonal relationships and loss of job satisfaction.

Verbal abuse does not only affect its direct victims; it also causes pain to those who silently see their loved ones suffer in pain. We have to realize that belittling and criticizing is part of verbal abuse. Children and adults alike need to learn to communicate without degradation and domination.

I want to emphasize that verbal abuse is unique in that it is the only form of abuse that has not been the subject of an intense public education or awareness program. Other forms of abuse and violence, such as date rape, family violence, senior violence and abuse, child abuse, sexual abuse and spousal abuse are already well recognized in our society as unacceptable behaviours and have various mechanisms to change the behaviour of perpetrators and also to assist victims. It is crucial that verbal abuse be brought to the forefront of people's minds, that we are all made aware of its devastating and long term effects and educated as to how quickly and regularly it transforms into physical violence.

Sadly, the seriousness of this issue is slowly coming to the public's attention. There have been a number of dramatic cases involving verbal abuse covered by the national and international media. In January of this year Thomas Junta was convicted for the beating death of Michael Costin at their children's hockey practice in Cambridge, Massachusetts, which began, as everyone in this House is aware, after a hostile exchange between the two fathers.

Another sports related incident that captured the attention of Canadians was an altercation at a girls' softball game in Albany, Georgia in 1979, when Ray Knight, a former Cincinnati Reds third baseman and manager, engaged in an agitated and profane dispute with the father of another girl. It led to Mr. Knight hitting the other parent and being charged, but it started with verbal abuse.

• (1820)

This is a very serious issue in our minor hockey system right across Canada. We see situations where parents of both genders, people who outside the rink do not engage in that type of behaviour, verbally abuse 12 year old and 13 year old referees.

Verbal abuse has also become an increasing problem in our schools, resulting in fear among teachers and students alike. Recent

suicides and school shootings of young people in Canada and abroad are connected directly to verbal abuse and bullying. The horrifying incident that occurred at Columbine High School, where 12 students and one teacher died as a result of teenage shooters who subsequently turned their guns on themselves, was attributed largely to verbal abuse that the two boys had suffered at the hands of their peers.

What we now consider to be almost commonplace in school, violence, suicides and shootings, can, I submit, be prevented. With increased education we can better understand how to better prevent verbal abuse and, consequently, its negative long term effects.

The timing of this verbal abuse prevention week, to be held in the first week of the month of October, would allow administrators, teachers and personnel in the education system to develop curriculum based programs and encourage the participation of students in verbal abuse prevention activities that would help educate our youth to treat others as we would want to be treated, that is, with kindness and respect.

Recent developments in the campaign to raise awareness of verbal abuse are exemplified through an American organization called Words Can Heal, a national effort that began in September 2001, shortly after a national poll showed that 90% of Americans agreed that verbal violence and gossip are a problem in schools, in homes and in the workplace. Words Can Heal is a media and educational campaign to eliminate verbal violence, curb gossip and promote the healing power of words to enhance relationships at every level. There is a board comprised of top politicians, leading diplomats, Wall Street's most influential CEOs, clergy, Hollywood celebrities and community leaders.

This American campaign is one good example of the necessity for public action and education. While there are some good examples in Canada of programs aimed at preventing verbal aggression, a national week of awareness would go that much further in co-ordinating awareness raising programs across Canada and publicizing this very important issue.

There is a great deal of support for the bill from constituents and from organizations in my province and across Canada. This private member's bill can help raise awareness of the effects of verbal abuse by increasing the amount of education people have access to about the impact of words, which may then cause people to reflect on what they say and do to others.

The bill can also help promote better conflict resolution skills. I submit there is no time when better and greater conflict resolution skills are needed than right now in the troubled world in which we live.

Finally, the bill may result in improved access to information for victims and perpetrators of verbal abuse and better education as to where Canadians can seek professional help.

Private Members' Business

Clearly this issue is a growing concern among Canadians and in the entire world. I have sponsored the bill in the hope that it will succeed in capturing the attention and concern of my fellow parliamentarians about the seriousness of verbal abuse in our communities, in our homes and in our schools and about the importance of raising people's awareness of this very important topic.

