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(HANSARD)

Monday, April 8, 2002

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, April 8, 2002

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

• (1100)

[*English*]

VACANCIES

GANDER—GRAND FALLS, VERDUN—SAINT-HENRI—SAINT-PAUL—POINTE SAINT-CHARLES

The Speaker: Order, please. It is my duty to inform the House that vacancies have occurred in the representation, namely Mr. George Baker, member for the elector district of Gander—Grand Falls by resignation effective March 25, 2002.

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Lavigne, member for the electoral district of Verdun—Saint-Henri—Saint-Paul—Pointe Saint-Charles, by resignation effective March 25, 2002.

Pursuant to subsection 25(1)(b) of the Parliament of Canada Act, I have addressed on Monday, March 25, 2002, my warrant to the chief electoral officer for the issue of a writ for the election of a member to fill these vacancies.

* * *

[*English*]

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that Mr. John Reynolds, member for the electoral district of West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, has been appointed member of the Board of Internal Economy in place of Mr. Randy White, member for the electoral district of Langley—Abbotsford; and Mr. Dale Johnston of the electoral district of Wetaskiwin has also been appointed in place of Mr. Gary Breitzkreuz of the electoral district of Yorkton—Melville.

It being 11.10 a.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed in today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1110)

[*English*]

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the national holiday on November 11th, Remembrance Day, be designated to remember the men and women of the Armed Forces and the Merchant Navy and all civilian groups who served in close support of the armed forces, all of whom sacrificed of themselves in the service of Canada.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I thank my seconder from Winnipeg for sponsoring the motion.

Before I start on the particular wording, I did put a notice of motion beforehand to change the actual wording of the motion. I thank the folks at Heritage Canada very much for helping me along in this process.

I seek unanimous consent to change the wording of the motion and have the debate on the following amendment. I move:

That in the opinion of this House, the national holiday of November 11, Remembrance Day, be designated to remember the men and women of the armed forces and the merchant navy and all civilian groups who served in close support of the armed forces, all of whom sacrificed of themselves in the service of Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The House has heard the terms of the amendment. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Amendment agreed to)

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for its generosity in allowing me to change the wording of the motion. The purpose of the motion is to make Remembrance Day a very inclusive event for civilians and our armed forces personnel from coast to coast.

The other day we celebrated the 85th anniversary of those who lost their lives at Vimy. Just as important as those young men and women who lost their lives going over the top as they say, were those people who were left at home. Those people did know whether their loved ones had perished or were severely wounded either physically or mentally in the serious challenges of World War I, especially at the battle of Vimy. I could comment on many other battles but this particular one was really where Canada saw its growth as a nation. Our maturity as a nation basically started from that particular battle.

Private Members' Business

As members know, back then we did not have the instant communications that we have today. Part of the motion is to bring those people who kept the home fires alive into the remembrance part of Remembrance Day.

Soldiers cannot do their duty for the service of Canada if they do not have the support of their family, their loved ones and, just as important, the support of their community, their province and their country.

At the end of the debate I will be seeking unanimous consent to make the motion votable in order to allow the House to reflect upon the sacrifices made by our armed forces personnel, merchant mariners and all those people who participated in the war effort from coast to coast to coast. I am not necessarily speaking of the ones who went in ships overseas or flew overseas but those people who stayed at home as well.

I remember the Rangers in Newfoundland and Labrador who supported the war efforts, the coal miners of Cape Breton who supplied the energy needed to make the machinery, the farmers of Saskatchewan and all the prairie provinces who supplied the food and the men and women who worked in the plants, especially the women who worked in the factories. For many women it was the first time they had worked outside the household. That was an integral part of our victories overseas, not just in the first world war but also in Korea and in the second world war.

It is imperative for the House of Commons and the Senate to reflect again on the sacrifices made by so many people in the very serious times we are facing now. We have men and women serving in peacekeeping duties overseas in countries like Afghanistan. They have very concerned families at home. I am sure every member of parliament in the House today has some armed forces personnel from their ridings serving in some capacity, be it in the army, navy, air force, the cadet programs, administrative programs or in a more supportive role such as the legions or various associations across Canada. Millions of Canadians support our men and women overseas and our men and women on the homeland who are working to ensure that we have peace and security at home and abroad.

This particular Remembrance Day motion would not only reflect upon the sacrifices made by those in the past but would also continue to serve as notice that we appreciate the sacrifices made by those young men and women who have left recently. I think of members of Princess Patricia's light infantry and many others who have left Canada to go overseas in very difficult situations to preserve peace and freedom and spread democracy around the world. I can think of no nobler act than this particular motion in terms of remembrance.

I should advise the House of why the motion was changed. On Remembrance Day many schools and provincial buildings are open. In my ignorance I assumed that the federal government could tell provinces through an act of legislation to close their provincial buildings or schools in the act of remembrance.

• (1115)

I realize that the House of Commons or the federal government did not have that jurisdiction. Therefore with Heritage Canada, along with my staff, I was able to reword the motion to get it to a point

where through a motion in the House we would encourage the provinces to act accordingly to what the House of Commons and the Senate would hopefully do in the very near future.

That is the purpose of the change. I thank the House and all members who are here today from the various parties for supporting that change, as well as yourself, Mr. Speaker.

On a personal note, I have talked many times in the House about my parents and my oldest brother who were liberated by the Canadian military in the liberation of Holland in 1945. In fact there is a member of parliament across the way who I serve on the defence committee with whose father was one of those liberators. It is always a great time for me because I know my mom is watching now. My dad unfortunately has passed on.

They indicated to me that any time I get a chance to rise in the House I should thank Canadians, their forefathers and foremothers, for the sacrifices they made for our freedom and the freedom of millions of Europeans in that time. We can never thank Canada enough for its sacrifices.

It is rather ironic that many years later I could actually stand in the House of Commons where those difficult decisions were made. Sixty years later we still reflect on whether it was the right decision or the wrong decision. Hindsight is 20:20 but regardless of a person's personal belief on whether the decision to send troops over was right or wrong, I am standing here as an example of the decision that was made to send troops in order that my parents could be freed.

In 1956 the decision was made to move to Canada. My father always said that with a military like that imagine what kind of country Canada was. In that era of 1956 employment opportunities around Holland and Europe were very slim, in many cases non-existent. The decision to emigrate from Holland and move to Canada was a tough decision but one made for the benefit of the family.

I know I do not speak alone. There are over 70 members of parliament here who were born in other countries and have relatives born in other countries. I know the sacrifices they made as well in order to come to Canada and be part of a great nation that we truly are, from coast to coast to coast.

I encourage again all members of the House to support the motion. At the end I will be seeking unanimous consent to make it votable.

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to address the motion put forward by the member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore. In addition to commending him for his patriotism I congratulate the member for his astute and conscientious amendment that has just been made to the wording of the motion.

The motion as it now stands is inclusive of all those who sacrificed for us from those in the uniforms of our armed forces to the civilians who supported them and died alongside them. I thank the hon. member.

Canadians fought and died bravely for this country. It has been almost 200 years since the War of 1812 when one of Canada's legendary heroes emerged. General Brock died on the battlefield and still we remember the gallantry and bravery of this great Canadian.

The following lines were written by an anonymous Canadian upon the completion of a monument in the general's honour. They remind us of Canada's long tradition of gallantry.

His loyal hearted soldiers were ready everyone,
 Their foes were thrice their number, but duty must be done,
 They started up the fire-swept hill with loud resounding cheers,
 While Brock's inspiring voice rang out; "Push on York volunteers!"
 But soon a fatal bullet pierced through his manly breast,
 And lovely friends to help him around the hero pressed,
 "Push on" he said, "Don't mind me" and ere the set of sun,
 Canadians held the rugged steep, the victory was won.

Canadians have been almost legendary for their bravery in battle ever since. Through World War I, World War II, the Korean war, the Gulf war, in peacekeeping missions the world over and now in Afghanistan, our Canadian armed forces and those civilian groups who support them have done and continue to do our country proud.

The memory of the bravery, valour and heroism of those who have served Canada in the conflicts of the world makes us proud to be Canadians. Each of us walks a little taller when we think of it. Each of us feels the love for our country swell when we picture the courage of our soldiers

However this feeling, this pride, is not the most important reason to remember. The most important reason is thanks. We must never forget what truly has been given up for us. For though they are often spoken of, pageantry and glory are not the real story of war.

• (1120)

War is hell and no one knows that better than those who are sent to fight. It is death, suffering and pain, and must only be entered into as it is today in the hope of peace and in the name of justice. Bravery, honour and selflessness are found in times of war and these virtues seem to have followed Canadian soldiers wherever they have gone. The stories that lie deepest in the hearts of those who have witnessed war are not often the stories filled with glory, they are stories of hurt, pain and loss.

We must never forget this. We must never forget the enormity of the sacrifices that have been made over the course of our military history by those who have served Canada.

November 11 is a day when we express our words of gratitude to those among us who are living reminders of that sacrifice, our veterans. It is the day when we send our prayers of thanks to the fallen and those who have since passed on, a day in which we take a moment to consider the courageous youth this nation has lost and to recommit ourselves to always and everywhere make peace our goal and war our last resort.

That is why since 1919 Remembrance Day has been observed in Canada. Initially it was known as Armistice Day and was created to celebrate the armistice that ended the first world war on Monday, November 11, 1918 at 11 a.m., the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. Armistice Day was held on the Monday of the week on which November 11 fell until 1931 when a member of

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parliament, Allan Neill, introduced a bill to hold Armistice Day on a fixed day, November 11.

During the bill's introduction it was decided that the word remembrance would be used instead of armistice. The bill passed and Remembrance Day as we know it was conducted on November 11, 1931. Currently the Holidays Act, Chapter H-7 of the Revised Statutes of Canada, confirms and establishes Remembrance Day thus:

November 11, being the day in the year 1918 on which the Great War was triumphantly concluded by an armistice, is a holiday and shall be kept and observed as such throughout Canada under the name of "Remembrance Day".

In addition to its inclusion in the Holidays Act, the status of Remembrance Day as a statutory holiday is preserved under such central and vital federal legislation as the Canada Labour Code and the Interpretation Act as well as other important legislation such as the Bills of Exchange Act and the Canada Elections Act.

Remembrance Day is at present a holiday for federal public servants pursuant to the public service terms and conditions of employment made under the Financial Administration Act. Federally regulated institutions such as banks also observe Remembrance Day as a legal holiday. For the federal government and institutions falling within federal competence Remembrance Day is a national holiday.

Many people ask why stores are still open and children still in school on November 11 in so many parts of Canada. The answer can be found in the Constitution Act of 1867 wherein legislation relating to legal non-working holidays is found to be generally within the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces and territories. That means that the definition of holiday as it concerns employees who are not within the jurisdiction of the federal government is determined by the provinces by their labour codes and legislation which deals with holidays, retail businesses and education.

In addition it also depends on whether a particular holiday is included in the applicable collective agreement between employers and employees. Holidays are declared and regulated by the federal, provincial and territorial legislatures acting within their own sphere of authority and competence. Consequently it appears that most of the difficulties relating to the non-observance of Remembrance Day are at the provincial and territorial levels.

Nevertheless I commend my colleague for the love he shows for this country in the tabling of the motion. I support his efforts to broaden the official scope of Remembrance Day and I applaud his endeavours to further its observance throughout Canada.

Canada's youth of years gone by offered to give up their lives in defence of liberty and to preserve the peace and they still do today. From those who have been killed and wounded, from those who have sacrificed and served, we have been given this great country and the freedom to enjoy it.

The thanks we owe cannot be measured. Every year on Remembrance Day I am especially proud to be a Canadian.

Private Members' Business

•(1125)

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Canadian Alliance I congratulate the member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore for bringing up once again Remembrance Day.

All of us are deeply thankful and grateful because it gives us an opportunity to honour and remember the men and women who fought and sometimes gave their lives and their families' lives so that we could enjoy the peace and security that we have today and are so lucky to share.

Remembrance Day has a number of elements to it. Yes, it is a time for honour and it is a time to hold up those who gave up their lives and those today who go out across our dangerous world for peace. However, it is also a time for remembrance. It is a time to teach the young about the sacrifices of the past.

The hon. member's intention of having a national holiday so we can have more time to remember our men and women in uniform and for those who have gone is honourable. However he is forgetting something that veterans groups brought up to us recently. They said they needed an opportunity to teach the young about this important day and about the history that is behind it.

It is for that reason that they want opportunities to go into schools to teach about the past, about their experiences and to let us not forget. That is what they want to do. They want the young to not forget the lessons of the past so that they may not be repeated in the future.

As a party, the then Reform Party now Alliance since 1993, we have fought hard for our men and women in uniform. Unfortunately, the government took it upon itself, since 1993, through an utter disregard, through financial and political interventions, to hamstring the military and to compromise it in a time when our world is becoming more dangerous. Today we have more complicated weapons, more threats, both direct and indirect to our country and to the world, than we have ever seen in the last 100 years. Yet there has been a systematic erosion of the military in our country.

The removal of funds, the reduction in weaponry, the rust out and the reduction in manpower has severely compromised the ability of our men and women to do what Canada has asked them to do, both at home and internationally. There have been many comments about how that has eroded our military. The U.S. ambassador to Canada stated in Whistler, B.C. on July 26, 2001:

At this point, I must note that many of our friends in Canada have expressed a concern in this area, one that many on the U.S. side of the border share. That concern is over resources for Canadian forces. While these resources were cut drastically because of the end of the Cold War, and the need to put the Federal budget back in balance, it has now reached the point where without significant increases, the Canadian forces could lose much of their effectiveness.

That is what the U.S. ambassador said. That is what we found in the U.S. and that, sadly, is what we found among many of our men and women in uniform. They want our support. They have been given dangerous tasks and yet we have not supported them.

Let the motion on Remembrance Day be an opportunity for Canadians across the country, and particularly for the House, to back our men and women in uniform and also the civilian employees who

work so hard to support them. For example, Union of Defence Employees are a terribly hardworking group of civilians who the military desperately needs to support in the superb work they do at home and abroad.

The government has cut their effectiveness by cutting them to the bone. In spite of that, they continue to work hard in support of our men and women in uniform. That relation of the civilian aspect of our military simply cannot continue. It is an unrecognized disregard for our men and women in uniform and also compromises their effectiveness.

Our party has put forth a number of solutions over the years to address these issues and I will address a few of them: a lack of manpower, a rust out in equipment, a lack of foresight, and not addressing family issues. All these seek to erode our men and women in uniform.

•(1130)

Here are some possible solutions. First, our defence department needs a white paper that works in conjunction with foreign policy. We need a combined foreign policy defence white paper. This would enable our defence forces to know what our foreign policy was. We would then be able to fund our defence department to do what our foreign policy dictated. We cannot have disconnected foreign and defence policies, yet that is what we have had for a long time.

Second, we must increase our manpower to 75,000. We have seen our men and women in uniform rapidly cycling through the tasks they have been given. As a result they are burnt out, particularly our army people. Our army personnel are burnt out because they are cycling from the Middle East, Kosovo and Bosnia. They are tired and exhausted. We need up to 75,000 more people on the sharp edge of our military.

Third, we need critical investment in the rust out factor I have mentioned. We have a critical need for weaponry and equipment in a vast array of areas, particularly in the army but also in the air force. The navy is not doing too badly.

Fourth, those who come back sick must be taken care of. For reasons that are unfathomable to us, soldiers in uniform who get sick are too often treated with utter disregard. That is not fair. We must give our men and women in uniform greater regard than they give us, and they give us a tremendous amount. They must be taken care of when they come back sick.

Fifth, we must consider the families of soldiers and issues of life. The SCONDVA published an excellent report on issues concerning military families, yet by and large it was disregarded. The families placed much hope on the report. They listened and gave input. The report came out. It was excellent. It was supported by parties across the House, yet it has not been implemented. Why has the report not been implemented?

If the government truly wants to do something constructive and support our military it will remember those who have gone before us and those who are here today. It will live up to the obligation Canada has toward the people who fight for us and for peace.

There are many ways to do this. The Conference of Defence Associations published an excellent report which proffered many solutions to make our military effective. However we cannot condone the recent comments of government cabinet ministers who said aid was more important than defence. They suggested that diminishing our defence complement and defence investment would somehow make our country safer.

It would not. The world is more dangerous today than it has been in the last 100 years. China has a superheated military complex. It has been investing in long range weaponry and aircraft carriers while pretending to be weak. Even smaller countries like Thailand and Singapore have large militaries. The expansion of long range weaponry by China and other countries makes Canada a less safe place.

Furthermore, more than 50 conflicts are taking place. The nature of the world has changed. The conflicts are no longer between nations. Most are internecine conflicts within nations. Our military needs the tools to be nimble. It needs the ability to project military people into the theatre with our allies. Our military personnel need the equipment to do their jobs. Their families sit here worried sick about them. They are worried they will not come back alive because their husbands and wives do not necessarily have the equipment they often need.

We in our party plead with the government and the minister of defence to finally give our military personnel the respect they require and the tools to do the job. It should make the necessary investment so they will be safe in some of the most dangerous theatres in the world.

On behalf of the Canadian Alliance I thank the men and women who are in Afghanistan today. I thank the peacemakers and peacekeepers who work across this dangerous world of ours in the pursuit of peace and security for those who are most impoverished. I thank the Union of National Defence Employees and the civilian population. Above all, I thank the families for the sacrifices they make on behalf of Canada.

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating my colleague from Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore for the motion before us today. I feel it is an important motion. The Bloc Québécois has studied each of the concepts included in the motion, as we always do. All of the concepts in the motion are to the Bloc's liking.

First of all, it recognizes the contribution of all those who have come before us to defend the values we continue to hold dear today. There may be many objections about the cost of this or the fact that it is not under the right jurisdiction, but I believe that it has been worded so that it can satisfy everyone. It is also an expression of thanks.

Private Members' Business

If the House of Commons could adopt this motion, it would serve as an expression of thankfulness for all those efforts. Those were times of great tension, to which we can relate. Whether the war of 1914-18, the war of 1939-45 or the Korean war, these were times when dictators were emerging, mainly in Europe but in Korea as well. The free and democratic nations had to speak out and say "That is enough. Our own value systems are at risk".

Take my parents, for example. I have often heard them talk about the period from 1939 to 1945. My father was a member of the Fusiliers Mont-Royal; he did his part for the war effort. He witnessed the rise of the Nazi dictatorship and racist Nazi nationalism. He felt that it was important to stand up to it. There was debate at the time, and once again, it became apparent that there were two societies. Some people agreed to go and defend the so-called motherland, Great Britain—I am referring to English Canada—but Quebec was not as keen for this cause. We know that Quebec was not in favour of conscription.

These were tense times for people in the first blush of youth, between the ages of 20 and 25, who witnessed the rise of the regime and were told that they should go overseas to defend Europe. Even though Quebec voted against conscription at the time, Quebecers did nevertheless enlist to defend freedom in Europe.

It is very important to recognize that those were stressful times back then. My father, a member of the Fusiliers Mont-Royal, was about to marry my mother. They had to wait because he was sent overseas. It is not hard to imagine that this was difficult, just like it is difficult today, knowing that soldiers may be sent to Afghanistan to risk their lives fighting for the same values.

The proposal as such includes the whole notion that the House of Commons should recognize this effort and, more importantly, that it should remember it. This motion includes both men and women. Recently, we had a motion before the House to recognize the work of women. It should be remembered that, at the time, men went to Europe or Korea to defend fundamental values. These men were accompanied by women, including nurses. It was very important to have nurses on the line of fire. Someone had to take care of the injured. In my view, there was never a resolution to recognize the work of these women.