• (1825)

While this bill has been deemed non-votable, I urge my colleagues here today to reflect on the magnitude of this issue and ensure that in the future perpetrators and victims of verbal abuse will be taken seriously by our society.

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today on behalf of the people of Surrey Central to support Bill C-414, an act to establish verbal abuse prevention week. This bill is sponsored by the hon. member for Hillsborough and I commend him for his efforts.

If this bill were to pass, the first week of October would be designated as national verbal abuse prevention week. This would go a long way toward raising the profile of this issue among Canadians, many of whom seem to know little about the devastating effects of verbal abuse.

Throughout the 1990s, we all became increasingly aware of the power of words through the political correctness movement. While we can agree or disagree with its politics, its basic message is that the words we use have power. Verbal abuse is more than an issue of political correctness.

Richard Krugman defined verbal abuse as "the rejection, ignoring, criticizing, isolation, or terrorizing of children, all of which have the effect of eroding their self-esteem".

It is an issue that cuts to the very heart of our society. It is not only indecent but hurts the abused. Slurs or racial discrimination or even making undue fun of others hurts. A one finger salute during road rage or swearing, humiliating, threatening, scaring children all hurt. No one has right of way on abusing; a mother in law on her daughter in law or the rich on the poor as in some societies or cultures. All these things hurt.

Verbal abuse is a precursor of family, domestic or other violence. Stronger families make stronger communities and stronger communities make a stronger nation. To strengthen families, we have to exert our moral responsibility to prevent family violence. To prevent family violence, we have to address the root cause of violence in families, which is verbal abuse.

Soft and courteous words pacify individuals. They calm and sooth relationships. The main superiority human beings have over animals is the evolution of language. So why not use words which please others and sooth relationships rather than words which hurt others? We should utter words soft enough because one day we may have to swallow them.

At the workplace words like "thank you" and "excuse me" go a long way. We all know that to get respect one has to give respect. Saying something like "good morning" or wishing someone a good day in a bus, on an elevator or in any other public place makes a

person's day. The character of a nation is demonstrated by how its people speak to each other. The way someone is spoken to on the other side of a counter demonstrates the level of service that is provided.

I visited in Salt Lake City some time ago. I visited a friend who was in the hospital. I was impressed with the way people spoke to visitors at the hospital. I have never seen such a respectful manner and humble way of speaking to each other. I was impressed by that.

Overall verbal abuse is already fairly common and figures show it is on the rise.

• (1830)

According to one study, 3 million American children suffer verbal abuse attacks from some source. If similar proportions hold true for Canada this means approximately 300,000 of our children are targets of verbal abuse. These figures most likely underestimate the prevalence of verbal abuse because adults also suffer verbal abuse.

The effects of verbal abuse on children are serious. Indeed, all forms of abuse are a social disease. As my hon. colleague mentioned, sexual abuse or abuse of any kind is a social disease that affects many parts of Canadian society. Schoolyards, workplaces, homes and streets can all be places where taunting, insults and even name calling can occur. Wherever it happens its effects are always devastating for those that suffer under its weight.

Many of us watched in horror the murderous attacks in Columbine, Colorado and Tabor, Alberta. While it in no way excuses what these teenagers did, each incident had its roots in school bullying and name calling.

Verbal abuse and other kinds of cruelty can set a spiral of escalating violence into motion which in these two cases led to the tragic loss of life. These extreme cases receive most of the media's attention.

Issues that receive less attention involve children who are afraid to go to school, workers who book sick leave and wives and husbands who suffer from family violence, stress and health complaints brought on by verbal intimidation and put downs.

The constituency of Surrey Central has been affected by its share of tragedies, the corrosive effects of school bullying and verbal abuse.

Fourteen year old Hamed Nastoh committed suicide rather than face the relentless taunts of his classmates in school. His mother, in fact the whole family, was understandably devastated when I visited their home in March 2000 to express my sympathy and to understand the situation when Nastoh committed suicide.

More recently, his mother told a local newspaper that awareness was the best weapon against bullies and violence. With this in mind she joined forces with two other local mothers whose children died of preventable causes.