The motion before us today recognizes this work at last. It also recognizes the work of civilians. Even though my mother was not a nurse, she worked very hard for the military industry during the war. For example, the Singer company, which is located in my riding, was in operation 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to provide the necessary supplies to support the theatre of operations in Europe, from 1939 to 1945.

This motion also recognizes the work of civilians, and this is important. It was not only women who worked for the military industry to support the front. Farmers, also produced a lot to sent food items to Europe, specifically to support the war effort. Again, this is appropriately mentioned in the motion.

Private Members' Business

So far, little has been said about the merchant navy, but I want to talk about it. The federal government was slow to recognize the effort of the Canadian merchant navy. It took the government a long time to do so. Yet, these people were taking very serious risks. The Germans had very sophisticated submarines and they were well aware that if they could intercept convoys and stop the shipping of necessary supplies to Europe, this could be a turning point in the war.

● (1140)

Many merchant mariners lost their lives. They too took part in the war effort. This is recognized in my colleague's motion.

One thing which is very important to the Bloc Québécois is Quebec's jurisdiction. This motion does not force Quebec to declare November 11 a holiday. In most federal institutions, it is of course observed. It is also observed in many institutions in Quebec.

The motion, however, leaves it up to the provinces and the municipalities, which come under provincial jurisdiction, to decide whether or not to observe the day. I think it would be desirable for everyone to observe it. But the fact that my colleague has given thought to respect for jurisdictions is not insignificant and I wish to congratulate him on the work he has done.

I would be disappointed if, at the end of this debate, my colleague did not seek unanimous consent. I noted that this motion was unfortunately not votable. I think that, for all the reasons I have just given, it would be interesting for the House of Commons to hold a debate and confirm that this recognition and this remembrance are important.

I urge my colleague to put forward a motion later—and I hope that everyone will be in favour—seeking the unanimous consent of the House to make this motion votable.

For all these reasons, I can tell the hon. member that the Bloc Québécois will unanimously support his request for a motion. We would also be in favour of the motion being made votable, because I think it is important for society to recognize the efforts of those who lost their lives, or whose lives were shattered, who lost relatives and friends. It is vital that this be recognized today. I hope that everyone will support the member's motion.

[*English*]

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in my place today to support the motion of my hon. friend from Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore to enhance our day of remembrance for the men and women who have made the supreme sacrifice for Canada.

This is not the first time I have tried to deal with the matter in this place. Many years ago a constituent of mine named Brian Warshick repeatedly asked me to make Remembrance Day a holiday in Canada. It had always upset his father, a decorated vet, to watch the news on November 11 and see Torontonians shopping on the hallowed day. I wanted to make the change but I came across the same jurisdictional obstacles my friend from Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore encountered. I want Brian and his father to know that today in the House of Commons we are doing what we can.

Before looking into the legalities of holiday law in Canada I had always thought Remembrance Day was a real holiday, meaning people stopped and did other things apart from commerce, schools and whatever we busy ourselves with. In Nova Scotia schools, malls, courts and offices are closed on November 11. No one would dream of trying to hold a public event in Halifax on November 11 that was not related to Remembrance Day. I have always supported this.

There is nothing special about the devotion of the people of Dartmouth to our military. We honour the military tradition. We remember perhaps a little more because of the Halifax explosion, the hundreds of convoys which have left from our harbour and the hundreds of sons who never came back. However men and women from across the country have never come back. All parts of Canada have supported our forces and our war efforts. The memory of those who fell is honoured in every small and large jurisdiction across the country. We should do anything we can in the House to encourage jurisdictions and provinces to respect the memories of fathers, sons, brothers, sisters and daughters who served Canada and did not return.

Mr. Warshick has nothing against the folks he sees on the news who shop in malls in Toronto. He merely asks that they join him for once in taking this day to reflect on the courage and values we stand for and on the sacrifice his father and the fathers and grandfathers of many here in this room have made on behalf of our country.

Once again I thank the drafter of the motion. I ask that we all support it being made votable in the House of Commons.

● (1145)

Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pleasure to support my colleague from Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore in this very important initiative. We need to take every opportunity to renew the pride of Canadians in some of our institutions, in our citizenship and in our parliamentary processes. At the very core of this pride, we need to point to the tremendous contributions made by those men and women in past world conflicts in defending the principles of democracy and freedom that we now enjoy.

Increasingly Canadians are taking for granted the privileges we have of living in a democratic country, privileges for which there was a very high price. Some of those men and women paid the ultimate price of losing their lives overseas, many sustained permanent injury, both emotional and physical, and families lost members in conflict defending the principles of democratic freedom and liberty.

However today as we pull back from honouring, supporting and recognizing these contributions, we live in an age where we see declining voter participation in every election. What is most upsetting to see is that first time voter turnout has been reduced significantly in almost every election in recent years. Canadians have the sacred privilege of participating in the electoral process and electing individuals to represent their views in this hallowed place, the House of Commons. We have seen a decline in that level of participation.

Private Members' Business

This type of initiative would help strengthen the recognition across Canada of the contributions of these brave men and women, our veterans, and perhaps would help remind Canadians why it is important not just to be patriotic on November 11 but to vigilant every day of the year, and on election days for us to participate as informed and interested citizenry. This would help. I would argue further that we need to see provincially a greater focus across Canada on educating young Canadians on our history and on the importance of citizenry involvement and participation. This certainly would help.

In my view it is unacceptable that on Remembrance Day we have a hodgepodge of policies on a day when Canadians ought to be united on one thing, and that is the sacrifices made by our forefathers in protecting our freedoms and that the benefits which have grown from those sacrifices are felt by every Canadian in every province of Canada. As such we need to see an approach that recognizes this sacrifice from coast to coast.

I would also argue that we need to do more on an ongoing basis to make Canadians aware of our history. In so many ways if Canadians are not more aware of our shared history, we have less to bind us together in moving forward. One thing which we need to take into account, particularly at a time now when Canadian men and women are again involved in conflict on foreign lands and in recognizing the contributions made by Canadian peacekeepers over the last 30 years particularly, is the respect earned by our peacekeepers around the world.

• (1150)

One thing we do very well as a country is help provide a greater level of stability in security and safety for people in other countries around the world in which there are not the great levels of freedom and liberty that we take for granted in Canada.

I would argue that if Canadians were more aware of how well our peacekeepers are regarded around the world, it would become a rallying cry from a unity perspective because clearly one of the casualties of a divided Canada would be our ability to participate as fully as we do now with our peacekeepers in distant lands.

Therefore it is not just Canadians who have a vested interest in a strong united Canada but it is people who live around the world. Whether it is in Cyprus, Afghanistan or the mid-east in general or in the former Yugoslavia, people in those distant lands depend as much as we do on a strong and united Canada to continue its vigilance and ensure that in this 21st century as we move forward that we will see a greater level of peace and harmony than we perhaps saw in the 20th century.

We have always punched above our weight as a country. Canadian participation in military efforts on behalf of freedom and liberty has always been disproportionate to our actual military resources and indeed our population.

I would hope that one result of strengthening our commitment to Remembrance Day would be to remind every Canadian why military funding is so important. I know this ought not to be a partisan issue, but I would be remiss not to mention the fact that under this government we have seen a dramatic reduction in the commitment to

our Canadian military, both in terms of equipment and also in quality of life issues in terms of pay and housing.

Recognizing and strengthening our commitment to Remembrance Day could also have the benefit of strengthening the commitment of individual Canadians to hold the feet of the government to the fire by demanding that this government and future governments do more from a resource perspective to ensure that our men and women who so valiantly represent the values that we treasure as Canadians will have the resources required to do the job and that the military will not be asked constantly to do more with less. This increased level of pressure on the current government and future federal governments to do more to assist our military from a resources perspective would ensure that these proud Canadians could continue to represent Canadian values proudly and protect the rights and freedoms around the world which we take for granted here at home.

• (1155)

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all the individuals who spoke today in favour of the motion. I know I have great support from all the people who spoke.

I would be remiss if I did not include for the official record a couple of individuals who are sitting in the House today, my colleague from Winnipeg Centre and my colleague from the Alliance Party from Surrey North whose fathers were also part of the liberation of Holland. The father of my colleague from Winnipeg Centre, Lieutenant Jack Martin, was part of the liberation of Holland and the father of my colleague from Surrey North, Corporal Ernie Cadman, was in Apeldoorn during the liberation and ended up marrying a Dutch girl. As I always say, if people are not Dutch, they are not much, so he is half much.

I rise to ask the House to make this motion votable. I understand the role of the committee when it makes a particular bill or motion non-votable. It goes before six of my colleagues in committee and they decide yes or no. In this case they said no but I remind the House that what the committee said no to was the original wording of the motion. That has now been tossed out.

We now have a new reworded motion with the generous help of the heritage committee, the heritage department and the Government of Canada. They helped me rewrite this motion to make it more palatable, more accessible to the House of Commons and hopefully votable. We are not debating the original motion. We are debating the one the reworded motion which the House unanimously agreed to debate. In fact, the department of the Minister of Canadian Heritage was gracious enough to help me rewrite this motion.

Again, I thank all members who spoke on behalf of our brave men and women in our military, past and present, our civilian workers attached to the military, past and present, and all Canadians across the country who support our military men and women in their efforts to spread democracy around the world, as well as peace and freedom. At this time I seek unanimous consent of the House to make this motion a votable item.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Is there unanimous consent to make the motion votable?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Government Orders

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired. As the motion has not been designated as a votable item, the order is dropped from the order paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1200)

[English]

PASSING OF THE QUEEN MOTHER

Hon. Sheila Copps (for the Prime Minister) moved:

That a humble Address be presented to Her Majesty the Queen in the following words:

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY:

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN:

We, Your Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of Canada, in Parliament assembled, approach Your Majesty with the expression of our deep and heartfelt sorrow at the demise of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

We mourn the loss of Her Majesty whose kindness, graciousness and influence for good over so many years won the love, respect and admiration of us all, and there has come to each of us a sense of personal bereavement which, we say with all possible respect and duty, makes Your Majesty's sorrow our own.

We pray that the God of consolation may comfort Your Majesty and the members of the Royal Family in your bereavement, and that Your Majesty may long be spared to continue the eminent public services of your great predecessors.

That the said Address be engrossed; and

That a Message be sent to the Senate informing their Honours that this House has passed the said Address and requesting their Honours to unite with this House therein.

She said: Mr. Speaker, the life of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, spanned the entire 20th century, a century of immense upheaval and great change.

[Translation]

That entire time, the Queen Mother has been a symbol of courage, stability and dignity, and of constant devotion to her loyal subjects. Not only did she live through so much of our modern history, she was also a key figure in it.

[English]

With a grace and strength that belied her diminutive figure, she was a beacon of light and hope during the darkest days of the second world war. Although she could have left England during the Blitz as many urged her to do, she adamantly refused. She said:

The children won't leave without me, I won't leave without the King, and the King will never leave.

She, King George VI and their daughters, Elizabeth and Margaret, remained in England even as Buckingham Palace was damaged by several hits from enemy bombs. "Now I feel I can look the East End in the eye," was her famous response.

• (1205)

[Translation]

The Queen Mother, who spoke French very well, made radio broadcasts to occupied France. This was one of the reasons Hitler considered her "the most dangerous woman in all of Europe".

In her numerous visits to Canada, Canadians had ample opportunity to show her the great affection they felt for her, and she too made no secret of her affection for Canada.

[English]

Upon her first visit to Canada in 1939 when her husband George VI had been King for only a short time, the response was overwhelming and genuinely warm. Canadians in the hundreds of thousands came out to cheer the royal couple as their train travelled from coast to coast. She was later to say:

I lost my heart to Canada and to Canadians, and my feelings have not changed with the passage of time.

Canadians in turn felt the same way about her.

I was fortunate to have met her on her last visit to this country as she marked the 50th anniversary of that first historic visit. Like so many others, I was struck by the complete ease with which she spoke to people from all walks of life. Although royal in stature and regal in bearing, she had the ability to connect with anyone, an indication of her true style.

All of these characteristics went hand in hand with a genuine love for life. She was passionate about horse racing and fly fishing. She welcomed neighbours who lived near her Scottish home.

Her sense of duty did not end after she was prematurely widowed half a century ago. The Queen Mother remained active late into life in more than 300 charities.

No one followed better than herself the advice she gave on numerous public occasions:

Do not, in today's tumult, lose sight of the ancient virtues of service, truth and vision.

She truly epitomized that advice.

[Translation]

All those who knew her will say that this was a great lady who could transmit her joie de vivre to all those who had the privilege and the unique opportunity to enjoy her company.

[English]

We are reminded at this time of our country's longstanding link with the crown and the bonds of friendship that have been built between Canada and the more than 50 other nations in the Commonwealth.

The Canadian crown has lost a part of itself and the Canadian family now mourns one of our own. Canadians are deeply saddened by the loss of Her Majesty. In an ever changing world, she was truly a symbol of enduring strength and stability and service to humankind. We shall miss her.

Mr. John Reynolds (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition I would like to express to Her Majesty and her family our deep and sincere sorrow on the passing of the Queen Mother, Elizabeth Angela Marguerite. I know that the House and Canadians will join me in paying tribute to the Queen Mother who for almost a century was part of our lives.

Government Orders

As Canadians we have always considered Her Majesty as one of us. She was Colonel-in-Chief of the Black Watch, Royal Highland Regiment of Canada, the Toronto Scottish Regiment and the Canadian Forces Medical Services. The Queen Mother was the Grand President of the Victorian Order of Nurses in Canada, an honorary member of the Law Society of Upper Canada, and the patron of many national organizations, including the Canadian Red Cross Society.

She was near and dear to Canadians because she personified the values that are at the core of our identity as a people, values such as dedication and loyalty to family, duty and country. She demonstrated discretion, poise and grace under the pressures of public life. She will be profoundly missed by people all over the world and in particular the people of Canada and the Commonwealth.

The Queen Mum was born on August 4, 1900 during the Boer War and was considered the last of the great Edwardian ladies. She was the youngest daughter of Claude George Bowes-Lyon, 14th Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorne. Her family is descended from the Royal House of Scotland and Robert the Bruce, King of Scotland.

On April 26, 1923 Elizabeth was married to Albert, Duke of York and second son of King George V. This marriage was a popular departure from the longstanding practice of an English prince marrying into a foreign royal family. Another popular departure from tradition was her relationship with her children and how she brought them with her when she travelled.

The Queen Mum became Queen on December 11, 1936, upon the abdication of Edward VIII and the accession of her husband as George VI. During her long life she witnessed many changes and advancements in the world. She lived through the first world war and was Queen during the second world war.

When war broke out in 1939 there was some suggestion that she and her daughters should evacuate to North America, but throughout the war she and her children shared the dangers and difficulties of the rest of the nation and were in Buckingham Palace when it was bombed in 1940. She put on a brave face under those circumstances and her observation of the damage the bomb blast did to her home was that it provided her a view of the East Enders, the poor neighbourhood of London which suffered greatly from the Blitz.

Together with the King she frequented England's wartorn cities, munitions factories and hospitals. As the Blitz tore through the east end of London, the Queen travelled through the bomb sites to boost morale. Her efforts re-established confidence in the monarchy and saved the monarchy from ruin.

She became known officially as Queen Mum after her husband's death on February 6, 1952 and the accession of her daughter Elizabeth II. There is no doubt that she was the most popular and admired member of the royal family. Canadians will remember her fondly.

After her husband's death, the Queen Mother continued her public duties at home and abroad, including a 1989 visit to Canada which marked the 50th anniversary of her first visit here. Her first visit started in Quebec City in May 1939 and she travelled the country for two months. It was during a visit to Canada in 1954 when a journalist first called her Queen Mum in print.

The Queen Mother had sailed many times to and from North America on the *Queen Elizabeth*, and the *Queen Mary* in 1954. In 1962 she graced our land again, touring for several days visiting Montreal and Ottawa, including visits to eastern Ontario and a finale in Toronto. She returned to Toronto in 1965 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Toronto Scottish Regiment of which she had been Colonel-in-Chief since 1937.

In 1966 it was western Canada's turn to see the Queen Mother. When Canada celebrated its centennial in 1967 the Queen Mother contributed to the national festivities with a tour of the four Atlantic provinces. In 1974 the Queen Mother returned to Canada for the Dominion Day celebrations at Queen's Park. Five years later in 1979 she was back to present the new colours to the Maritime Command in Halifax. In 1981 the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake marked its 200th anniversary and the occasion brought Her Majesty to Ontario for six days in July.

• (1210)

Her Majesty was part of so many of Canada's celebrations we will miss partying with her. Once again we offer our condolences to Her Majesty and her family. Our thoughts and prayers are with them while we share in their bereavement at the loss of Her Majesty the Queen Mum.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, having seen the long lines of people wishing to pay their last respects to the Queen Mother, we are moved to join others in extending our condolences to the Queen of the United Kingdom, Great Britain and Northern Ireland. However, the wording of the motion concerns us, and we feel compelled to propose an amendment that would replace the words after "in the following words" with the following: "We, the House of Commons of Canada, in Parliament assembled, wish to extend to Her our condolences on the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, who, with her husband, King George VI, was able to rally the British nation, particularly during the dark days of World War II."

I am sorry, but the terms of the original motion are totally unacceptable to us, because of three expressions included in it. First, it begins with the words "We, Your Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects". We have been Quebec and Canadian citizens since the 1949 Citizenship Act was passed. Moreover, the motion passed by the Parliament of Great Britain begins with the words "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty expressing the deep sympathy". There is no reference to "Your Majesty's dutiful subjects". Also, no such wording can be found in the speeches delivered in the House of Commons.

Also, we do not think that it is appropriate to refer to God in a motion of the House of Commons. We can offer our condolences to the Queen without saying, out of respect for all the members of this House and all Canadians, that the God of consolation may comfort Her Majesty.

Finally, the motion says "that Your Majesty may long be spared to continue the eminent public services of your great predecessors". Out of respect for a number of people in this parliament and elsewhere in Canada, we can certainly find a wording on which we will agree, without using these expressions.

Government Orders

We deeply regret not being able to give our support and make this a unanimous motion, but we feel that the motion that we just proposed could enjoy the unanimous support of the House. If this issue had been discussed before, we could have agreed on a motion and sent to the Queen a unanimous message of sincere condolences following the death of the Queen Mother, of a woman whose achievements are being remembered. The Queen Mother played a prominent role, particularly in Great Britain, during World War II, during the darkest times of that period, when Great Britain itself was playing an important role.

We feel the House should give its unanimous support to a motion and that is why we are proposing this amendment.

• (1215)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): If I might have the attention of the hon. member for Mercier, I would remind her that the standing orders require her to read her motion at the end of her speech. I would therefore ask her to do so now.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to read it at the beginning, out of respect for this assembly, so that my speech would be understood. My motion is:

That the motion be amended by replacing everything after the words "the following words " by the following:

"We, the House of Commons of Canada, in Parliament assembled, wish to extend to Her our condolences on the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, who, with her husband, King George VI, was able to rally the British nation, particularly during the dark days of World War II."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I would inform the hon. member for Mercier that her motion will be taken under advisement and the Chair will rule on it a little later on today.

Mr. Michel Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I would like to know why this motion is not being accepted immediately.

What is it that you need to reach a ruling on? Is it on the hon. member's right to make a motion in amendment? This is not a problem.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I am advised that there is a new element that was not in the initial motion and that this requires reflection. The Chair will therefore get back to the House on this as soon as possible. You are also requested to approach the table so that this may be discussed with you.

• (1220)

[*English*]

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is with a sense of solemnity but also of celebration that we gather together to pay tribute to a truly extraordinary woman who was much loved by Canadians. As has been said so many times in the last nine days since the passing of the Queen Mother, she had an extraordinary and deep affection for Canada and for Canadians. It was a truly mutual relationship that is being remembered and celebrated today.

This is not an occasion for debate. It is not my intention to add to the many historical facts that have been shared and remembered in the last nine days. On many occasions I have had the opportunity to express condolences to the Royal Family, as we all have. In the few moments available to me I will speak on a personal note. I will talk about the extraordinary outpouring of affection, admiration and

appreciation for this truly remarkable woman who was in many ways very conventional.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage described the Queen Mother as a woman royal in stature and regal in bearing who at the same time had a common touch. I agree. This is one of the things for which she will always be remembered and much loved. She not only took up the duties her royal responsibilities imposed on her. She went way beyond the call of duty. She took a courageous stand during the second world war when she would not vacate London if the people to whom she saw herself as a servant were to remain in jeopardy and danger. She said she would stand with them. For that she will always be remembered.

When I received word of the passing of the Queen Mother I instantly made a phone call to my cousin Elizabeth, the daughter of my great aunt Alice MacKinnon who was a British war bride. My great aunt has been decorated and celebrated many times as the first nurse who entered the first world war in Britain. She subsequently married my great uncle and came to Canada as a war bride as did so many British women.

I made the call to my cousin Elizabeth because I knew she would regale me with stories of my great aunt Alice's remarkable encounters with and, one might say, friendship she developed over the years with the Queen Mother and subsequently Queen Elizabeth. As everyone knows, in her affection for Canada and her love of travel the Queen Mother came to Canada again and again. On one occasion she visited the veterans at the Camp Hill Veterans Memorial Building. My aunt Alice was there. The Queen Mother was the same kind of character back then. She was conventional in many ways but had a real sense of mischief about her. She enjoyed life to the fullest. She had a joie de vivre, as we say.

On that occasion my aunt Alice was not in the veterans hospital but was there to greet the Queen Mother. They had a wonderful discussion about their shared interests. They both enjoyed gardening and taking their grandchildren fishing. On many occasions we have heard stories about the Queen Mother's great devotion to her grandchildren. The same was true of my great aunt Alice.

Shortly before my great aunt Alice passed away at the astounding age of 104 and a half she had an opportunity to present flowers to Queen Elizabeth. Queen Elizabeth came to dedicate the new veterans memorial hospital in Halifax. It is fair to say Canadians loved the Queen Mother. It is particularly true to say maritimers loved the Queen Mother. Haligonians had a special affection for the pageantry that went with visits from members of the Royal Family.

On that occasion the new veterans memorial hospital was being dedicated by the Queen. The administrator asked my aunt Alice if on the occasion of her 100th birthday she would like to present flowers to Queen Elizabeth. With the same sense of fun and mischief we can imagine coming from the Queen Mother, my aunt Alice said "On the occasion of my 100th birthday I should have thought the Queen might want to present flowers to me. However I am honoured to be asked and I do not mind if I do".

Government Orders

●(1225)

On that occasion my great aunt had the opportunity to talk with Queen Elizabeth. The conversation went on for the unusual length of seven or eight minutes even though Queen Elizabeth was making her rounds. She had an opportunity to inquire about the health of the Queen Mother, her hobbies, her gardening, her fishing, her fun and her enjoyment of horses. She was very pleased to be updated on what was happening in the life of the Queen Mother.

This weekend I attended the funeral of a much loved member of my extended family. The mother of my sister in law passed away at an advanced age, just before her 97th birthday. Our Speaker, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, knew Mrs. Marjorie McDonald Little very well. She was one of his constituents for many years. She was a woman with the same qualities as the Queen Mother. She had a real sense of duty to family, community and country. She also had an extraordinary sense of self as a woman.

In the year 2002 we may take for granted the notion that women can play a public role in situations where their role is generally defined and circumscribed by conventional expectations. I am sure everyone here and all Canadians have examples of women who lived during the Queen Mother's era. Some were born in the 19th century and have lived into the 21st. Some have broken barriers by not accepting conventional limitations. They have respected and fulfilled the responsibilities associated with such conventions but have gone beyond them. The Queen Mother was such a woman. Her courageous stand on behalf of the people of London during the second world war will always be remembered with the greatest admiration.

Midge Little who passed away this past week had a great affection for the Queen Mother. Midge's son Bob had an opportunity to bring his mother up to date moment by moment on the developing pageantry after the Queen Mother passed away. In 1925 Midge Little made the astounding decision to go to university which was quite uncommon at the time. She chose to take physics and mathematics. She worked through the depression years. In each of the four successive years she taught school her salary was systematically reduced. Like the Queen Mother, she rose to the challenges of her time and far exceeded what was expected of her.

On this occasion people around the world who knew of the reputation, deeds, and *joie de vivre* of the Queen Mother are celebrating the way she lived up to the demands of her time while serving as a role model for the rest of us. We are seeing a tremendous outpouring of affection not just from strong supporters of the monarchy or those who follow the royal family. Today people of all ages and both sexes are showing their admiration and respect. They are honouring and celebrating this astounding woman who blazed a trail and served as a role model for so many of us.

The Governor General by whom we in Canada are privileged to be served is such a woman. She has taken the opportunities life has presented and done far more than might ever have been demanded of her.

On this day it is appropriate to remember and celebrate the Queen Mother for her contribution and for a life so wonderfully and richly lived.

●(1230)

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express the sincere condolences of members of our coalition to Her Majesty the Queen, Prince Philip, their children and grandchildren on the death of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

We also celebrate her long and remarkable life and contribution. The Queen Mother's 101 years traversed the 20th century, times of turmoil and war, times of transformation and of extraordinary human and social progress. She moved with grace, with courage and with humour through them all.

[*Translation*]

The Queen Mother will always figure in our memories as a symbol of courage and deep devotion. Throughout her life she won the hearts of her people and of people around the world with her warm smile, extended hand, and words that came straight from the heart. At a time marked by crisis and controversy, she arrived like a breath of fresh air.

From the outset, during that critical time, her unswerving support for her husband, and the example she set herself defined new standards of leadership. As a result, she became closer to all of us than any of her predecessors. She lived a life dedicated to her duty, a model of dignity. She leaves us now, known as a grandmother to us all.

Canadians will always remember the joys of welcoming her here. During her numerous visits, many of us had the good fortune of seeing her and being touched by her warmth. She always maintained close, even informal ties with Canada. Canadians, in return, always welcomed her as a member of the family.

She was loved and admired beyond the borders of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth for her grace, devotion, and great courage.

Her Majesty the Queen Mother will never be forgotten.

[*English*]

Her first memorable visit to Canada was in 1939. In total the Queen Mother came here 11 times and touched the lives of generations of Canadians. She served as Colonel-in-Chief for the Black Watch, with the Toronto Scottish Regiment and the Canadian Forces Medical Services. She was the Grand President of the Victorian Order of Nurses in Canada, an honorary member of the Law Society of Upper Canada and patron of many national organizations including the Canadian Red Cross Society and the Canadian Merchant Navy Prisoners of War Association.

Government Orders

Her Majesty's strength during the second world war helped stiffen the backbone of Great Britain during those dark days. The film footage we have watched over the past week of the King and the Queen walking through the rubble of bombed out London shows her devotion to her fellow citizens, her devotion to duty and her courage in the face of adversity. Beyond that royal and official role her impact as a sensitive and caring human being was palpable to all who met her and was unforgettable to those she touched directly.

If the House may allow one personal recollection, in May 1979 one of those rare and extraordinary events occurred in Canada. A general election actually changed the Government of Canada. The Queen Mother had an event in Halifax to which invitations had been issued well before election day. To say that the invitation list did not reflect the election result would be to understate the case.

My spouse, Maureen McTeer, attended the Queen Mother's reception and events on my behalf. That was a time when Maureen McTeer's own use of her own name was not universally approved. Several of the guests at the luncheon, coming from both another party and another time, delighted in referring to Maureen consistently as Mrs. Clark. Not the Queen Mother. As Maureen walked her to her car, the Queen Mother touched her arm and said "I always tell my grandchildren that they must be themselves and do what they believe is best in life. Just be yourself". Then she said "Don't let them get you down, Ms. McTeer".

The Queen Mother was a powerful and courageous symbol. She was a wonderful and sensitive person. We extend to the Royal Family our most sincere sympathies and our prayers during this time of sadness.

• (1235)

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I count it an exceptional privilege as a member of the Canadian House of Commons to stand here to pay tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, known to the world as the Queen Mum.

She was the mother of our present sovereign, Queen Elizabeth II, but the Queen Mother showed us that a woman does not have to be a mother to become a grandmother. A grandmother is a loving, kind, strong, resourceful, dedicated, disciplined human being who imparts important values to those she loves. The Queen Mum truly was a royal grandmother to the world, and what an exceptional person she was. As nanny to us all she won the hearts of millions around the globe with her warmth and sympathy.

The Queen Mother made her last trip to Canada in 1989 to mark the 50th anniversary of the 1939 royal visit that was so important in solidifying the continuation of the house of Windsor. After stepping out of the same 1939 Buick convertible that had carried her and her late husband during their visit 50 years earlier, she was greeted by a crowd of 10,000 people on Parliament Hill. In a short address in both official languages the Queen Mother said:

I rejoice that the bonds of friendship between Canadians and the Royal Family have become even closer, perhaps in part because they have grown year by year more personal.

Canadians remember the former Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon with affection as evidence of the special bond that she forged with Canada. She said:

I lost my heart to Canada and to Canadians, and I assure my sentiments have not changed with the passage of time.

In 1939 she first toured the country with her husband, King George VI. Thousands of Canadians lined railway tracks for a glimpse of the royal couple. Gesine Stone, mother-in-law of one of my staff has a cute story about that trip.

Two years ago she was cleaning out some old photos and came across a black and white picture she had taken when she was in nurses training at Vancouver General Hospital. It was a picture of the Queen Mum with King George in an open car touring downtown Vancouver.

For this young farm girl from Saskatchewan being in Vancouver and seeing the King and Queen was a pretty big happening. Mrs. Stone decided she would get the picture blown up and sent a copy to the Queen Mum at Clarence House early last year with a little story about the picture taking. Surprise of surprises, she got a response from London in a special envelope with a royal seal from the Queen's lady-in-waiting acknowledging and thanking her for taking the time to send the picture.

Let us make no mistake. The Queen Mum was also a pillar of strength. During the war a crazed intruder had hidden in the Queen Mother's bedroom behind a curtain. When he leapt out and grabbed her by the ankle she was cool as a cucumber, calmly listening to the man's tale of woe until she was able to ring a bell for help.

When in South Africa with the King in 1947 a man lunged at their open Daimler. He grabbed hold and would not let her go. It turned out he was trying to give Princess Elizabeth a gift but no one knew about that then. While the King shouted at the chauffeur to accelerate, the Queen Mother performed the remarkable feat of holding the man at bay with the point of her personal parasol in her right hand while she continued to wave regally to the crowds with her left.

In Westminster last week MPs recalled anecdotes of a high spirited woman with a wicked sense of humour. Paying tribute to the Queen Mum's sharp edged sense of humour, Prime Minister Blair told the story of the same royal visit to South Africa when she was confronted by a disgruntled Boer War veteran. "I can never forgive what the English did to my people", the man told her. The Queen Mother replied, "Oh, I do understand. We in Scotland often feel just the same". She showed strength by example. The Queen Mother did what needed to be done when it needed to be done.

Government Orders

As we all know she and Princess Diana were estranged for years before Diana's death in Paris. In the tide of mourning that swept Britain after Diana's death, the Royal Family did not play its cards at all well. It was not as clear as it needed to be that the Royals shared the people's grief. Was monarchy irretrievably out of touch? Many thought so and once again began calling for an end to it. The Queen Mother's soldiering on with her duties can only have reassured Britain that the monarchy still had worth. In spite of her severe differences with Diana, the Queen Mother knew what she had to do and she did it.

● (1240)

The sight of that very old woman walking so painfully into Westminster Abbey for Diana's funeral, the familiar smile so remarkably fresh and sincere, spoke volumes about a rich past of devotion, steadfastness and honour. For the Queen Mother the monarchy was more important than her differences with Diana. She did not let past differences deter her from doing what was right.

The Queen Mother was fortunate too, having an amazing physical condition right to the end, or was it her sheer personal determination? The Queen Mother once famously told an aide "If you ignore an illness it will go away". For much of her life she was able to prove that. She was 101 when she passed way, remarkably healthy and engaged until her final days.

The Queen Mother had been in declining health since last Christmas when she developed a bad cough and severe chest infection. What will never be known is what effect the death of her 71 year old daughter Princess Margaret on February 9 had on her remaining will and spirit.

In recent days advisers reported she had remained perky, if increasingly frail, still able to follow her beloved horse racing news from a wheelchair. In spite of her amazing age headlines around the world said it all: "We all felt we knew her".

As the Queen Mum she won over legions of fans from the post-war generations. She charmed them with her wild hats and her reported enjoyment of a gin and Dubonnet or two, and she conducted herself with a mixture of dignity and self-deprecation that somehow kept her free from the sting of scandal which diminished other members of the Royal Family one by one.

The appeal of the Queen Mother cut across international boundaries and class barriers. She was often referred to as everyone's favourite grandmother.

John Aimers, dominion chairman of the Monarchist League of Canada, said it was her ability to reach out to the people that made her so popular. "She sought nothing for herself, never losing her royalty, never becoming familiar. Yet we could all identify with her", he said.

As a counsellor and a friend, a personification of both the monarchy and its humanity, she made a personal connection. Every one of us felt we knew her. Mr. Aimers said it was her relaxed yet regal style that endeared her to so many. He said:

She never reinvented herself, didn't have spin doctors or image consultants—she was utterly herself. She gave pleasure to others and, my goodness, that was her agenda, and in a world where so many people have agendas for the me and the my... she stressed the we, the us, the sense of community and getting along with people.

The Queen Mum above all was a very special person. In spite of her position she did not make people feel uncomfortable. As a matter of fact quite the opposite.

In 1987 she helped celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Black Watch of Canada of which she was Colonel-in-Chief at a posh Montreal hotel. When the ball ended she heard music coming from a nearby room and asked what was going on. Someone said there was a high school prom and she said "Oh, let's join them". The kids were just stunned. She was the queen of fun. From her daily gin and tonics to her love of parties the Queen Mum had an effervescent enthusiasm for life.

Harold Nicolson, then charge d'affaires at the British embassy in Berlin, met the Yorks when they stayed at the embassy on their way back from a wedding in Norway in 1929. He found her "delightful, incredibly gay and simple. It was a tragedy that she should be royal".

Chips Channon, a Chicago born British MP whose diaries are a lively chronicle of London society in the 1920s and 1930s, described her this way:

Well-bred, kind, gentle and slack, always charming, always gay, pleasant and smiling, mildly flirtatious in a very proper, romantic, old-fashioned Valentine sort of way. She makes every man feel chivalrous and gallant toward her.

While always socially correct, she knew how to tweak things and still be perfectly proper. Once a guest sitting on the couch with her dropped a biscuit into his tea. He was mortified and did not dare fish out the biscuit with his fingers in her presence. She giggled and told him she was going to turn away from him for a few seconds to attend to something, and of course she could not see what he did when her back was turned.

Prince Charles, her first and favourite grandchild, once said "She belongs to the priceless band of human beings whose greatest gift is to enhance life for others through her own effervescent enthusiasm for life".

● (1245)

She was the belle of the ball of her post-first world war generation, though on her own terms. This was the time of the flapper, the cocktail swilling women with bobbed hair and loose morals in some parts of society, but she remained, even in her youth, resolutely old fashioned. She was never a prude.

It was reported there were many gay men on her staff who she affectionately referred to as "my knitting brigade".

According to a well known anecdote, she once called down to the servants' quarters at Clarence House as the cocktail hour approached saying "I don't know about any of you queens down there but this Queen up here wants a drink".

She loved the outdoors, could fly-fish with the best of them and was not afraid to back a loser at the track.

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Through it all, one of the most endearing and enduring images of the Queen Mother was that of a passionate sportswoman who loved nothing better than to check on her race horses or head to the countryside for an afternoon by the river dressed in Wellingtons and pearls. Her love of the outdoors and the sporting world was legendary.

Warmed by the odd glass of gin, the Queen Mother would make frequent visits to the stables even on the coldest of days to check the horses and watch them train.

In warmer weather, however, she liked trudging along the riverbanks to enjoy one of her other favourite sports, fly-fishing. The Queen Mother enjoyed trout and salmon fishing and could wield her fishing rod with the pros. For a time she was also the patron of the Salmon and Trout Association.

She was particularly fond of fishing on the River Dee and was long a familiar figure along the riverbank with her corgis, Billy and Bee, at her side. Occasionally she would startle the odd angler who, looking up from his or her rod, would find themselves in the company of royalty.

Believe it or not, it was only when she turned 85 that Prince Charles finally persuaded his grandmother to stop wading out into fast running streams. This was said by Arthur Bousfield who has written extensively about the Queen Mother. He said "They were afraid she would fall over and be carried away. It was evidently with great reluctance that she finally gave it up".

British liberal democrat leader, Charles Kennedy, also a Scot, remembered the Queen Mother as fiercely energetic even in her nineties. Having dinner with her one evening he noticed her personal detective, who travelled with her everywhere, was deeply asleep in an armchair. When the man awoke he told Kennedy with embarrassment "The problem is I'm just exhausted. I simply cannot keep up with her.

The newspaper headline says it all so well, "Few have given so much, to so many, for so long".

This is a death that need not be mourned. I see the remembrance of the Queen Mom as a lesson for us all. Everyone of us is getting older day after day. As we see our roles in life changing, as our family and friends move away and as our situations evolve which one of us from time to time has not felt just a little bit useless?

Maybe we are the mum or dad who used to be essential to our children's well-being. Maybe we are the reason why a church group, a neighbourhood block watch, a service club or a youth organization used to happen. Life has gone on. Life is passing us by and perhaps we indulge in a little self pity. Who cares? Who needs us anyway?

The Queen Mother was a grandmother to the world without giving birth to the world because she cared and she shared. A grandmother is a loving, kind, strong, resourceful person dedicated and disciplined. She is a human being who imparts important values to those who she loves.

When my staff member's mother-in-law, Mrs. Stone, got her reply from the Queen's lady in waiting she shared it with her friends. Many seniors' lives were made just a little bit brighter because of the

thoughtfulness of the Queen Mum. Mrs. Stone and her family will have a treasure forever.

The Queen Mother's life and now her death causes me to reach out, to be real and to enjoy life but above all I want to be a great-grandfather.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I want to rise and with humility offer my support to the sentiments expressed in the motion currently before the House. I very much associate my remarks with the poignant and insightful sentiments expressed by previous speakers.

The people of Nova Scotia and of Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough share with all Canadians and do indeed lament the death of Elizabeth the Queen Mother. Coming as it does so soon after the death of Princess Margaret, there is added reason to express our genuine and deep sorrow for the Queen.

As well, as the Queen herself has said, there is comfort to be taken from a long life lived to the full. That the Queen Mother continued to enjoy her life to the full until its end is also cause for celebration. That the Queen Mother set a shining example of public duty throughout her life is equally cause for celebration. That the Queen Mother chose to help us preserve our Scottish heritage is cause for celebration. That the Queen Mother kept faith with those who gave their lives in war is cause for celebration. Her unwavering support for British, Canadian and allied forces in times of war and peace is a testament to her resolve and regal human nature.

Eighty-five years ago today Canadian troops were engaged in a battle at Vimy Ridge. Eighty-five years ago Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, having lost her brother in the bloodbath of Flanders, was caring for casualties of war in her home which had been turned into a hospital. As a young teenager born to a life of entitlement, she chose duty and responsibility. That is cause for celebration.

Above all, the Queen Mother and His late Majesty, King George, raised a daughter who reigned within our constitution and laws for half a century. This is cause for celebration.