Private Members' Business

Together they formed Angels in Heaven, an organization that brings grieving parents together for mutual support. This is the sort of organization that could use national verbal abuse prevention week as a way of educating the public about the harmful effects of verbal abuse.

Another example of local initiative comes from Prince Edward Island where Tami Martell undertook a walk for talk in 1998 because one of her six children was victimized by verbal abuse. This was after she wrote a report in 1997 entitled "An information report in recognition of verbal abuse in Canada".

A product of 18 months' work it contained several recommendations for provincial governments and school boards: a code of behaviour for schools to state that physical, sexual, verbal or psychological abuse was unacceptable; a code of behaviour to be prominently displayed in the school; health and family living teachers to incorporate a verbal abuse unit into their curriculum; and school boards to set up a standard system for schools to record and file incidents of abuse. If Ms. Martell's recommendations were applied in schools they would make a huge difference.

A national verbal abuse prevention week would give Canadians an opportunity to educate themselves and others. They would pause to think about how their actions affect others. It would also provide a source of help for abusers as well as the abused and make it more public.

• (1835)

I urge all members of the House to support the bill. In fact I seek unanimous consent of the House to make this item votable.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Is there unanimous consent to make this a votable item?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as this motion will not be votable because unanimous consent was denied, we can debate this bill, but that it will lead nowhere. It is deplorable to have, in this House, debates and speeches on issues that come to nothing.

Another example, debates on parliamentary procedure and enhancement of the MPs' work will have to be closely examined, because they are starting to look more like a popular television talk show than parliamentary debates where serious work is done and worthwhile bills are introduced for the members to vote on. Whether we are in favour of or against a bill, our constituents, the people who voted for us and appointed us as their representatives, must be made aware of our position on every single bill.

Today, we are debating Bill C-414. I am pleased to take part in this debate because we will never say enough about the whole issue of abuse, whatever form it may take. This bill deals with verbal abuse. It is aimed at establishing the first week of October as Verbal Abuse Prevention Week. I think that nobody in this House can be against such a bill. It would mean being against a principle supported by everyone, namely that there is too much verbal abuse and that it should not exist.

We live in a strange society if we have to establish a Verbal Abuse Prevention Week when we should all agree that there is too much verbal abuse and that it should not exist. I am sure we all recognize that verbal abuse is the first step toward physical abuse. In a way, through our work in this place, through legislation and other means, we are trying to reach the objective of zero tolerance with regard to physical abuse. However, we must start somewhere. Anyway, it is unrealistic to think that we can reach this objective of zero tolerance with regard to physical abuse.

But as I was saying, we must start somewhere. I sincerely think that working to prevent verbal abuse is a good start. I know that certain provinces, including Quebec, have already launched ad campaigns and put in place verbal abuse prevention programs, particularly in the schools. We see some of these ads in movie theaters sometimes. I think this is a very positive initiative.

Having a Verbal Abuse Prevention Week to educate people and encourage discussion on this issue would be very positive. We could talk about it more with young people. Verbal abuse often starts at a very young age; it starts in the schools and the playgrounds.

I said earlier that we are a strange society, we tolerate a lot. Indeed, there is a lot of verbal abuse in games, hockey, amateur sports. We only need to go to an arena to see that parents are encouraging a certain kind of violence in their children taking part in sports. Parents use a lot of verbal abuse. I know there is such a thing as competitive spirit and it is healthy. One must be competitive. We are in politics here and we are all competitive. However, there is a line that must not be crossed. Frankly, I believe some parents do not know where to stop with regard to verbal abuse in arenas.

With a verbal abuse prevention week, maybe we could increase the awareness of parents involved in amateur sports and hockey, even professional hockey. One has to go watch a game at the Forum to realize there is verbal abuse. If one is close to the ice, from time to time one will realize that there is verbal abuse on the ice also.

This is a major societal problem, since this kind of abuse may one day lead to physical abuse, as mentioned by my colleagues who spoke before me.

• (1840)

When we look at violence in all its manifestations, be it verbal, which is the subject matter of the bill before us, or otherwise, the issue of violence tolerated on television comes up. There is also a certain level of verbal abuse tolerated in films. One day, we will have to look at this issue and the fact that it is encouraged. A verbal abuse prevention week might help these people realize that they may be going down the wrong road. There is a point when lines have to be drawn and not crossed.