It is for those reasons that we express our sorrow to our Queen and her family who have lost a mother, a grandmother and a great-grandmother. We lament the conclusion of this magnificent life.

Tomorrow, after the captains and the kings depart, when the crown that adorned her coffin is returned to the jewel house, there will remain a human ache in the heart of a daughter who has lost within a few weeks both a sister and a mother.

While some may not readily identify with the jewels and the pageantry, all of us have known or can anticipate the feeling of loss of a parent, and the poignant sight of a wreath of white roses inscribed "In loving memory, Lillibet".

Her Majesty should know that here in the Queen's Canadian parliament there is great sympathy and great gratitude.

● (1250)

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to convey to Her Majesty the Queen our condolences regarding the death of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

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Much has been said over the past week in the media, in assemblies of worship and in parliaments of the Commonwealth around the world reflecting on the long life of Her Majesty the Queen Mother. I am deeply honoured today to pay tribute on behalf of the people of Delta—South Richmond.

While many of my colleagues in the House and many Canadians have reminisced on the visits of Her Majesty to Canada and what she has meant to us over the past century, I would like to add a reflection on a phrase used by the most notorious figure of the past century. During the dark days of World War II, Adolf Hitler called the then Queen Elizabeth the most dangerous woman in Europe. It seemed he knew that Her Majesty had something that could not be defeated.

Why did he think she was so dangerous? She did not hold any political power. She did not command armies. She was not even born into royalty. The quality of this consort of the King was common enough to all of us. It was her common decency, sense of duty, care, friendliness and smile.

However it was her unique destiny in history that gave her an opportunity to do a tremendous amount of good, and good she did. Duty by itself can be dry and heartless but the Queen Mother was determined to stay with her people through one of the darkest periods of the war. Her visits with the King to factories, bombed homes, hospitals and military bases were done with genuine kindness, empathy and sincerity, which in turn boosted morale and resolve to the determined population, who together with their allies would win the war.

The Queen Mother was indeed a dangerous woman with her smile and kind words of encouragement. She loved her country and her country loved her. No political power and no army could defeat that. In these troubled times that sounds so simplistic but it was not simplistic. It was simple. She cared deeply about people and they knew she did.

These past few days, since the start of the lying in state on Friday, we have witnessed this love in the many thousands who have paid their respects at Westminster Hall in London. People from Britain and around the world have been queuing up patiently well into the night and waiting many hours for an opportunity to say goodbye. Many have been heard to saying “She never let us down and we will not want to let her down. She was there for us and we want to be there for her now”.

We know that she had a genuine affection for the people of Canada and it has been very evident over these past few days as Canadians remember the high esteem in which she was held by many of us. After all it was, I believe, in Canada that she was first called the Queen Mum. Canada also claims to have had the first royal walkabout. The 1939 visit to Canada of the King and Queen was the visit, as the Queen said, that made them.

Not a few blocks from where I am standing today there is evidence of the triumphant visit of the King and Queen at the Supreme Court of Canada building and the War Memorial. Canada it seemed, true to our friendly Canadian character, embraced her as our own.

The Queen Mother had a special regard for Canadian soldiers throughout the war. Her association with Canada continued as she

had been the Colonel-in-Chief of the Toronto Scottish Regiment since 1937 and was later, after the war in 1949, made Colonel-in-Chief of the Black Watch, the Royal Highland Regiment of Montreal and the Canadian Forces Medical Service in 1977. Numerous other organizations have also benefited from her patronage and presidency.

Yes, Canada's relationship with the smiling Duchess who became a Queen was warm and friendly and she will be missed. The Queen Mother's life was blessed with longevity, a long and enduring love for people and an abiding faith in God. The world was indeed blessed in return.

Now with the House I offer my deepest condolences to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and her family and convey the sentiments of the House to the United Kingdom as they lay to rest the Queen Mother.

Rest eternal grant unto her, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her. Amen.

•(1255)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I declare the amendment put forward by the hon. member for Mercier to be in order.

[*English*]

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the constituents of Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, I would like to express my deepest and heartfelt condolences to the Royal Family and the people of Great Britain on the death of the Queen Mother.

While I am a proud Canadian citizen, this issue is somewhat personal for me because I was born in England and spent my early years there. I have vivid memories and recollections of the Royal Family. The Queen Mum still at that time was one of its most prominent members. That was not so long after World War II. The connection the Queen Mum displayed and had with her people was in many ways cemented during that difficult time in Great Britain.

I remember British citizens who lived through the bombing. One of their most vivid recollections of the Queen Mother, who instead of living in the safety and cloistered environment which she was privileged to as a member of the Royal Family, was that she chose to go out among the people during the devastation that was wrought on London during the bombing.

When she went out on the streets and touched the hands, the hearts and the lives of average British citizens, she cemented an affection, a love and a relationship with not only the British citizens, but with people from all over the world, especially in Canada. She sent a message that while she was a royal, while she was part of the monarchy, she was still British and she would stand with them shoulder to shoulder against tyranny.

Throughout her life she displayed grace and selflessness. She was an example to which many people from across the world looked. The Queen Mum displayed many of those ideals from a generation that is long gone, ideals that are still important in our society today but are sometimes difficult to find.

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Although the Queen Mum is dead, we will always remember her. We will remember her for her grace, her class and her elegance. Above all else, we will remember her for the connection, the love and affection she gave to citizens around the world.

On behalf of the constituents of Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca and my colleagues who have not had an opportunity to speak, we wish the Royal Family our humblest condolences, and to the Queen Mum, God speed.

• (1305)

[*Translation*]

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

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

And the bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): At the request of the chief government whip, the recorded division is deferred until 3 p.m., after oral question period.

* * *

[*English*]

AN ACT TO AMEND THE CRIMINAL CODE (CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AND FIREARMS) AND THE FIREARMS ACT

The House resumed from March 20 consideration of Bill C-15B, an act to amend the Criminal Code (cruelty to animals and firearms) and the Firearms Act, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in the last six minutes that I have to speak to this issue, I want to let members know that it is an issue that is extremely important to farmers, industry workers and people in the medical field. Some grave concerns have been expressed by these people about the bill and I will talk a bit about some of the specifics later. Right now I want to speak in general terms about their concerns.

I would suggest that many groups support the intent of the legislation. They agree with and support the objective which is an increase in penalties for offences relating to animal cruelty. Most groups support that objective. Even though there have been minor improvements made to the legislation, the bill requires significant amendments which have not been made to deal with some specific issues, a few of which I will mention.

If I could pick out one concern from this legislation in terms of the most important changes being proposed, that concern would be moving the animal cruelty provisions from those of a property offence, which is the case in the current legislation, to a new and separate section. By elevating the status of animals to a new and separate status above that of property, clearly substantial changes are being made to the way the law would treat animals and the way courts would treat animal cruelty.

I think most Canadians fully support protecting animals against cruelty. That really is not the issue here. Canadians widely support that concept. Members of my party strongly support that concept. However when animals are taken out of the part of the law dealing with property offences, then some very serious concerns come up. They have not been dealt with by the group of amendments we are debating today.

The new definition of animal is very broad. Not only does it elevate the status of animals, it also broadens the categories as well. It includes an extremely broad definition which says a vertebrate, other than a human being, or any other animal that has the capacity to feel pain. The category for these cruelty to animal offences has been broadened to any animal that can feel pain. I would defy the very government that has put this legislation in place to tell me to what animals that specifically applies.

The government is willing to put a law in place when it cannot possibly define to which animals the law applies, and there is grave danger in that. It does not make any sense to me. If the government cannot determine to which animals this law would apply, then how are people who deal with animals supposed to determine that? How broad could it go? How are people supposed to know to what this applies? The government should not put a law like this in place when it cannot define in a more specific way to what animals the law would apply. That is certainly one of the grave concerns that groups, including farmers, have with this legislation.

Just how bad this legislation is can be best demonstrated by looking at what the former justice minister said when she was talking about this piece of legislation. She said:

—what is lawful today in the courts of legitimate activities would be lawful when the bill receives royal assent.

She is saying that if it is lawful today to do these things, as a farmer for example, then when the bill passes it will still be lawful.

• (1310)

If that is the case and she wants to get tougher on cruelty to animal offences, then why on earth did she not just raise the penalty? She said it would not cover anything different. If she wanted to make it tougher, why did she not increase the penalties for the offences that are in place today? That would clearly do the job.

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The former justice minister was being less than forthright in making a comment like that. It does not fit in. It does not compute. It does not make any sense. On the one hand the minister is saying that the new law will not apply to anything other than it applies today. The simplest and most obvious way to deal with that would be to increase the penalties. The government did not do that and I can only guess why. The government has not given a clear vision or view on that.

It would seem that the intent of this legislation goes well beyond the intent of the current legislation. Farmers and people who do medical research, which is so important to finding the cure for diseases such as cancer, have many good reasons to be concerned about the legislation and the changes that were made.

For eight years I have worked on having an effective form of gopher control returned to farmers. The Government of Alberta is finally providing this form of gopher control to farmers this spring, which is encouraging, under an emergency registration. If this law passes, farmers will have to worry about whether they can use that product to effectively control gophers without being found guilty under the law. I have concerns about that.

The amendments which should have been made have not been made. It is important that we support some of the amendments in this group.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would reflect what my colleague has just said. Clearly there is a concern about the abuse of animals. There is not one member of the House of Commons who is not concerned to see that steps are taken for proper protection of animals, but it is not quite that simple. The difficulty is that in this law we are opening up to attack a lot of people who own animals, whether they are domesticated animals or animals which are farmed.

I would like to read a couple of comments from people who love the kind of wording that is included in the legislation. The California based animal rights organization In the Defence of Animals, IDA, launched a campaign called "They are not our property; we are not their owners". According to the IDA website the campaign proposes nothing less than to change society's relationship with animals. The following few quotations indicate that the campaign has strong support among animal rights activists. The quotations also reinforce the argument that the concept of property is fundamental to understanding the animal rights agenda.

Lynn Manheim, a columnist for Letters for Animals said:

Ultimately there can be no real progress until society undergoes a paradigm shift, a new way of looking at the world which opens the door to new systems of interacting with it. We have seen most strikingly with the women's movement, language plays an essential part in such a shift. Establishing legal rights for animals will be virtually impossible while they continue to be called and thought of as "its" and "things".

Alan Berger, executive director of the Animal Protection Institution said:

Animal Protection Institute is pleased to endorse IDA's They are not our Property...campaign. Society's perception of animals as property must be changed before legal rights for animals can be established. The time is right to make such a change.

This one is from Kristin von Kreisler, author of *The Compassion of Animals*:

IDA's They are not our property campaign will prod us along in our moral evolution. Just as we have moved beyond "owning" people after the Civil War, we now need to move beyond "owning" animals, who deserve a far greater understanding in our society than simply being treated as property or things.

This is one from Jane Goodall of the Jane Goodall Institute:

In the legal sense, animals are regarded as "things", mere objects that can be bought, sold, discarded or destroyed at an owner's whim. Only when animals can be regarded as "persons" in the eyes of the law will it be possible to give teeth to the often fuzzy laws protecting animals from abuse.

Let me repeat the objective of this particular activist: Only when animals can be regarded as persons in the eyes of the law will it be possible to give teeth to the often fuzzy laws protecting animals from abuse.

Those are the people and the organizations the government is not taking into account. The wording of its legislation is simply not precise enough to stop this kind of fuzzy headed thinking.

This quote is from Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, author of *When Elephants Weep* and *Dogs Never Lie About Love*:

How can we own another person? We cannot. Why then should we think we can own another being, a dog, a cat or a horse? The law may tell us we can, but the law also told us in the past that men owned their wives, parents their children, slaveowners their slaves. I now realize how wrong it is to consider myself an animal "owner". Language is no trivial matter, how we use it affects how we think and then how we act.

We can no longer own a dog, a cat or a horse. Perhaps this person would also like to give them the vote. I do not know. This is another quote:

I looked up the word "property" in the dictionary. It said, "a thing or things owned". To me, this makes it clear that, by definition, animals can never be considered property. A "thing" cannot love. A "thing" cannot act from compassion. A "thing" will never risk its own life to help a stranger or even a friend.

This is so fuzzy it is almost, in my humble opinion, slightly humorous. But it is not humorous because we are talking about the lives and the livelihood of people who are involved in the agricultural industry.

●(1315)

We are talking about the potential effect of criminal prosecution against anybody who owns an animal. As human beings we can own animals. Let us be clear, that is exactly where I am coming from.

When we look at the various motions by the member for Selkirk—Interlake that clause 8 be deleted, if we are unable to pass the amendments that are required to prevent harassment prosecutions of farmers, ranchers, medical researchers and all other Canadians who use animals for their livelihood, we should delete the entire animal cruelty section. That is where we are coming from. We must be more precise.

There is another motion we will be opposing. It is Motion No. 4 by the member Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot which states:

That Bill C-15B, in Clause 8, be amended by replacing line 5 on page 3 with the following:

"other animal that has the capacity to experience pain."

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We are opposing it because the amendment simply changes the definition of animal from a vertebrate other than a human being to any other animal that has the capacity to feel pain, with emphasis on the word feel, a vertebrate other than a human being and any other animal who has the capacity to experience pain. We are opposed to either definition as both broaden the term "animal" in the context of criminal code offences.

We are aggressively opposed to Bill C-15B for the simple reason that it opens the door to fuzzy headed thinking about the ownership of animals and the ability of people to work with animals within our society in the humane ways in which they are presently working with them.

Again I want to make it perfectly clear that every member of the Canadian Alliance and I as the member for Kootenay—Columbia are concerned about the potential abuse of animals, livestock and domestic animals. We are all concerned about that. However the proposed law does not cut it. It is far too imprecise. That imprecision will open the door to the potential criminal prosecution of people in my constituency and any other rural constituency where people are dealing with domesticated animals or livestock.

The member for Selkirk—Interlake has moved Motion No. 5 which states:

That Bill C-15B, in Clause 8, be amended by replacing line 7 on page 3 with the following:

"who, wilfully or recklessly, and in contravention of generally accepted industry standards,"

The amendment is designed to better protect farmers, ranchers, medical researchers and others who depend upon animals for their livelihood from nuisance prosecutions by animal rights activists. Any member in the House, anybody reading *Hansard*, anybody watching this debate on television who does not believe that the bill will not open farmers, ranchers and dog owners to the potential of criminal action as a result of the activity of animal rights activists probably does not know what day of the week it is.

The former Minister of Justice called on a number of amendments that will actually straighten out a certain amount of this badly flawed bill. We are not in opposition just to be in opposition. In fact with respect to Motion No. 6 the opposition will vote in favour of the government's amendment to its own bill. It takes some tiny steps toward resolving this imprecise situation of which I spoke.

We have gone over the bill with a fine-toothed comb. On balance, unfortunately there is a tremendous amount lacking and a tremendous amount of potential danger within Bill C-15B.

• (1320)

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I compliment my colleague who just spoke and also my friend from Lakeland who spoke a minute ago on their speeches. They touched on many of the concerns the Alliance has with Bill C-15B.

I want to point out that in a way Bill C-15B underlines the misunderstanding or the lack of appreciation that the government has for farmers and ranchers in Canada. This is one of many pieces of legislation and initiatives that the government has taken that really make it difficult for farmers to make a go of it today.

I refer to the endangered species legislation which would not properly compensate farmers and ranchers whose land would be taken out of production because of the legislation. This comes at a time when farmers are already in straitened circumstances. I refer to Kyoto which potentially could have tremendous negative consequences for farmers and ranchers. I refer to the government's unwillingness to address the drought situation in the prairies and the lack of a suitable farm safety net that would allow farmers and ranchers to make it through tough times when European and American farmers are receiving heavy subsidies that distort the market.

On top of all of that this really causes me to wonder whether or not the government understands what is going on in rural Canada. It seems to be completely insensitive on the issue.

My friend mentioned the problem of gophers on the prairies. I can assure members that this is a real problem. A couple of years ago a farmer just outside of Seven Persons, Alberta called to say he was being overrun by gophers. Times were tough on the farm and he complained about putting seed in the ground only to have swarms of gophers consume everything he had planted. It is difficult to deal with that kind of situation without the support of government.

In Alberta there is a real move to deal with the problem of swarms of gophers that cause all kinds of destruction not only to crops but leave holes that cattle step in and break legs, and cause destruction to underground wiring and so on. Many people are concerned to start to deal with the gopher issue the way that they have always dealt with it in the past which is to use poison in some cases or shoot them in other cases.

They are concerned that the government will be lobbied hard by animal rights radicals to stop that activity which they need to do to protect their livelihood. It is quite common for farmers to protect lambs at lambing season against predators such as coyotes and foxes. They need to know that they can do that and not fear being pursued by the government because radical animal activists have been pushing the government hard on this issue.

In northern parts of the country ravens are a problem. They go after the eyes of newborn livestock. Farmers and ranchers need to know that they can protect their livestock and property and that the government will support them. The government has failed to make its intentions clear by not allowing us to pass some of the amendments that the Canadian Alliance had proposed.

We are very concerned that the government is mixed up in its priorities. It seems to be on the verge of granting all kinds of rights to animals at the behest of radical animal activists while at the same time making the livelihood of farming and ranching very precarious. We urge the government to keep this in mind when it proposes to pass Bill C-15B. Other members on the government side who will speak to this come from rural areas.

• (1325)

I note for a fact that they are hearing from farmers and ranchers in their areas. I hope they will have the courage to stand and let the government know that it is unacceptable to start to raise the rights of animals up to the same plane as those of human beings. We are hearing that kind of rhetoric from animal activists.

Members must remember it is not unrealistic to suspect that animal activists will push very hard to take whatever crack that the government gives them in the legislation and pursue it in the courts to make it very difficult for farmers and ranchers to do what they need to do. We need to remember some of the statements that they have already made about going hard after government backbenchers who do not support their point of view. They have made public statements along those lines.

We also know that they have condoned violence and have used violence. They have acted as terrorists, blowing up trucks that belong to fish companies, for instance. They have done all kinds of things to protest the idea that people can own animals and that animals are not on the same plane as human beings.

We know what these people are willing to do and have done in the past. The government is playing far too much to their agenda by going as far as it has gone with Bill C-15B.

Canadian farmers and ranchers want one sign that the government is sensitive to the situation they are in today. So far in the House I cannot think of a single piece of legislation in the nine years I have been here where it has shown some awareness that there needs to be reform that favours farmers and ranchers and is not always against them.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, at the outset I will make it clear that my party supports stiffer penalties for animal cruelty and is against animal cruelty. It is an issue of concern to us. However the direction the government has taken is clearly wrong. There are other ways to achieve its objective.

I will give an example of the danger that could befall us if we follow the direction the government has taken. Recently in Denmark a fishmonger was convicted and fined \$150 in court for having a live fish in his stall. This is the possibility that exists when we elevate the status of animals from property into some sort of nebulous, quasi-human status. What would the penalty be for a fisherman who caught a fish on a hook and brought it in? Obviously the animal is under stress when that happens. What would happen if a fisherman caught a fish in a gill net and the fish smothered, which is what they do in gill nets? Would the fisherman be brought forward in court and fined on that basis? Who knows?

The concern goes beyond that. There is concern in the agricultural community. The parliamentary secretary to the minister of agriculture has suggested the concerns are of no effect. He and the government assure us we do not need to worry about inappropriate interference in the agriculture business not to mention the fishing industry if Bill C-15B is brought into place. However there is considerable concern in the agricultural industry.

I will read into the record a letter by Leo Bertoia, president of the Dairy Farmers of Canada. The letter is directed to the Prime

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Minister. It is interesting that the president of the Dairy Farmers of Canada would go beyond the agriculture minister and the justice minister and make his point directly to the Prime Minister. He states:

Dear Prime Minister Chrétien,

The cruelty to animals section of Bill C-15B places Canada's dairy producers at unnecessary risk of prosecution for engaging in normal animal handling practices. Dairy Farmers of Canada recommends that three changes be made to the Bill to ensure that farmers can continue, without extraordinary legal burdens and intrusions, to provide top-quality, safe, and affordable food for Canadians.