Private Members' Business

Earlier, the member seemed to compare verbal abuse and taxing in schools. We must really make a clear distinction between the two, because taxing is physical abuse; it is not verbal abuse. Those who practise taxing go beyond verbal abuse, since they commit an act. They say "Give me 10 bucks or I will break both your legs". This is taxing and it is physical abuse; it cannot be considered as verbal abuse.

Anyway, to get back to Bill C-414, I believe we could have such a week, not only for young people, but also for the elderly. There is some verbal abuse among children and the elderly. Even in hospitals, there may be verbal abuse toward the elderly. I do not believe it is done maliciously, but at some point, because of fatigue, stress or for any other reason, one does something and it goes to the next level, that of verbal abuse. With time, it can lead to physical abuse.

We could have a special week to promote awareness of all this and get information on this issue. I believe it would be desirable. It would be productive for MPOs, for groups dealing with young people and people who are not so young, for those who look after the elderly.

I will conclude by saying that it is all very fine to consider a verbal abuse prevention week, but I believe it must be supported by public money. If we want it to yield results, if we are serious about it, if we want to be preventive—I believe a dollar of prevention ends up saving a lot of money in terms of health care, psychologists, penalties and physical crimes—to start with, maybe we should go for a verbal abuse prevention week. Eventually, maybe not today but some time in the future, we should also consider using public money to reach certain segments of society. We could reach the groups where verbal abuse is the worst and take preventive action to reduce its impact on society as a whole.

• (1845)

[English]

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it was not my intention to speak to the particular bill, but having listened to the debate and having heard the sponsor from Hillsborough indicate his reasons for raising it my little old mind was just turning.

Everyone can imagine that as a young man I was actually a miniature of what I am today, but I had the same general geography and the same shape. As a result I have to confess that I was the object of a great deal of teasing. We would call it verbal abuse nowadays. In fact when I look back at it I realize I was really hard done by. I did not realize it at the time, but when I look back at it now I am amazed at how cruel some of the kids were to me.

I remember when our little country school closed down. I first attended a little country school with one schoolroom and one teacher from grades 1 to 8. It was closed down because there were not enough students. I was a big farm kid. I was about 180 pounds when I was in grade 8, so everyone can imagine.

We were bused into the big city school. Those city kids were merciless, not only because we were poor farmers but also because I had this, I thought, exceptionally fine aerodynamic shape. They did not think of it that way.

I had all sorts of things happen to me. I will not go into all the details, but just listening to the debate reminded me of some things I have long forgiven and forgotten. I have moved on with my life.

One thing that helped me to do that was parents who both by example and by encouragement helped me not to be discouraged. They helped to build my self-esteem which was greatly destroyed by not only the students, I may say, but also by the teacher.

I remember when I was in grade 9. I was ignorant, I will admit now. The young people here can hardly imagine it, but it was at a time before there was any television. I had never been to a football game in my life and because television had not yet been invented I did not know what football was.

As I say, I was moved into the city school. It was a beautiful fall day and the gym teacher said that we would play football. I did not have a clue. I totally did not. Nobody gave any instruction. We were just to play football.

I guess the other youngsters in that grade 9 class realized that I was ignorant, so nobody bothered to cover me because I was no threat. Lo and behold I later learned when the quarterback threw the ball to me. I was smart enough to catch it and I ran. As everyone can imagine that would have been quite a sight. I ran for all I was worth and I made a touchdown, but it was at the wrong end of the field. I did not know that I was running the wrong way. I thought these guys yelling at me were cheering me on to run faster. It was really quite embarrassing in retrospect.

However I still remember the teacher. I will not mention his name even though I guess I could within the confines of the House use his name. I still remember it. He came up to me and kicked me, and he kicked me hard. It hurt my tailbone. I was humiliated and hurt, but in my usual way I used humour and laughed it off.

I am sure I am the only one who remembers that incident these many years later, but that was a form of abuse. I guess nowadays I would sue the guy. No, I would not do it, but it is the type of thing which can be devastating. Fortunately I was blessed to have parents that gave a complete antidote to the results that type of thing could have had.