1. The current status of animals as "property" in the Criminal Code must be maintained.

Canada's agriculture industry is based on the principal of ownership of animals: a farmer's legal right to use animals for food production stems from his proprietary right in these animals. By moving the cruelty to animals provisions out of the special property section and creating a new section, the Government is changing the legal status of animals. This shift could lead to an unprecedented risk of prosecution of farmers who use animals for food production, as a farmer's right to use his animals would have to be reconciled with the new status of animals under the Criminal Code.

Humane treatment is not compromised by an animal's designation as property. The Government could maintain the current status of animals as property under the Criminal Code and still meet its stated goal of the legislation, which is to increase penalties for animal abuse and neglect.

2. The defenses of "legal justification, excuse and colour of right" that currently exist under subsection 429(2) must be retained.

Agricultural producers must have access to defenses that provide assurances for legitimate animal-based activities and businesses. Including these defenses would not diminish the stated intent of the law. Former Justice Minister Anne McLellan repeatedly met farmers' concerns with the statement that—

• (1330)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The hon. member knows the minister cannot be referred to by name. She must be referred to her as the former minister of justice.

Mr. John Cummins: Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I was quoting directly from the letter and I appreciate that. The dairy farmers go on to say:

Former Justice Minister...repeatedly met farmers' concerns with the statement that "what is lawful today will continue to be lawful". If the government wants to ensure this, the defences currently available should not be removed.

The third point the dairy farmers make is the definition of animal cruelty in the bill must be amended.

Defining "animal" as "a vertebrate other than a human, and any other animal that has the capacity to feel pain" is too broad. As it is written, Bill C-15B threatens to subject farmers to protracted litigation as meaning is given to this definition through judicial interpretation. More importantly, this broad definition is not necessary to achieving the Government's goal of legislation.

The dairy farmers go on to say:

Prime Minister, no group of people in this country is more concerned about animal welfare than agricultural producers. Farmers set and follow high standards of animal care and treatment, and we believe those who neglect or viciously kill animals should be punished with the full force of law. However, Bill C-15B moves far beyond punishing those who neglect or viciously kill animals. The Bill unnecessarily elevates the legal status of animals and puts powerful legal tools into the hands of animal rights activists to lay animal cruelty charges against producers. At the same time, the Bill takes away defenses that should be available to farmers who responsibly produce Canada's food.

Government Orders

The three changes we have suggested will ensure that the law is fair and just, and will in no way detract from the Government's goal of increasing penalties for animal abuse offenses. I trust you will give careful consideration to these concerns, and on behalf of Canada's dairy producers, I thank you for your attention to this important matter.

The letter is signed by Leo Bertoia, president of the Dairy Farmers of Canada.

I believe that the president of the Dairy Farmers of Canada makes a compelling case for changes to the bill. I think the last thing we want, and I would suggest that it is not the intention of the government, is to have farmers brought before the courts on frivolous charges of abuse. However it is implicit in the bill that that is a possibility.

It is also a possibility that fishermen and others who handle animals in the prosecution of business could in fact be brought forward on charges of cruelty to animals for doing what is normal and expected business practices. They are not practices which are intentionally hurtful but they are the usual practices of either agriculture or fishing.

I urge the government to reconsider the bill and to take into consideration the changes that have been suggested by the Dairy Farmers of Canada and by my colleagues in the Canadian Alliance.

• (1335)

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the previous speaker for his remarks.

In going through Bill C-15B, it is important to keep in context how the legislation came about. It originally was before the House in the form of what is called an omnibus bill. There were a number of very complex and unrelated subjects that found themselves in the bill which caused a great deal of consternation I think for many members of parliament. It is a usual tactic that the government has employed to have its way, that is to essentially include a number of issues with which most if not all members agree and couple them with other pieces of legislation that the government would like to slide in, putting members of parliament in the uncomfortable position of voting against things of which they actually are in favour.

The strategical tactics unfortunately have blurred much of the merit of this particular bill. However the former minister of justice did climb down from her lofty position and agreed to some extent to split off parts of the bill to allow members to vote more freely and more in line with the wishes of their constituents and their own comfort levels.

We have before us a bill with a number of important amendments, which I would hope the government would consider, that would improve and in fact very much ameliorate the ability of the legislation to address the principle issue, and that is: helping to eradicate and give our law enforcement officials greater ability to enforce laws which are meant to curtail cruelty to animals.

We in the coalition are very supportive of any initiative that will bring about legislation dealing with crimes against animals. This legislation very much puts forward the spirit that we need to punish those who intentionally abuse or neglect animals. Cruelty to animals is an issue that has received significant public attention of late. In

recent years psychologists have drawn clear parallels between a child's cruelty to animals and subsequent cruelty toward human beings in his or her adult life as one element to take into consideration.

We support as well the government's decision to put forward an ability for judges to remove barriers, to heighten the sentences and heighten the degree of deterrence that should emerge from cases where there is clear-cut, proven on evidence cases of animal abuse.

We do not, I hasten to add, adhere to the government's position in the legislation that to achieve the deterrents and to achieve the heightened degree of accountability, the government must remove the criminal code provisions dealing with animals from the property section of the code.

The proprietary aspects of animal abuse have always been very important in the prosecution of animal cruelty cases. Moving the animal cruelty provisions out of part XI of the criminal code removes the protection of legitimate based businesses that relate to animals and animal husbandry. By virtue of taking that section out of section 429(2) of the criminal code, this important ability to protect oneself by virtue of the law is removed. Let us be very clear about that.

The current section in the property law allows for legal justification, or excuse or colour of right to be claimed by a person who might be charged. Therefore it affords legal protection for acts which have always been seen as legitimate and outside the gamut of animal cruelty and always based upon the evidence. It is inappropriate and misleading in a malicious way to suggest that somehow removing these sections will protect animals any further than it currently does.

It currently is illegal to perpetrate any sort of cruelty against animals. The problem has been in the prosecution of these offences and further in the ability of the police to lay charges. That also ties very much into the resource allocation currently available for police in the country. Removing the cruelty to animals provisions from this section is of particular concern to hunters, trappers, farmers and to researchers. There is an important element in the use of animals for genetic research. People like John and Jessie Davidson would be the first to say that genetic research is something that has to be given a higher priority by the Parliament of Canada and the people of Canada.

• (1340)

These legitimate individuals who work and depend on animals for their livelihood have expressed very clearly to the government their concerns. They came before a committee. There was extensive study of this issue. Everything the bill seeks to achieve could be achieved by bringing about the amendments but leaving the current sections in the property section of the criminal code. Everything that is sought to be accomplished could be done so in that fashion.

Government Orders

We share the concerns of many Canadians, though, who have spoken about the definition of an animal. Any animal that has the capacity to feel pain does encompass in a large way any sort of cruelty that might be perpetrated. Yet through this definition, the government is putting at risk many activities that currently occur. We have heard examples of those. A farmer who puts a noose around an animal's neck to lead it to pasture or to pull it out of danger could potentially be charged.

We have heard ludicrous examples, such as putting a worm on a hook or boiling a live lobster. Potentially, if taken to the extreme, these types of activities could result in prosecutions. The sad reality of that is that the cost that would be expended and the delay in following through with these types of prosecutions, whether they be brought about by the crown or private prosecutions which currently can occur, would bankrupt and put out of business a lot of individuals who currently rely on animals for their livelihood.

Even the intentional act of stepping on a spider was one example that was given as cruelty to an animal.

My comments are in no way an attempt to make light of a serious situation but to point out that this type of law is very dangerous and should not be proceeded with in this fashion. This law could place fishermen, farmers, hunters, trappers, furriers or any individual that associates with animals at risk of frivolous prosecution and those who espouse radical views about animal protection.

The ensuing lawsuits could paralyze and bankrupt some businesses. It is well intended and there are many individuals who are well intended in their efforts to protect animals, but the reality is the horrific cases of animal abuse are currently illegal. It is a matter of enabling our system further to resource and through attention and prioritizing the prosecutions for these types of offences. We support strengthening the criminal code and provisions dealing with animals and many of the improvements that are envisioned by the bill. This punishment and resource question is where the problem lies.

The minister did at least realize the carelessness that occurred in the drafting of the original bill, Bill C-17, and she was careful to now inject the word "wilful" with respect to cruelty and unnecessary pain being perpetrated in the drafting of this new bill.

Regrettably, the former minister did not see the need to keep the animal cruelty sections within the property sections of the criminal code. Thus, this improved legislation would not provide the adequate protection with which the majority of animal business people would be concerned. For that reason, sadly we are unable to support the bill.

We believe the legislation is needed and that further legislation is needed to prevent needless animal pain and suffering. An example that comes to mind is the case that many of us were transfixed on a few years ago when we heard about a Rottweiler dog that was dragged on a chain behind a pick-up truck. There was a case very recently in Kingston that was reported in the Kingston *Whig-Standard* of horrible abuse to a cat named Solitaire that was bloodied and battered. These type of cases are extremely offensive to the sensibilities of most Canadians.

The traditional practices of hunting, fishing and farming do not fit into the category of mean spirited violence, yet they could very much be caught up by virtue of these changes.

It is imperative that animal cruelty legislation be clearly designated to target those who would engage in brutal, deliberate acts against animals. Just as the other parts of this legislation which deal with firearms legislation, it is fine to try to redefine what the legislation does, yet we know it has been a complete and utter failure. The cost is prohibitive. The intent is such that individuals will not voluntarily participate.

● (1345)

For those reasons, and for reasons which I would like to elaborate on but due to limitations of time I cannot, our coalition cannot support the bill. We would be hopeful that the government would be willing to accept the amendments which would take away those sections which very much undermine the spirit and intent of the bill.

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to again participate in the debate on Bill C-15B at report stage. I believe I addressed the bill at second reading but in view of the government's position on the bill I do not think one can revisit one's concerns often enough.

If the evidence I have seen is any indication of the reasons for bringing the bill forward by the former justice minister, it is for all the wrong reasons. I have a fundraising letter in my office from an animal rights group suggesting that the bringing forward of the bill to the House of Commons by the former justice minister was a payoff for supporting her in a very close election race in the last election. I am really concerned that the bill was brought forward for that reason.

I really think this whole recognition of animals in a Walt Disney sort of animated way leaves the wrong impression and creates these kind of extreme animal rights groups that want to elevate the status of animals to the status of humans with human rights. It is quite ridiculous.

As a person who has been involved in animal husbandry all of my life and who grew up in a family that was sustained through hunting, fishing and the traditional practices that many people today, particularly our aboriginal people in Canada, still maintain is a necessary part of our culture and our very existence, I feel the bill could threaten those ways of life and for reasons that are not necessary.

I think everyone here would agree that we need to enforce the law. Although I am not certain, we may even need to put in place more severe penalties or more severe procedures to punish real cruelty to animals which does exist and does happen. I think the member who spoke previously pointed out some examples which I certainly would not deny. However, life sometimes requires acts that would not be considered kind to animals, whether that be in the slaughter of animals for food, in the husbandry of livestock when someone is ranching or the harvesting of wildlife for sustenance.

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If people ever lived in a rural setting and been part of that life they would recognize that it would not be a kind world if domesticated animals were left to fend on their own. I still support the concept of ownership of animals but part of the whole aspect of having animals in the property rights section is a responsibility to look after one's animals in a humane and decent way. I have always taken great pride in the way I looked after my animals and took care of them. If we do that animals are quite content, quite happy and life is as it should be. In those instances where it is necessary to neuter animals or to dehorn cattle, for example, these are not pleasant jobs but they are necessary and part of that culture and lifestyle.

Anyone who has ever been out in the wild or for that matter has watched films showing the taking of animals by wolves, by coyotes and by predators has observed cruelty to the extreme.

● (1350)

There really is nothing more cruel than a wolf taking down a deer or a moose and eating it alive. It is not a pleasant sight. Reality is that life is not always kind and nature is not always kind.

The problem here is that we are going to the extreme. Anybody, whether a person who owns pets or is involved in animal husbandry, who is not terrified when they look at the bill and terrified at the prospect of being maliciously prosecuted by some organizations with very deep pockets is foolish. While someone may or may not eventually find justice, and I would hope they would, our justice system process is extremely expensive and one most of us cannot afford, particularly when we are seeking justice through court action brought on by a group of animal rights people or by the Government of Canada with extremely deep pockets. One could certainly face bankruptcy and destruction of their family. We have seen all kinds of examples of that. As members of parliament, every day we hear from people involved in those kinds of situations and who are trying to defend themselves against a corporation or a government entity with deep pockets. It is a frightening procedure and totally unnecessary.

I myself have seen incidents of unnecessary animal cruelty by those who keep animals for pets or for sustenance. My observation is that we are not enforcing the existing law as we should be. We could do a lot more.

I have watched people in my neighbourhood who I do not think intended any cruelty or intended to be unkind to their animals. They were raised in an urban environment and lived in the country and thought it would be a wonderful thing to raise their own wheat and produce meat raised without pesticides and all the rest of it. That is the kind of mentality of people who move to the country because they do have that right and it is maybe a good thing to do.

In this particular instance these people did not have any idea what those animals needed in the way of being looked after properly with the intention of being turned into food at some point. Those animals were terribly abused. My wife phoned the local animal cruelty authorities on a number of occasions. It was not until one animal was dead and the other very close to death that the authorities were willing to do anything.

Before we go down the road we are going down and make a real mistake, we could do a lot more by simply tightening up existing laws and leaving animal cruelty under the property section in the

legislation. I think the minister could accomplish what he is attempting to accomplish without endangering an entire way of life and an entire culture of many Canadians.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1355)

[*English*]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Canadian Alliance):

Mr. Speaker, because of the Liberal government's failure to successfully negotiate an end to the softwood lumber dispute with the United States, Canada's forest products industry is preparing to withstand the impact of punitive tariffs on \$9 billion worth of our lumber exports while the Americans are going to get a multibillion dollar windfall.

Late last year, while watching the international trade minister bungle negotiations, the official opposition began calling for arrangements to support the softwood industry workers. So far the Liberals have no plan to see these Canadians through this crisis.

Entire communities rely on the softwood industry and something must be done about the loss of thousands of these jobs caused by this government. This industry is Canada's largest single exporter.

Even though the Liberal government is raising the employment insurance surplus to \$42 billion on the backs of our workers, it changed the Employment Insurance Act and is now denying benefits to many lumber workers.

The government continues to seriously fail Canada's softwood lumber industry.

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[*Translation*]

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. André Harvey (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, may I take this opportunity to indicate that our government will continue to provide important support to the Roberval region, as it has in the past, in areas such as research and tourism, with the Centre de conservation de la biodiversité boréale de Saint-Félicien, as well as in lumber processing through support of such businesses as Pan-O-Star and Produits Forestiers Lamco.

I would also point out that we are going to continue our collaborative efforts with the municipalities in essential infrastructure projects, as we have recently demonstrated at Lac Bouchette and Saint-André.

There are several other projects slated for the Roberval region, which we intend to support.

• (1400)

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

Ms. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, the Council of Women of Winnipeg and other community activists have expressed great concern with Canada's age of consent for sexual activity. All involved express that which we have known for a long time: The age of consent must be raised from 14 to 16.

All too often we hear of very young girls and boys falling victim to sexual predators. Sadly this fate is most often suffered by young girls who are two or three times more likely to be a victim. In fact 54% of girls under 16 have been the targets of unwanted sexual advance.

It is the responsibility of this government to help the nation's parents protect our children. We need to see tough consequences for the people who prey upon the sexual naivety of our young. We need laws that reinforce our commitment to stopping these sexual predators before they strike. This starts with the prohibition of adults engaging in sexual contact with persons under the age of 16.

* * *

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, representatives of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations met our caucus on post-secondary education. Since then the member for Fredericton and I have met with representatives of CASA universities in the maritimes. The focus of the presentations was access to higher education. Topics covered included strengthening of the Canada student loans program, parental contributions, loan limits and capital cost items, living allowances, in-study income and needs of low income and potential students.

With regard to the last item, CASA recommends additional funding of Canada study grants and improved debt relief initiatives.

I commend these students for their real interest in these matters and for the care and time they put into researching their positions. They are an example to other groups who lobby the federal government.

The House should realize that full access to higher education is the key to the future of a happy, healthy and prosperous Canada.

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[Translation]

DAFFODIL MONTH

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, April is Daffodil Month. The daffodil is the symbol of the Canadian Cancer Society's fundraising campaign. Today I would like to pay tribute to the Quebec division of the society, which has been under the direction of Yvan Naud since November 2000.

Quebec's first Daffodil Day was held in 1961, and ever since then, this has been a high point in the organization's fundraising activities. Over the years, another fine tradition has developed, the Daffodil

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Ball, the 9th edition of which will take place on Thursday April 25, at Montreal's Windsor Station.

This community organization is wholly supported by funding from the public, and so it needs our generous support to be able to fund its services to those with cancer, its education projects and its promotion of research that is yielding results.

While in the 1940s, only one person in five diagnosed with cancer could expect to survive, now, one in two can beat this disease.

In closing, I would just like to remind hon. members that the daffodil is a symbol of the hope that we will one day conquer cancer.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, "What is being done for 'newborn' mothers?"

This is the title of a letter which appeared in the April 7, 2002 edition of *La Presse*. It was written by Céline Lemay, a midwife from Boucherville, and deserves the attention of all MPs and MLAs in Canada.

She writes:

The move away from hospital care has highlighted not just a failing in our health care system, but also a failing in our safety net: support for new mothers, new parents.

The rest that women get in a hospital is not really physical in nature: one is not in one's own bed; it is too hot; there is constant noise, etc.; in addition to the potential medical problems for the mother or her baby; staying in the hospital, being exposed to numerous germs, and exposing one's newborn to them.

Visiting homemakers would be quite capable of providing services in the home for a few days.

In the Netherlands, specially trained postnatal assistants help out mothers at home for several hours a day during the first ten days after they give birth.

* * *

[English]

ALBERT RICHARDSON

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week we learned of the death of Mr. J. Albert Richardson. Mr. Richardson was the province's first NDP leader. He worked for many years in the labour movement where I have personally known him when we were fighting side by side for the rights of workers.

Mr. Richardson was an old time socialist who really believed in the working people. Social causes were always near to his heart. This is probably why he got involved in the New Brunswick NDP. His devotion and beliefs helped him in many battles.

Mr. Richardson will never be forgotten for all the work he has done for the labour movement and as leader of the NDP. The New Brunswick NDP lost a wonderful member last week. The death of Mr. J. Albert Richardson will have an impact on the party forever.

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•(1405)

CURLING

Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my sincere congratulations to David Hamblin and his rink from Manitoba on winning the World Junior Men's Curling Championship. The world curling title has been won by teams from Canada for the past five years.

David Hamblin and his rink of Ross Doerksen, brother Kevin Hamblin and Ross McCannell defeated Sweden in a 3-2 thriller in Kelowna, British Columbia. David needed to throw a cold draw to the 8 foot to secure the victory for Canada. David is not only an outstanding shot maker but his abilities in his role as skip and leader of the team show a maturity well beyond his age of 20 years.

I extend congratulations to David's father, Lorne Hamblin, who served as the team's coach, as well as wife and mother Chris Hamblin whose support of the young curling champions was invaluable.

I am honoured to recognize these fine young curlers. All Canadians are very proud of them.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, the government failed to reach a deal with the United States on softwood lumber. The U.S. will impose a 29% duty on Canadian lumber yet the government has no plan in place to assist the 30,000 workers in B.C. alone whose jobs have been threatened or already lost because of the government's failure to reach an agreement.