I remember another incident where these kids would deliberately take a step toward me. One of them would come up real close to me and then take a step toward me. What is the natural reaction? It is to step back because he is getting too close. Unknown to me another one had knelt down behind me and with that I went flying over and they laughed. They thought that was funny. I guess it was. It must have looked hilarious. I wish I had a videotape of it now, but it was abuse of the worst kind.

Private Members' Business

● (1850)

As I said, the greatest antidote to the results of verbal abuse came from my parents. On one occasion I did something stupid on the farm. I will not bore members with the details but I broke a piece of farm equipment strictly out of not being careful. My father would have had every reason in the world to bawl me out because we took the machine out of use for a while and it was costly to repair it. Instead my dad said to me "Ken, next time you should take a little more time".

I remember the event vividly. My father, and I love him dearly, turned 90 a couple of months ago. He had no anger. He did not abuse me verbally or in any other way. He just gave me the solid advice that I should take a little more time, which is very good advice. The way he handled it put the onus totally on me. Had he struck out or lashed out at me with his tongue we would have had a good old battle and it would have been as much his fight as mine, but he handled it so well. I do not know where he got that wisdom but he did.

My hon. colleague from Hillsborough came up with the idea of bringing the nation's attention to the problem of abuse, be it verbal or other abuse. It is a notable and worthy goal.

As members know, I had the advantage of having taught high school for four years. I then taught at the college level for some 27 years before I came to this place. The difference between this place and the colleges is that here no one listens and no one learns. I should not say that. It is somewhat different from that. However during my years of teaching having gone through my earlier experiences helped me relate to young people who for one reason or another were also the object of scorn and abuse.

The initiative is a good one. It would help draw attention to the issue. The circle of abuse which goes from generation to generation must somehow be stopped. If we can draw attention to it and bring people to the point where they realize how hurtful words can be, I would hope that over a period of time people would learn to deeply respect one another.

I cannot help but think of another event that happened a little over a year ago which hurt me probably as much. I will say this as gently as I can. During the election campaign some of the comments made about our party by our political adversaries were very hurtful.

I am proud of the fact that my children have worked with relief agencies around the world. One of my most precious pictures is of my son and his wife as a newly married couple in Rwanda surrounded by some 400 beautiful little black children whose parents were killed in the country's horrible holocaust. Then someone has the insensitivity to accuse me of being a racist. That hurts. It is adult abuse. It is verbal abuse at an adult level and it sets a bad example to the children and young people of our country when it comes from our own leaders.

I wish we could get beyond that. I wish we could deal honestly and openly without false accusations or abusing each other verbally or in other ways. Let us build a society on respect and real love for one another where the interests and well-being of other people take precedence over our own.

● (1855)

Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-414 is designed to raise awareness of the negative consequences of verbal abuse in our communities, schools and workplaces. The bill would designate the first week of October in every year as verbal abuse prevention week throughout Canada.

I commend the hon. member for his dedication and insight in bringing this important issue before the House. I know I share the view of many in the House in thanking him for his role and contribution and for bringing an issue to the forefront today which is all too often ignored.

Canadians should be able to live in an environment free from degrading, demeaning and harmful behaviour, an environment where respect and dignity within families, between neighbours and friends, and within society generally is nurtured.

The Government of Canada is supportive of the intent of the bill. I have no doubt that all members support the worthy goal of enhancing awareness of this preventable harm.

Verbal abuse has a profound emotional effect. It can undermine confidence and make individuals reticent to participate fully in our society. It affects families but it also affects our communities throughout Canada. The detrimental effects of verbal abuse are recognized as serious and far reaching.

Verbal abuse is about power. It is usually directed at those who are more vulnerable in our society such as the young, the elderly, persons with mental or physical disabilities, and new immigrants. In short, it is directed at those who are unable to walk away.

Verbal abuse is often an important aspect of an abusive relationship. Not all abusive relationships result in visible scarring. Sometimes the scarring or damage caused by the abuse is internalized by the victims and affects, as we have just heard, their self esteem in significant and long lasting ways. Indeed, statistics show that those who hold the least power and resources in society are most often emotionally abused.