The government failed to protect Canada's scarce fish stocks and allowed a Russian trawler to head home with 49 tonnes of illegally caught cod, cod that Canadian fishermen have not been able to catch for years because of a moratorium. The same government failed to help western farmers. The country is in an agricultural crisis.

Instead, what is the government doing? It is paying \$101 million to buy new Challenger jets for the Prime Minister when the government's own report has said that "fleet modernization or replacement is not warranted at this time". This is at a time when our Canadian troops must hitchhike to battle and rely on 40 year old Sea Kings when they get there. Surely the government could do more.

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CANADIAN ALLIANCE

Mrs. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, over the weekend the Canadian Alliance held a successful convention in the beautiful city of Edmonton. With our new leader Stephen Harper at the helm it is clear to all Canadians that our party is strong and here to stay.

Unlike the Liberal government and the Liberal Party, the Alliance is tackling its debt. Unlike the Liberal government and the Liberal Party, the Canadian Alliance is talking about issues that Canadians care about. Unlike the Liberal Party, our membership is open to all who support our principles, and our party is growing.

On behalf of the Canadian Alliance caucus I thank our supporters and our delegates for taking time out of their busy lives to make our convention a huge success.

Let me remind all that the Canadian Alliance is strong and here to stay.

* * *

QUEEN MOTHER

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with tremendous sadness that Canadians received the news of the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

Canadians share a profound admiration and respect for the Queen Mother, whose courage and self-sacrifice impressed the whole world during the last global conflict.

Her Majesty visited Canada 10 times beginning in 1939 when as Queen Consort of Canada she accompanied King George VI on the first visit by a reigning monarch to Canadian soil. She retained a particular fondness for Canada which she often called her second home.

The Queen Mother was made an Honorary Companion of the Order of Canada on August 3, 2000, on the eve of her 100th birthday.

I wish to join with all members of the House in offering our sincerest condolences on behalf of all Canadians to Her Majesty the Queen and to the Royal Family.

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[*Translation*]

CONVENT IN ROBerval

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on Saturday March 23, a major fire reduced a large part of the Roberval convent to ashes.

Two residents lost their lives in the blaze, which destroyed this historic building and a key piece of Roberval's heritage. I offer my deepest condolence to their families and to the Ursuline sisters.

Many generations of girls in Roberval received excellent instruction at the convent, both at the primary and secondary levels as well as at the Institut familial or the École normale de Roberval, which accepted both boys and girls.

The Ursuline sisters have taught and run this academic establishment with love, skill and generosity. As a graduate of the École normale de Roberval, I will never forget the years I spent there.

We thank the Ursuline sisters for all they have done for us. I wish them all the best in what the future holds. Like thousands of other inhabitants of Roberval, I sincerely hope that they will decide to continue on in our community, which is their community too.

• (1410)
[English]

AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to congratulate the Futaba Industrial Company Limited for making a new investment in the city of Stratford. With the recent signing of a land purchase deal the stage has been set for the manufacture of Toyota automobile parts and a newly constructed Stratford factory next year.

Located in Wright Business Park, this new facility amounts to a total investment of \$31 million. At the onset of production 70 new employees will be hired to begin producing 33 different components of the top of the line Toyota Lexus RX300. These parts will be slated to supply the entire North American market.

This will be a new employer for the city of Stratford and expansions are planned for the future. The facility will amount to a win-win situation for the constituents of Perth—Middlesex. Initial production is expected to begin September 2003.

I congratulate the Futaba Industrial Company Limited on the proposed new facility.

* * *

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, an unprecedented attack by the government upon Canadian democracy began last month. It did this by introducing a poison pill amendment to effectively prevent a free vote on a votable private member's bill.

The substance of the bill is not important. What is important is that the government is prepared to kill the last vestiges of innovation and independence that MPs have in a House that has otherwise been turned into an effective dictatorship. The use of the poison pill amendment is unheard of in Canadian parliamentary history. Even you, Mr. Speaker, suggested that it was hijacking the bill.

On April 11 MPs will have a choice. Will they vote in favour of the government's poison pill amendment that would kill a votable private member's bill and allow the Prime Minister's Office to strip the last vestiges of individuality MPs have or will they vote against it and preserve our ability to represent our constituents and preserve our dignity? The choice will be ours, dictatorship or democracy.

I urge my colleagues to choose democracy and vote against the poison pill amendment next week.

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CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, the PC/DR coalition calls on the Minister of Justice to act today. The recent decision of the B.C. supreme court in the Robin Sharpe case has outraged Canadians and children's rights groups across the country.

According to child advocates and sexual abuse investigators this decision makes sexually explicit stories about children legal in Canada and will only encourage and protect sexual predators.

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We live in an information age where pornographic material which is offensive and harmful to people in society is increasingly finding its way into the general public. It is incumbent upon parliament to assure the protection of children. The government must clearly define the strict legal parameters of child pornography. The Minister of Justice should begin hearings immediately.

I call on the government to implement an Internet safety education program for children, increase funding for training of frontline police officers in tracking pornography and revamp the anti-porn laws to protect our most valuable asset, our children.

* * *

[Translation]

EXTENSION OF HIGHWAY 35

Mr. Claude Duplain (Portneuf, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the extension of highway 35 is receiving a lot of press coverage. Some citizens formed a pressure group so that this project can become a reality. The Mayor of Saint-Jean, Gilles Dolbec, is actively involved in this priority issue for the Haut-Richelieu region.

It is important to give these people our support. My colleague, the hon. member for Brome—Missisquoi, has been giving his support to Mayor Dolbec for several months.

In fact, last fall he organized a working session for a delegation from the Haut-Richelieu, during which the extension of highway 35 was discussed.

These people care about the economic development and prosperity of their region, but also of Quebec.

Like the hon. member for Brome—Missisquoi, let us support them, so that they are finally rewarded for their valiant efforts.

* * *

• (1415)
[English]

CANADIAN ALLIANCE

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I was a pretty busy guy this last weekend because we had the big Canadian Alliance convention in Edmonton. My riding is right next door to it.

At the same time we had the largest trade fair in rural Alberta in Sherwood Park in my riding. It was a bit of busyness to jump back and forth between the two functions. I had a lot of fun at that trade fair because literally hundreds of people stopped by. All day Friday I listened to people. By the end of the day I was hoarse from listening so much. It was an intriguing experience.

Over and over people said that we needed to replace that tired, mismanaging Liberal government and they believed we could do it. People came to the booth asking to buy memberships in our party. It was a lot of fun and very exhilarating.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTION PERIOD***[English]***MIDDLE EAST**

Mr. John Reynolds (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Canadians need to know that the government is doing its part to help bring real peace and security to the Middle East.

U.S. President Bush has called on Israel to withdraw from the territories. The United Nations has also called for Israel to take similar action.

I would like to ask a question of the Deputy Prime Minister. Has the Government of Canada voiced its support for the position put forward by President Bush and the United Nations, or do Canadians count on more fog and confusion from the government when it comes to the pressing problems of the Middle East?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question because I know all members of the House are extremely anxiously following what is taking place in the Middle East. I do not accept the qualification that the government's position is one of fog and confusion.

We have been very clear. We are supporting in every instance, whether it is in Geneva at the Human Rights Commission, in Canada or in discussions with our colleagues, whether they are Arab, Israeli, European or American, that the way toward peace is to stop the violence and bring us back to the political solution which is set out in the Mitchell plan and in the Tenet plan. That is what we need. That is where we will go and that is where we will stay with our policy.

Mr. John Reynolds (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is a little foggy anyway. We deplore the loss of life on both sides. We believe that Canada must play a positive role in negotiating a peaceful settlement in the Middle East. In order to reach a settlement both sides have to be committed to that objective. That is why the president of the United States has been so tough on this issue.

Has the government been provided with information showing that Yasser Arafat is linked to the suicide attacks and if so, does the government agree that Yasser Arafat is now in fact the problem rather than the solution?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have not been provided with any direct information along the lines suggested by the hon. member. However I would like to remind the hon. member that Mr. Arafat is recognized by the president of the United States, by the United Nations and by all other parties as the representative of the Palestinian people.

As Mr. Powell said to me some time ago, "When you negotiate for peace you must negotiate with your enemy". I do not think it is helpful at this time to be setting out conditions in a way which will render any negotiations impossible because that is where we must go if goodwill people will reap the chance of peace that we all so much wish for.

Mr. John Reynolds (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, if we recall the government's activity we

would have no peace on either side. Both sides are wrong. We all know that. We must ensure they know we feel that way.

My next question is for the solicitor general. In the last several days we witnessed a spate of violent acts against synagogues and other sites in Canada, including a horrible attack against an institution at the heart of Saskatoon's Jewish community.

Could the solicitor general explain to Canadians what specific actions are being taken to find those responsible for these crimes and to ensure we have no further attacks?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is well aware of the horrible and unacceptable acts. We have a very efficient police force which will be investigating to ensure that the people who are responsible are brought to justice. Canadians will not accept this.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the hatred and violence from foreign conflicts have no place in Canada. It was wrong to attack mosques and it is equally wrong to attack synagogues. I hope the government demonstrates some leadership to try to calm the fears of both sides as I have asked it to do in past conflicts.

On another issue, the Prime Minister and the finance minister claim to be resolutely opposed to terrorism. Why then does the government continue to allow Hezbollah to fundraise in Canada?

• (1420)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government has put all terrorists who have been listed as terrorists by other nations on our list. We continue and the Canadian banking system continues to monitor the situation very closely.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the organization banned from fundraising in Canada is the Hezbollah External Security Organization. This is the military arm of the Hezbollah.

Since 1983 Hezbollah has been responsible for attacking the U.S. embassy along with the U.S.-French barracks in Beirut and it is presently attacking Israel. Why does the government refuse to ban fundraising by all branches of Hezbollah?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it takes us back to the answer to the earlier question by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. What we are seeking is an opportunity to have a dialogue to achieve peace.

As the hon. member well knows, we have banned the military operations of Hezbollah. There is a dimension of Hezbollah that actually has representatives elected to the Lebanese house.

There is a civil dimension to that. We will continue to work with all parties with whom we can get peace. We will continue to do that. We have banned the military operations. We will stop terrorism at all costs but we will also—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Roberval.

Oral Questions

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the situation in the Middle East is most worrisome. In recent weeks, it has been civilians, both Palestinians and Israelis, who have paid the price of violent outbursts.

For almost ten days now, Israeli troops have occupied major Palestinian cities of the West Bank as part of Operation Protective Wall. This occupation is counterproductive and does nothing but fan this vicious cycle of violence.

Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs tell us what Canada's diplomatic officials are doing to ensure that UN Security Council resolutions 1402 and 1403, calling for the withdrawal of the Israeli army from Palestinian cities, are being respected?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has contacted the U.S. government and has encouraged the U.S. government. It supports Mr. Bush's and Mr. Powell's position in the region. Mr. Bush was categorical: the UN resolutions must be respected.

We have telephoned our counterparts in Arab countries and even in Israel to say the same thing. We know very well that these resolutions must be respected. We are doing our best to ensure that they will be respected.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since the start of the Intifada, 18 months ago, almost 2,000 people have been killed.

Does the government not believe that it is time to play an even more active role in this crisis, by supporting the idea of establishing an implementation force, for example?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, setting up an implementation force would require acceptance by both sides. For now they are against such a course.

We are therefore in the position of accepting and working on any positive measures to restore peace to the Middle East, including the possibility of sending troops.

This will not be possible under the current conditions. The parties must accept the fact that there needs to be a political solution, not a military solution. That is what we are focusing on right now.

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the conflict is degenerating quickly. It is taking an international dimension with the bombings in South Lebanon.

The government must decide to play a role, even if the options are very limited, and its diplomatic efforts must reflect imagination and initiative.

This is why I am asking the minister if he agrees that Canada must get to work to become, along with others, the proponent of lasting solutions.

• (1425)

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is precisely what we are currently doing. We primarily support Mr. Powell's efforts. All the parties to this terrible conflict recognize that the position of the United States is critical. We should give the Americans an opportunity to work in the region.

We indicated to our European, Arab and Israeli colleagues that we are there, that Canada is there to support peace, but we also support Mr. Powell's efforts to set this most important process in motion.

I think we must work in that direction, and I am sure that the hon. member agrees with me on that.

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Foreign Affairs also agree that one of the Prime Minister's priorities should be to play a significant role before the conflict gets out of hand, by examining, along with his counterparts, possible necessary measures, including the urgent sending of an interposition force to the Middle East?

We will have to be ready to take action when the time comes. This must be made clear to the parties.

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I repeat what I have already said in the House. Sending troops under the present circumstances would put lives in danger, without ensuring positive results.

We remain prepared to do whatever is necessary. We support Mr. Powell's efforts. I spoke to my contacts in Arab countries and in Israel to tell them that violence must stop immediately, and particularly to ask Arab countries not to cause problems at the Israeli border, because this would compromise any chance for peace in the whole region.

So, we are doing our part. I can assure—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Halifax.

[*English*]

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the crisis in the Middle East is deepening and leadership is desperately needed. Events unfolding are horrifying, truly terrifying. In the wake of the escalating cycle of violence here is what Canada's Prime Minister offered:

—there's not much we can do...but to pray for peace to come back.

It is clear that prayer alone is not enough. Canadians want to know what concrete steps their government is taking to help get the Middle East on to a path toward peace.

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure my hon. colleague will agree with me that the prayers of all of us in the House are going both with Mr. Powell and with all other people of goodwill in the Middle East who are trying to reduce the conflict, trying to stop the violence and trying to stop the radicalization of what is taking place.

The Prime Minister's comments were exactly on. We need not just actions. We need prayers as well. The government has actions. I have explained to the House that we are in regular contact with our colleagues in the Middle East, in Europe and in the United States to push the United Nations resolution solution, to push the tenet—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Halifax.

Oral Questions

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the point is that prayer alone is not enough, that goodwill is not enough. What is happening here at home is also totally unacceptable: the harassment of Canadian Arabs and Canadian Jews, attacks on their mosques and their synagogues, the religious institutions of their communities.

I want to ask the minister a very direct question. Has the Canadian government invited representatives of the Canadian Islamic and the Canadian Jewish communities to come together in an attempt to launch dialogue, to increase understanding, to build bridges and to work together in advancing peace at home and in the Middle East?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member puts her finger on something which we as Canadians can do. We can work together in our communities to try to bring reason to this debate, and we are doing that.

I assure the hon. member that my department is financing initiatives in this respect. We are bringing together people of goodwill from our own communities who are saying we must stop the violence in the Middle East. They can exercise influence on their counterparts in that area.

I assure the hon. member we are doing this and will continue to do it. We have a population that is desperately trying to see peace in that area. We will use them as we can, as Canadians always have been used in—

The Speaker: The right hon. member for Calgary Centre.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, in the Middle East this is a time for solutions and not for blame. There is a deadly sense of siege among both Israelis and Palestinians. Yet at the same time both the Saudi plan and the UN resolution show that progress might be possible. The Americans are now taking a major initiative.

Will the foreign affairs minister assure the House that Canada will pursue every serious opportunity to move that region away from the mutual atmosphere of deadly siege and toward productive discussions? Would he tell us what specific initiatives Canada is pursuing now?

• (1430)

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the right hon. member for his question because I totally agree with his premise that we must work on the political solution. I hope my earlier answers in the House have demonstrated that the government is actively pursuing those solutions.

I assure the right hon. member that we are using every diplomatic channel open to us to discuss with all parties the necessity to stop the violence and to return to negotiations, which is the only possibility we will ever have of bringing peace to that terribly troubled region of the world.

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SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. It has now been over two weeks since Canada failed to stop crippling American duties in the Canadian softwood lumber industry. The Department of Human

Resources Development has announced no special measures to help people in the community who are devastated by these duties.

Is there a special committee of cabinet co-ordinating a proposal to help people in communities and industries who are suffering so severely now? Will there be special federal programs to help these communities, industries and people? When will they be announced?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, clearly we were all very disappointed that we were not able to stop the Americans from imposing a 29% tariff on our industry. We believe it is a very punitive measure.

We are continuing to work very closely with all provincial governments that have been very involved in our two track strategy from day one. We will continue to monitor very closely the situation of our exports to the United States. We will continue to work with our industry very closely in the next few weeks and months.

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PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister just found \$101 million for executive jets so that his fat cat cabinet and he can fly around in luxury. At the same time our Sea King helicopters are over 40 years old.

I would like to ask a question. How can the priorities of the government be so far off that our military comes up second best?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the issue of the purchase of new aircraft, two of the existing planes in the fleet were replaced by new ones. They were some 19 years old.

Insofar as the Sea King process required, I am pleased to inform the House that the draft pre-qualification stage ended two weeks ago. We are now moving ahead very shortly with the formal pre-qualification stage and then bidding. None of it has been delayed.

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it took the Prime Minister about three microseconds to cancel the EH-101 helicopter contract back in 1993.

I have a question for the government. How long will it take it to cancel this foolish VIP executive jet contract so that our military does not come up second best?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said previously, this does not delay the purchase of the helicopters for the military. The purchase of the helicopters for the military is on track. We just terminated the draft pre-qualification process. The next step is formal pre-qualification, as I said, and then of course the formal bidding.

Oral Questions

Perhaps the hon. member could inquire of the former critic of public works and government services who was very well briefed on the issue.

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[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during a visit to Alberta last week, the Minister of Industry wondered publicly whether Canada could simultaneously maintain its standard of living and live up to its environmental responsibilities under the Kyoto protocol. He went on to say that any decision made would have to be based on the facts and not on ideology or theory.

Does the Minister of the Environment agree with the Minister of Industry, who apparently associates the requirements of the Kyoto protocol on climate change with theories and ideologies?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is in agreement with the idea put forward and with the statements by the Minister of Industry to the effect that government decisions must be based on facts. It is not a question of ideology. It is a question of facts, and that is what we are going to do.

• (1435)

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the least that can be said is that the minister's answer is far from clear with respect to the statements made by the Minister of Industry.

For his part, the Minister of Natural Resources maintained that there was no point in complying with the Kyoto protocol if we were unable to meet its objectives.

Does the Minister of the Environment also agree with the Minister of Natural Resources, who is telling us in advance that Canada will not meet the objectives of the Kyoto protocol?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all the ministers, and certainly the three mentioned by the hon. member, have the same position, which is the one taken by the Prime Minister: that the issue of ratification will be considered by the government after consultations have been held with the provinces, the territories, the industry affected and Canadians from coast to coast, and after the introduction of a plan which will be fair across the board and which will not be overly difficult for any one region of the country to implement. That is all that we are asking: to have the facts before us before taking a decision.

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[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, sadly the government has chosen to put the comfort and convenience of its ministers ahead of the safety of our soldiers who are serving us so well in Afghanistan. That is shameful. It has spent more than \$100 million on the new Challenger jet at a time when it will not even provide proper uniforms for our soldiers in Afghanistan.

Why is the government putting the convenience of the Prime Minister and the cabinet ministers ahead of our soldiers in Afghanistan?

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is absolute nonsense. I have just visited with our troops in Afghanistan. They are very proud of what they are doing. They are proud of their uniforms. They are doing a terrific job. And by the way, those Sea King helicopters are doing yeoman service as well.

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is okay for our men and women to use 40 year old helicopters but it is not okay for the ministers to fly in 19 year old Challengers. The priorities are all wrong. The defence minister will not even provide proper uniforms for our soldiers in Afghanistan and our soldiers have to hitchhike everywhere with the Americans.

Does the minister not think that this money would be better spent on our soldiers instead of making him more comfortable when he travels with his colleagues?

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the comfort, the well-being and the proper supplying and training of our troops is foremost to me as Minister of National Defence and to the government. We will continue to provide what our troops need.

By the way, when we provide transport, we are transporting Americans around in our aircraft as well. We provide some of the services and they provide some of the services. It is a team effort.

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[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, recent statements by the Minister of Industry and the Minister of Natural Resources concerning the Kyoto protocol are an absolutely perfect illustration of how divided the government is on this matter.

Does this not provide us with proof of the Minister of the Environment's lack of leadership and loss of influence within cabinet, from which his colleagues in industry and natural resources have gained?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leadership in this and many other areas is in the hands of the Prime Minister.

Naturally, all ministers of this government support him in his position, which is that there must be consultations with the provinces and territories, that there must be consultations with the industries affected, that there must be consultations with Canadians all over the country. At the same time, there must be a plan which shares the burden among the various regions of the country.

That is the position of the Prime Minister and each member of his cabinet.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we find the debate on the Kyoto protocol taking on a number of different directions and moving away from the intentions this government has expressed in the past.

Oral Questions

What we want to know now is whether the Minister of the Environment can confirm whether the government does or does not intend to respect its signature of the Kyoto protocol.

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): But of course, Mr. Speaker. I repeat, the position of the government is very clear. Yes, we have signed the Kyoto agreement and yes, we want to see the protocol ratified.

Before we make the decision on ratification, however, there must be consultations with the provinces, the territories, the affected industries, with Canadians all over the country, and at the same time there must be a plan that shares the burden throughout the country, so that no region will have a heavier burden than another.

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●(1440)

[English]

THE DEBT

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in budget 2001 the Minister of Finance made no projections for debt repayment even though Canadians are paying \$107 million a day on interest payments on the federal debt. Now that the economy is turning around and the surplus is expected to be larger than projected, will the Minister of Finance take this opportunity to send an early signal to Canadians as to how much he plans to pay down on the debt this year?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before answering the question, perhaps I should be allowed to congratulate the member for Peace River on his appointment as finance critic. His question is a very good start.

Debt repayment is very important to the government and the Canadian people. That is why we have paid down over \$35 billion worth of debt in the last four years. Given the improvement in our numbers, one would hope that the debt repayment when ultimately announced will be greater than that originally projected.

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LEADERSHIP CAMPAIGNS

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, that is encouraging to hear. I thank the minister for his kind words.

I would also like to give the minister the opportunity today to clear up the working relationship between his department and Calgary Liberal fundraiser Jim Palmer.

How will the Minister of Finance assure Canadians that this was not a conflict of interest, or was Mr. Palmer really selling tax policy in order to raise money for the minister's leadership campaign?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that Mr. Palmer is an outstanding natural resource lawyer and an outstanding tax lawyer. He is a man of great reputation.

The ethics counsellor has been fully apprised of all the facts dealing with this matter. He has stated that it has been dealt with satisfactorily. He has made extensive comments on the matter.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Bras d'Or—Cape Breton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. The Canadian navy Sea Kings have long made their home at the Canadian forces base in Shearwater.

Can the minister tell the House if the replacement for the Sea King will continue to be based in Shearwater?

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there has been a basing study done with respect to the maritime helicopter replacement for the Sea King which will be announced by the end of this year.

I am pleased to advise the hon. member that basing will continue in Shearwater, Nova Scotia for the east coast and in Pat's Bay, Victoria International Airport for the west coast.

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SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, forestry workers in B.C. are wondering who the heck is in charge of the softwood lumber file.

On the one hand the Minister of Natural Resources is publicly suggesting that Canada reconsider support for U.S. demands on energy or even pay the cost of the tariff and provide assistance to the industry and the workers. On the other hand, the Deputy Prime Minister has been silent. We heard his comments in B.C. on desperately needed assistance. He has clearly distanced himself from the minister.

While this charade goes on, communities and workers are suffering. We want to know today exactly what is the government's position, what assistance will be provided, what else is on the table and who speaks—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister for International Trade.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this cabinet speaks with one voice.

We on this side have been very preoccupied and concerned with the American punitive measures. We have denounced them and we have said this was not the way to go.

Of course every minister is responsible for his own department. There is the Minister of Natural Resources, and as far as I understand it, forestry is a natural resource. The Minister of Human Resources Development has certain tools and certain programs under her responsibility. I will continue to do my job as Minister for International Trade.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, well-meaning British Columbians are struggling over how to deal with the referendum on treaty negotiations and first nations land claims that arrived in their mailbox. Not only are the eight questions poorly crafted and difficult to understand, they seem deliberately designed to bind the government to positions that first nations can never accept and thus jeopardize all future land claims negotiations.

Oral Questions

Will the minister of Indian affairs agree that putting minority rights to a majority vote is offensive, divisive and inflammatory? Will he tell Canadians that he too disagrees fundamentally with holding this B.C. referendum on sensitive land claims negotiations?

•(1445)

Hon. Robert Nault (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the position of the Government of Canada for the good of the economy and the people of British Columbia is to get into a tripartite negotiation with the first nations communities in order to build modern treaties, to bring certainty to land tenure. This would allow, for example, in the last number of studies that we have done an increase in economic development of some billion dollars a year.

It has also been our position that we do not think referendums are helpful. We prefer to get to the table and negotiate.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has just authorized the \$100 million purchase of two new jets for his personal travel, yet he tells the Canadian armed forces to rent aircraft to move equipment and troops. The commanding officer of the squadron that flies the Prime Minister has said that the existing jets are in “excellent” condition.

Will the government listen to the auditor general and cancel the purchase of the luxurious new aircraft for the Prime Minister and put the money toward new planes or helicopters for our troops who really need them?

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are proceeding with the helicopter purchase. That has been said many times in the House. As I indicated just a few moments ago, there will be an announcement of what the new helicopter frame will be by the end of this year.

Meanwhile the two new Challengers are an upgrade from what presently exists. They will have a longer range. They will have greater fuel efficiency, better avionics. That will help to make sure the government is able to better do its job when it is required to travel.

Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, Canadians can watch as the decrepit old cabinet flies around in new jets while proud professional armed forces fly around in old helicopters.

The report to the chief of the defence staff stated specifically:

Given that there are no identifiable trends or problems with this fleet and given the high dispatch reliability of the Challenger, it is recommended that remedial action such as fleet modernization or replacement is not warranted at this time.

Why is the Prime Minister's desire for imperial style travel defeating the interest of the Canadian taxpayer and defeating the interest of the Canadian armed forces?

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the comments in the staff report are relevant to safety and reliability and that is not at question here. What is at question is providing for a significantly upgraded aircraft that will be able to go to Europe non-stop, that will be more fuel efficient, that will be able to go on to a greater number of runways.

All of the projects with respect to the military continue on. This will not detract one iota from any of the projects that the Canadian forces need.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago the Minister of the Environment claimed that compliance with the Kyoto protocol would only cost Canadians \$5 billion. Last week the minister estimated that the Kyoto protocol could cost Canadians \$10 billion. The numbers have just doubled, but the studies by industry, academics and government have been upward of \$40 billion.

The Minister of the Environment is on his cross-country fearmongering tour allegedly consulting Canadians on Kyoto, so when is he going to fess up to the real cost of Kyoto?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should remember that there is substantial cost to not addressing the climate change problem.

He should think of his own area in southern Alberta. The impact of drought is seriously affecting farmers in every part of that area of Alberta. He should consider the impact on northern Alberta and indeed the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut. He should understand that there are major costs of doing nothing as that party would like to see.

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, my response to that answer is where is the study to back up those allegations?

A few years ago in the House the Minister of Industry estimated that gun registration would cost \$85 million. Today the cost of that gun registration is over \$700 million.

Can we expect the same kind of accuracy in the minister's estimates of the cost of Kyoto?

•(1450)

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all the hon. member is mistaken in some of his statements with respect to what I have or have not said. Let me suggest that it is more I have not said than I have said.

The point is that I cannot provide the House with an estimate of the—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Hon. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, this is an important issue other than for the people laughing on the other side. For the rest of us may I suggest that we cannot provide a serious response to the question on costs until such time as a federal-provincial-territorial committee of officials has completed its work on analysis of the numbers. That will—

Oral Questions

The Speaker: The hon. member for Témiscamingue.

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[*Translation*]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on March 22, the U.S. Department of Commerce set countervailing duties and anti-dumping duties for Canadian softwood lumber at 29%. These measures are having a devastating impact on the Quebec and Canadian softwood lumber industries. After consultation, the Bloc Québécois has introduced a plan that would help the industry through the current crisis.

Is the Minister for International Trade aware of the urgent need for such a plan of assistance, which the provinces, the industry and workers are all calling for?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously, we have worked very closely with the Government of Quebec on the softwood lumber issue in order to help the workers in Quebec. We have also consulted closely with industry representatives. We are continuing to engage in extremely useful talks with them.

We on the government side are well aware that each of my colleagues, with the programs for which we are responsible, has made considerable efforts to ensure that workers, communities and industry are able to cope with the situation imposed on us by the Americans as acceptably as possible.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the softwood lumber situation has a direct impact on thousands of workers throughout Quebec and Canada.

Does the minister realize that his responsibilities require him to come up with meaningful proposals, such as those put forward by the Bloc Québécois to help the three groups directly affected by the crisis—large companies, small companies, and workers?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you know, we have a large number of programs throughout government, whether they be in the Department of Industry, the Department of Human Resources Development, or the Department of Natural Resources. Right now, we are obviously engaged in considering these various Government of Canada programs.

We are prepared to work with the provinces, as we did last year, with the workers and the communities affected by these American measures.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, there are cracks in cabinet over Kyoto. The environment minister says that without Kyoto the sky will fall, and the industry minister says that if we sign Kyoto the economy will fall.

If the environment minister cannot provide enough evidence to convince his colleague, the industry minister, that Kyoto is more

helpful than harmful, then how in the world will he ever convince Canadians?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have already provided four or five times today the information that the member is seeking.

The government will consider the question of ratification of Kyoto after we have had full consultation with the provinces, the territories, interested industry groups and Canadians from coast to coast. In addition, we will have in place a plan that will not unduly or unfairly penalize any area. That is the position of the Canadian government and that seems a perfectly reasonable position to the Canadian people.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the minister should know that his colleague, the industry minister, has already taken a position. He is saying that Kyoto will not work because it will hurt the economy too much.

If the minister cannot convince his colleague, the industry minister, based on all the evidence that he has to date, that Kyoto is a good thing, then how in the world can he convince Canadians?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I once more suggest to the Alliance Party that it waits until the federal-provincial-territorial committee, which is currently number crunching in the area of the compliance costs for Kyoto, reports. It is expected at the end of this month or early next month. It seems appropriate that these officials, who are working on the Kyoto agreement as it was modified by the Marrakesh agreement of November of last year, complete their work before getting involved in the scare tactics that the hon. member is currently undertaking.

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● (1455)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, most of us are familiar with Taiwan's transformation into an economic powerhouse. Taiwan has also transformed itself from an oppressive dictatorship into a robust democracy. It is a model to the world and one Canada should support.

Canada has a take note position on the PRC's claim to Taiwan. That means that we take note of the PRC claim, not adopt it as our own policy.

Will the Secretary of State for Asia—Pacific tell the House how, under his watch, this one China policy will change?

Hon. David Kilgour (Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the policy has given us the flexibility to maintain growing cultural, economic and people to people contacts with Taiwan, which, as the member knows, is our fourth largest trading partner in Asia.

As we urge Beijing and Taipei to resolve their differences, we will continue to support the efforts of the Canadian trade offices in Taipei and readily approve visits of all persons applying within the terms of the relationship.

*Oral Questions***CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA**

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, quite obviously this Liberal government has not heard the phrase that crime does not pay.

Federal inmates get necessary provisions such as free food, clothing and shelter, and rightly so, but with this government at the helm they also receive free porno films and pizza, cottage like quarters, college degrees, drugs and now \$700 a week incentive pay. No wonder there is so much overcrowding in our prisons.

Will the solicitor general confirm or deny that federal inmates are being paid incentive bonuses of up to \$600 or \$700 per week?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will indicate to my hon. colleague that what happened in this one case in this one institution was inappropriate. I can assure my hon. colleague and the people of the House that Correctional Service Canada has indicated to me it will not happen again.

* * *

[Translation]

AIDS

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while visiting South Africa, the Prime Minister refused to comment on how money contributed by Canada for the fight against AIDS should be spent, stating that he had no comment to make on how programs are set up in any given country.

How can the Deputy Prime Minister explain such an unconcerned statement by the Prime Minister, when AIDS has wreaked such havoc in South Africa?

[English]

Hon. Susan Whelan (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on December 5, 2000, we announced that the overall funding to fight HIV and AIDS would quadruple over the next five years, increasing from \$20 million to \$80 million per year, for a total investment of \$270 million. We are definitely on target for fighting HIV and AIDS.

* * *

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, the failure of the softwood lumber negotiations has resulted in plants closing and thousands of workers being laid off. Not only that, the companies involved are now being faced with millions of dollars of legal costs to fight the NAFTA and the WTO battles.

Has the government considered helping these companies pay the legal costs to fight the NAFTA and WTO battles?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have already had the opportunity to mention a few times today in the House, the government, through several departments and programs that we have, is at this very moment looking very carefully at programs that can help the workers, the communities and assist the industry. We are examining options for further assistance for the next months and years to come, assistance

to fight the punitive measures that have been imposed on us by the Americans.

* * *

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Budget 2,000 allocated \$900 million to the Canadian research chairs program to help Canadian universities attract and retain the best researchers and achieve research excellence in natural sciences, engineering, health sciences, social sciences and humanities.

Could the Minister of Industry tell the House if we are on track to meet our goal of creating 2,000 chairs by 2005.

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the House knows, the chairs were created to provide another method by which we can favour research in Canada and move toward our goal of making Canada the most innovative economy in the world.

We recently announced \$94 million to fund 88 additional chairs, bringing the total number of chairs now funded to one-quarter of our goal. Five hundred and thirty-two chairs have been funded out of a total of 2,000. These 88 chairs included 14 people to be drawn to Canada from other nations, showing that this is part of the reverse brain drain. It is another way in which we are strengthening Canada's economy.

* * *

● (1500)

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is encouraging to hear the solicitor general say that CORCAN, Correctional Service Canada, has messed up in paying \$700 per week to some of the prisoners within institutions. With cash in their pockets is it any wonder that during a one week period three inmates have escaped from federal institutions, including double murderer Raymond Tudor?

My question is for the solicitor general. How much of the inmates' salaries goes toward their room and board and how much, if any, goes toward repaying their victims?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is well aware that a portion of an inmate's pay, which is normally less than \$7 a day, goes to the inmate's keep.

I know my hon. colleague would never want to indicate that a large number of people receive a large amount of money and that a lot of people escape from maximum or medium security institutions.

When individuals escape from these institutions the RCMP or other police forces are notified immediately and appropriate action is taken.

Government Orders

[Translation]

AIDS

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what the statement the Prime Minister made in South Africa illustrates instead, is his irresponsibility in not caring how the AIDS money is being used.

How can the Deputy Prime Minister justify such irresponsibility when we know that Canada contributes \$10 million worth of assistance to South African programs to fight AIDS?

[English]

Hon. Susan Whelan (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first things first. Prevention and education are the most important steps in curbing HIV and AIDS. As I just stated, in 2000 we committed to quadruple our funding from \$20 million to \$80 million a year to fight HIV and AIDS.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

PASSING OF THE QUEEN MOTHER

The House resumed consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

The Speaker: Order, please. It being 3 p.m. the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment to government business Motion No. 24.

• (1510)

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

(Division No. 264)

YEAS

Members

Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bellehumeur
Bigras	Bourgeois
Brien	Desrochers
Dubé	Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lanctôt
Lebel	Loubier
Marceau	Ménard
Picard (Drummond)	Roy
Sauvageau— 19	

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Adams
Alcock	Anderson (Victoria)
Assad	Assadourian
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Bailey
Bakopanos	Barnes
Bennett	Benoit
Bertrand	Binet
Blaikie	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Boudria
Bradshaw	Breitkreuz
Brison	Bryden
Bulte	Byrne
Caccia	Cadman
Calder	Caplan
Carroll	Casey

Castonguay
Chatters
Coderre
Comartin
Cotler
Cummins
DeVillers
Dromisky
Duplain
Eggleton
Eyking
Folco
Godfrey
Gouk
Grey
Harvard
Herron
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hubbard
Johnston
Karetak-Lindell
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
Lee
MacAulay
Macklin
Mark
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Mayfield
McDonough
McLellan
Minna
Murphy
Neville
Pallister
Penson
Pratt
Proctor
Provenzano
Regan
Richardson
Robillard
Saada
Scherrer
Serré
Solberg
Speller
St-Julien
Stoffé
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Vellacott
Whelan
Williams

Catterall
Clark
Collenette
Copps
Cullen
Cuzner
Dion
Drouin
Easter
Epp
Fitzpatrick
Forseth
Goodale
Graham
Harb
Harvey
Hill (Macleod)
Hilstrom
Jennings
Jordan
Keddy (South Shore)
Keys
Knudson
Lastewka
Lill
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Manley
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
Merrifield
Mitchell
Nault
O'Reilly
Patry
Pettigrew
Price
Proulx
Redman
Reynolds
Ritz
Rock
Savoy
Schmidt
Skelton
Sorenson
St-Jacques
Stewart
Strahl
Telegdi
Thibault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Vanclief
Wasylycia-Leis
Wilfert
Yelich— 144

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Augustine
Bagnell	Bélangier
Bergeron	Bonwick
Comuzzi	Crête
Dalphond-Guiral	Discepola
Duceppe	Finlay
Fontana	Fournier
Fry	Gagnon (Champlain)
Girard-Bujold	Goodale
Guay	Guimond
Ianno	Jackson
Mahoney	McCallum
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)	Pagtakhan
Paquette	Perron
Plamondon	Rocheleau
St-Hilaire	Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)	Ur
Venne	Wood— 36

The Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Discussions have taken place between all parties and I believe you would find consent to immediately put the question on the main motion.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

● (1520)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 265*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Adams
Alcock	Anderson (Victoria)
Assad	Assadourian
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Bailey
Bakopanos	Barnes
Bennett	Benoit
Bertrand	Binet
Blaikie	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Boudria
Bradshaw	Breitkreuz
Brison	Bryden
Bulte	Byrne
Caccia	Cadman
Calder	Caplan
Carroll	Casey
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chatters
Clark	Coderre
Collenette	Comartin
Copps	Cotler
Cullen	Cummins
Cuzner	DeVillers
Dion	Dromisky
Drouin	Duplain
Easter	Eggleton
Epp	Eyking
Fitzpatrick	Folco
Forseth	Godfrey
Goodale	Gouk
Graham	Grey
Harb	Harvard
Harvey	Herron
Hill (Macleod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom	Hubbard
Jennings	Johnston
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Keddy (South Shore)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)

Keys	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lastewka	Lee
Lill	MacAulay
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Macklin
Manley	Mark
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Mayfield
McCormick	McDonough
McKay (Scarborough East)	McLellan
Merrifield	Minna
Mitchell	Murphy
Nault	Neville
O'Reilly	Pallister
Patry	Penson
Pettigrew	Pratt
Price	Proctor
Proulx	Provenzano
Redman	Regan
Reynolds	Richardson
Ritz	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Savoy	Scherrer
Schmidt	Serré
Skelton	Solberg
Sorenson	Speller
St-Jacques	St-Julien
Stewart	Stoffer
Strahl	Szabo
Telegdi	Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Tirabassi
Tonks	Torsney
Vanclief	Vellacott
Wasylcia-Leis	Whelan
Wilfert	Williams
Yelich — 145	

Government Orders

NAYS

Members

Bellehumeur
Bourgeois
Desrochers
Gagnon (Québec)
Laframboise
Lanctôt
Loubier
Ménard
Roy

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Augustine
Bagnell	Bé langer
Bergeron	Bonwick
Comuzzi	Crête
Dalphon d-Guiral	Discepola
Duceppe	Finlay
Fontana	Fournier
Fry	Gagnon (Champlain)
Girard-Bujold	Goodale
Guay	Guimond
Ianno	Jackson
Mahoney	McCallum
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)	Pagtakhan
Paquette	Perron
Plamondon	Rocheleau
St-Hilaire	Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)	Ur
Venne	Wood — 36

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Routine Proceedings

* * *

[English]

CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS TRIBUNAL

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the 2001 Canadian Human Rights Tribunal annual report.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

EXPORT DEVELOPMENT CANADA

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) I have the honour to table, in both of the official languages of our country, the 2001 annual report of Export Development Canada.