Sometimes verbal abuse is manifested through bigoted statements aimed at members of visible minorities. This kind of verbal abuse has significant effects not just on individuals but on the fabric of Canadian society.

What can the Government of Canada do to address this serious concern? There are legislative measures in place designed to deter the most serious forms of verbal abuse in communities and workplaces. Provisions of the criminal code are aimed at imposing sanctions against those who verbally threaten people with serious harm.

The Canadian Human Rights Act has provisions prohibiting harassment in the workplace on any enumerated ground of discrimination. Part of the mandate of the Canadian Human Rights Commission is to promote public education in this area to prevent harassment.

Private Members' Business

Anger management programs have been developed for both adult and youth offenders. The recently enacted Youth Criminal Justice Act provides front end measures to help young offenders recognize the harm they have done and develop alternate means of handling anger.

However legislation alone is not sufficient. Verbal abuse can take many forms that do not necessarily involve threats of violence or criminal behaviour. Degrading comments such as insults, ridicule and name calling are all behaviour which, although not necessarily criminal, diminish the identity, dignity and self worth of the person to whom they are directed.

It is vital that children be protected as much as possible from all forms of verbal abuse. Children spend much of their daily lives in school settings. An increasing body of research reinforces the contention that bullying manifested through verbal abuse has a profound effect on the social and emotional development of young people.

● (1900)

It often causes fear, distress or harm resulting in victimized children feeling alone at school and unaccepted. They are also more likely to be unhappy and have low self-esteem. Ironically, they are more likely to be bullies themselves.

However, addressing bullying and issues of school safety is primarily the responsibility of the provinces and territories. In many cases they have established their own specific rules programs relating to verbal abuse at school.

In many cases of verbal abuse, the abused remain silent while the abuser continues to repeat and sustain the pattern. If left unchecked, abuse does not get better over time, it only gets worse.

Enhancing awareness of verbal abuse and helping to put an end to it is a goal this government believes is important and must be addressed. Indeed this government and our provincial and territorial partners have a number of strategies in place to reduce the incidence of verbal abuse and to provide some measure of increased protection for those faced with verbal abuse and its effects.

Included in these strategies are initiatives to combat the underlying social conditions that often find expression through verbal abuse. These initiatives range from community and school education campaigns to raise awareness about the nature and harmful consequences of emotional abuse, to programs to promote safety and non-violent ways of behaving in schools, workplaces and communities, to treatment programs and other assistance for those living in an emotionally abusive environment.

Verbal abuse is increasingly being recognized as a form of violence that has potentially devastating consequences for its victims. More can and must be done to reduce the incidence of emotional abuse and to protect the most vulnerable in our society from the long-lasting damage such abuse may cause. Indeed as a responsible government, we want to find the most appropriate way of dealing with the harmful effects that verbal abuse may cause. Enhancing awareness, promoting education and building respect for human dignity will help.

While the government supports the intention of the bill, we believe that the legislative route is perhaps not the most effective method to respond to this problem in our society. Instead, we will continue to work with our provincial and territorial partners and others in finding the best tools and responses to address the harmful effects of verbal abuse.

● (1905)

Mr. Shawn Murphy (Hillsborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just to conclude the debate, as I indicated in my opening remarks, I believe this is a very important and significant issue in Canadian society. I urge all parliamentarians and all Canadians to reflect and consider this issue in their daily lives.

It could be there are other means or methods at our disposal to raise public awareness on this very important issue. The bill of course was never intended to eliminate verbal abuse. It was a very small step to raise the public awareness bar on this issue. Naturally I am very disappointed that it was deemed non-votable by our procedure and House affairs committee. I am disappointed that it did not receive unanimous consent in the House.

In closing, I do want to thank very much all colleagues in the House for supporting the bill. Perhaps in our own small way through this debate we have raised public awareness on this very important issue. Perhaps at some point in time it will make its way back to the floor of the House. Perhaps other legislators in Canada will seize the initiative and run with it. Perhaps the amount and the extent of verbal abuse will decrease in society in the days, months and years to come.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired. As the bill has not been designated as a votable item, the order is dropped from the order paper.

[*Translation*]

It being 7.08 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.09 p.m.)

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