[English]

I also take this opportunity under standing Order 32(2) of the House of Commons to table, in both official languages, the corporate plan summary 2002-06 of Export Development Canada.

* * *

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.

* * *

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mrs. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, a report of the Canadian branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association concerning the bilateral visit to Scotland, United Kingdom, which was held March 7 to 9, 2002.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it you would find that there is unanimous consent in the House for the following motion having to do with the business of the House for tomorrow. I move:

That, on Tuesday, April 9 the sitting of the House shall be suspended from 11.30 a.m. until 2 p.m.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

● (1525)

PETITIONS

WINE INDUSTRY

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from citizens of Canada who want to extend the area of grape growing in this country. These petitioners are from Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and other provinces. They know that the minister of agriculture has been supportive of this effort to extend grape growing beyond the traditional areas.

The petitioners point out that by using new varieties of winter hardy, disease resistant grapevines currently growing in the northern United States, it is possible to create a viable wine industry in large portions of the Canadian plant hardiness zones four, five and six. They point out that the effects of these varieties would be to enhance employment in nursery and wine industries in Canada and provide an alternative crop to those suffering from low commodity prices such as groups in apples.

Every person signing this petition is willing to purchase these plants from overseas and pay a reasonable royalty for them. Therefore, they call upon parliament to expedite proceedings whereby grape varieties currently growing and being developed in programs such as those at the University of Minnesota, Cornell University and Elmer Swenson of Wisconsin be more speedily available for sale by Canadian nurseries to Canadian customers.

KIDNEY DISEASE

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from the citizens of Peterborough who are concerned about kidney disease. The petitioners point out that this is a huge and growing problem in Canada and that real progress is being made in dealing with the various aspects of kidney disease.

They call upon parliament to encourage the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to explicitly include kidney research as one of the institutes in its system to be named the institute of kidney and urinary tract diseases.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 109 and 112.

Question No. 109—**Mr. Bill Casey:**

With respect to the Department of National Defence's hiring of Reid's Bus Service to transport cadets on a round trip from Parrsboro to Amherst on February 2 and 3, 2002: (a) what was the cost of the transportation service provided to DND by Reid's Bus Service; (b) how many independent companies were asked to provide competitive quotes; (c) what is the current policy regarding private transportation contractors for cadets in rural communities like Parrsboro; and (d) does the service provided by Reid's Bus Service represent a policy change and, if so, under what authority?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): (a) The cost of transporting the cadets from Parrsboro to Amherst on February 2, 2002 was \$283.40. The cost of transporting the cadets from Amherst to Parrsboro on February 3, 2002 was \$268.40.

(b) Competitive quotes were not utilized in this instance. CFB Halifax requested the service from Zinck Bus Company in accordance with the existing standing offer agreement. Zinck Bus Company allocated this request to an affiliate, Boyd's Bus Company. Reid's Bus Service was not involved.

(c) There are no policies specific to the transportation of cadets in rural communities such as Parrsboro. In accordance with treasury board and Financial Administration Act guidelines, transportation requirements of DND personnel including cadets are satisfied with DND resources; standing offer agreements, SOAs, or local purchase orders. SOAs are developed on an annual basis to meet DND requirements by Public Works and Government Services Canada. SOAs are awarded to companies based on their demonstrated ability to provide the service at the best price. Private transportation contractors in rural communities such as Parrsboro can be used should the SOA service provider not be able to accomplish the task. In addition, if private local transportation contractors can provide better value than the SOA service provider, and they are licensed to provide the service, their services may be contracted through a local purchase order.

(d) The service provided to the cadets in Parrsboro does not represent a policy change and is consistent with treasury board and Financial Administration Act guidelines.

Question No. 112—**Mr. John Herron:**

With respect to the dissemination of Environment Canada's severe weather warnings, can the government identify the specific efforts made with regard to: (a) the development of an All-Channel Alert (ACA); (b) the publicizing of the Weatheradio network; (c) the development of "Internet PUSH+ technology"; and (d) if these efforts have not yet occurred, why not?

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): I am informed by the Department of Environment and the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission as follows:

Environment Canada

With respect to the dissemination of Environment Canada's severe weather warnings, the government is pleased to identify the following specific efforts made with regard to:

(a) the development of all-channel alert, ACA.

EC and Pelmorex, the Weather Network/Météomédia, continue to work to develop a national emergency warning system for cable TV subscribers. The system would deliver emergency text messages such as severe weather warnings on the bottom of the screen on every channel in a designated area served by a cable television service provider. Pelmorex planned to fund this system through an increase of 13 cents per month per subscriber. In a ruling announced February 23, 2001, the CRTC denied the application. The CRTC's reasons for the denial were:

—the lack of a detailed plan for implementing the service on digital television distribution systems as quickly as possible;

—the lack of clarity in the costing proposal and;

—the need to address the concerns of the visually impaired.

Currently Pelmorex and the broadcasting and cable industry have solved the technical and administrative issues identified in the CRTC decision, except funding. It is believed that in lowering the cost from the current 13 cents per month user by 3 cents or more it is critical to get CRTC support. Efforts are under way to resolve this issue. In addition, the events of September 11 have clarified the need to be able to effectively communicate to citizens in times of emergency. To this effect EC is working with Industry Canada, IC, and the Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Emergency Preparedness, OCIPEP, to develop a strategy for the development of a national emergency warning system of which the ACA could be one of the tools. It is anticipated that Pelmorex may be in a position to resubmit an application to the CRTC by early this summer.

(b) On the publicizing of the Weatheradio network

Over the past two years Environment Canada's Weatheradio network has undergone an extensive recapitalization that has effectively addressed infrastructure rust-out issues. In addition, a major program transformation is under way, as, by the end of this month, all Environment Canada Weatheradio programming will be available in both official languages. The overall Weatheradio communication strategy remains widespread but modest. Printed fact sheets have been produced and distributed through all Environment Canada's regions. In addition, there are dedicated web pages explaining the Weatheradio service available to Internet users:

http://www.smc.ec.gc.ca/cd/factsheets/wxradio/index_e.cfm

http://www.msc-smc.ec.gc.ca/cd/factsheets/wxradio/index_f.cfm

Note: the Ontario region is undertaking a targeted Weatheradio publicity campaign at two locations, London and Sudbury. Each location will have print and radio ads for a three to four week period promoting the Weatheradio service. The results of the campaign will be evaluated by the end of April to note the overall results and assess if this type of targeted program will be expanded to other sites in the Ontario region.

(c) On the development of Internet Push Plus technology

Government Orders

Environment Canada continues to explore the use of Informatics Technology, IT, as a mass dissemination delivery device. There are initiatives under way that will demonstrate the feasibility of pushing the severe weather warnings to important first line responders such as emergency preparedness officials, firefighters, police and other municipal officials. This service will be piloted this year to a select group. The pilot will be followed by a comprehensive review to verify and ensure that all severe weather warnings were delivered in a timely and effective manner. It is imperative that Environment Canada verify that delivery conduits can perform reliably and can ensure the weather warnings can be delivered in a matter of seconds 100% of the time. In the longer term, if technically feasible with the same delivery standards, the service could be expanded to the public if issues regarding the delivery can be guaranteed.

Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission

(a) As an independent regulating authority we do not develop and publicize such undertakings. We intervene at the frequency allocation stage and at the distribution level upon application.

We understand that an application is expected for a television all-channel alert but we have not yet received it.

Mr. Geoff Regan: I ask, Mr. Speaker, that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

MIDDLE EAST

The Speaker: The Chair has three requests for an emergency debate all on the same topic.

[*Translation*]

The first request came from the hon. member for Mercier. I shall therefore listen to the hon. member on this matter.

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have made a request for an emergency debate on the crisis in the Middle East.

Briefly put, the public is being constantly bombarded by images that are extremely disturbing, as are all the reports by journalists on the events over there. Since the beginning of the second Intifada, there have been close to 2,000 fatalities.

This affects us here in a number of ways, because citizens of Jewish or Arabic origin feel the impact of these events even more, and provide the rest of us with explanations of what is going on.

Moreover, the UN resolutions and the demands by Kofi Annan and President Bush for Israel's withdrawal from the territories they are occupying once again, more or less in total abandonment of the Oslo process, are a major cause for concern as well. They seem to be headed for an international escalation of the conflict. At this time, there are bombings in southern Lebanon and Saddam Hussein has just cut off oil supplies. There are, therefore, very many causes for concern.

We parliamentarians have just come back from a recess during which our fellow citizens shared their fears with us. We have witnessed or taken part in demonstrations. People are very much concerned, and there are some questions about the role Canada can play in this situation.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs has said that Canada was even prepared to take part in a peace implementation force when the time comes. Canada is concerned, therefore, and has played a role in the history of this conflict. It has a responsibility, therefore.

For all of these reasons, and in order to reassure the public, in order to be in a position to make proposals and not just stand back and watch this conflict escalate without our being able to do anything about it, I am calling for an emergency debate on this matter.

SPEAKER'S RULING

● (1530)

The Speaker: I have given careful consideration to the request by the hon. member for Mercier. She has the support of the hon. members for Cumberland—Colchester and Brampton Centre.

In my opinion, the position of the hon. member for Mercier is correct. This is an urgent matter. The Chair therefore rules that there will be a debate on this matter.

[*English*]

According to the powers I have under the standing orders, I will have the debate tomorrow evening rather than this evening. Accordingly the debate will take place in accordance with the standing orders upon the usual adjournment of the House tomorrow night.

[*Translation*]

I wish to inform the House that, because of the deferred recorded divisions, government orders will be extended by 20 minutes.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

AN ACT TO AMEND THE CRIMINAL CODE (CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AND FIREARMS) AND THE FIREARMS ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-15B, an act to amend the Criminal Code (cruelty to animals and firearms) and the Firearms Act, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on Bill C-15B and also to mention the title of the bill in starting. I want to talk today about judicial activism. Before I go any further, for the edification of the few Liberals who are in the House to listen to this, I point out that this does relate specifically to the bill. They do not have to call me on it because I intend to relate this clearly to the bill before the House.

Government Orders

In the case of judicial activism, there is a lot of talk of this in the public today. A lot of people are very upset with a lot of the decisions that are coming down these days by judges in our courts. As a result, they are calling for an overhaul of the judicial system itself, how we select our judges, the terms, the conditions under which they serve and so on.

An example of the kinds of things that are bothering members of the public under judicial activism is conditional release, a provision provided by the Liberal government in the House. Under conditional release judges may sentence people to serve their sentence entirely in the public without ever having to go to jail. The idea behind this apparently is that if the judges feel there is no risk to society with the person not being incarcerated, then they do not have to sentence them to actual prison time.

The Canadian public was alarmed and shocked when they found that people who were committing very serious violent offences, such as violent rapes, were being sentenced under this provision for conditional sentencing and were ending up not serving any time in jail. The public was outraged, and rightly so. People brought that to us and we in turn brought that to the House. We raised the issue in parliament. The response by the minister of justice at that time, who is now the Minister of Industry, was that it was never his intention that this should apply to violent offenders. Yet to this day that provision has never been changed.

Some time ago I did a study, along with other members of the House, of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. In the process of doing the study, we talked to all kinds of people involved in the corrections and justice system in the country. Some of the people we talked to were judges.

In talking to one particular judge, as an aside he brought up the subject of judicial activism. He said that he was not one to stand before us and say that none of the decisions made by his colleagues, the other judges, were made poorly. However he said that before we started to worry about changing the judges and judicial activism, we first should fix our legislation. He said that we could not keep writing legislation that caused them to be forced to consider anything brought forward by the attorneys for those who they were dealing with if the legislation provided the possibility of that. In the example of conditional sentencing, legislation did not preclude conditional sentencing being given to violent offenders and therefore they had to consider it.

That brings me to Bill C-15B, particularly the provision dealing with the penalties for cruelty to animals.

This places us in an awkward position, as many bills crafted by the Liberal government do, in that we support the motherhood issue of preventing cruelty to animals, and surely everyone in the House does. The question is not on the motherhood statement but rather on the application.

The previous minister of justice so often said that it was not their intention, then she carried on with whatever related to the particular bill of the day that she was involved in.

In this case she informed us that it was not her intention or the intention of the government that this would be applied arbitrarily to those who dealt with animals through farming, ranching and other

forms of legitimate practices with animals. Yet the way the bill is crafted, there will certainly be those who will interpret it that way.

• (1535)

Just like in the case of conditional sentencing, where a judge says he or she has no choice but to consider that type of sentence because it does not preclude using that on a violent offender, there will be those who will raise charges against innocent people, who, through natural acts of animal husbandry, have not willfully harmed or been cruel to an animal. There are those who will nonetheless raise these types of prospects and the courts will have to look at them and in some cases convict people whom, according to the minister herself, harm was never intended to through the bill.

Her comment that anything that is legal today will be legal after the bill passes makes little sense given that she attempted to change so many things that are currently in place. If her only intention was to deal with genuine cruelty to animals, which should be dealt with, then all she had to do was raise the fines, the sentences and the penalties for those who are willfully cruel to animals. To do otherwise is to open up yet another Pandora's box. We have seen it with a variety of different judicial acts. We are seeing it even in the endangered species bill, wherein the government acknowledges the onus on the government to show that somebody willfully harmed an endangered species or its habitat but even if people do it accidentally they can still be charged.

The government's own response to that was that the government would rather leave it that way because it would make it easier to prosecute people in general and then consider special circumstances in the sentencing of people who are convicted of doing something without even knowing or being able to know that they were damaging habitat or the species itself. That kind of absurdity suggests that we will be allowing innocent people to be convicted and then say that it is okay because they will only get a tap on the wrist as their penalty. Nonetheless, it will still leave them with a criminal record. In light of September 11 and people with criminal records appearing at the borders, I can see the kinds of arguments they will have with American customs agents when they try to explain that their crimes were not really serious crimes because the government recognizes that they were really innocent and just convicted them because it was more convenient to do so.

That kind of absurdity in the crafting of bills is the same thing we are seeing in this provision in Bill C-15B. It is one of the reasons that the opposition often gets placed in the very awkward position of having to vote against bills that perhaps have good intent but are so poorly written and could so easily be corrected. It is a very frustrating thing in the House.

In the future, when you will still be elected, Madam Speaker, but the government will no longer be the government and you will have to sit in opposition, I am sure you will be thankful that the new government will not write bills in the same reckless and incoherent manner that the government does today.

Government Orders

● (1540)

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to offer a few remarks at the report stage of Bill C-15B, the second part of the justice omnibus bill, which deals with changes to the gun control registry and cruelty to animals. The section I want to speak to in this group of amendments strengthens the sections of the criminal code dealing with cruelty to animals. I support the proposed amendments and am proud to say that my constituents have been very vocal about supporting these amendments as well.

Our laws relating to cruelty to animals are written to exclusively benefit the human. Currently the legislative architecture of the criminal code leaves animals with the legal standing of property. A court must now define the abuses or neglect of an animal as an offence against the right of property. This offers the same protections and defences to the accused as someone who allegedly steals cars or forges credit cards. I find it disturbing that sections of the criminal code which currently forbid cruelty to animals are treated in the same way as possible offences of cruelty to computer equipment.

I am sad to say that after listening to the low level of the attacks on the government position in this debate I am left with the impression that some commenting on this matter care more for their cars or their computers than for their pets or for the animals that provide us with food or clothing.

No one suggests making assault or murder an offence against property. Offences against people are in a much more serious category, with harsher penalties and fewer defences, to reflect the more serious harm our society believes takes place when we commit a crime against a living person as opposed to a crime against property.

I believe that animals are living creatures as well. They feel pain and share this great planet with us. They are a critical part of our ecosystem. They provide comfort, food, clothing, companionship, loyalty and endless entertainment. They deserve better than to be given only the protection of property. That is why I and every single caller to my constituency office support this bill giving animals their own status as creatures that can feel pain.

The vicious opposition being brought to bear against the bill by the Alliance opposition party originally puzzled me. After all, concerns of farmers, fishermen, hunters and trappers were dealt with by ensuring that they would still have many of the defences they possess in the existing code available to them and would therefore not be subject to frivolous prosecution or harassment, but I understand the Alliance position a little better now that I have heard this debate. Their position reflects their new leader's attitude toward Canada, which some of us call the fortress Alberta position. Their opposition has little to do with protection of animals or with the bill.

Listen to what we have heard so far today. The Alliance members suggest that we oppose this and also oppose the bill to protect endangered species, as the Klein government has called on them to do. After all, as Klein says, property should have more protection than endangered species. They are saying to oppose the bill and to kill Canada's support for the Kyoto protocols to reduce greenhouse gases and to stop climate change, as Ralph Klein has said they must, because it would cost our poor struggling oil companies some profit.

They oppose any attempt to stop global warming but also say that we should kill the bill and start to compensate farmers and cattlemen who are suffering through an extended drought in western Canada.

The bill is not about Kyoto, but I hope they remember that droughts are probably caused by climate change and if they want to help drought stricken farmers we should support Kyoto. One member even accused the former minister of justice of pandering to special interests and playing politics, saying that is why there is support for the bill. As far as I can tell, the bill is not about the last election or deals made by the former minister of justice. It is about animal rights.

Here is my position and I hope it is more to the point than some of the others that have been put on the record today. Animals should have more rights than property. Endangered species are animals as well and therefore they should have rights too. While the bill is not perfect and some of the loopholes such as the inclusion of the words "wilful" and "reckless" introduced by the government water down the original intent, we should pass this and try to improve on it later. I support animal rights and I, along with my other colleagues in the New Democratic Party, will be in support of Bill C-15B at report stage.

● (1545)

Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege for me to rise and speak on the bill, but once again I have to shake my head when I think about how the good idea of protecting animals could result in such a bad piece of legislation. I guess we should not be all that surprised. It seems to be a trend in the government, which has somehow managed to take an idea such as safer streets and turn it into a \$700 million attack on law-abiding citizens with gun control. We can see a sort of trend coming forward from the government. We have the responsibility to make effective legislation, the responsibility for the needs of all Canadians. This attack on rural Canadians must stop.

Canadians are supportive of the current legislation of protecting animals under the criminal code. Instead of strengthening the penalties that violators face under the current legislation, the justice minister has brought forward a far-reaching piece of legislation.

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There are two major concerns that I have about Bill C-15B. First, the definition of an animal is way too broad. The bill's proposed definition of an animal includes non-human vertebrates and all animals having the capacity to feel pain. Let us just take a couple of examples that would fit into those categories.

Rats feel pain and have vertebrae. I come from a province that is rat-free. We spend millions of dollars a year dealing with the problems of rat control within our province. Because of the natural boundaries of the Rockies on one side, we pushed back the rat population as much as we possibly could into Saskatchewan, yet under the application of the bill that could put in jeopardy. As well, the gopher problem is rampant in the prairies. The member from Lakeland, who sits next to me, could be called to task under the bill for bringing forward a private member's bill to introduce gopher poison.

It is not so much that we have a problem with the criminal code or with protection of animal rights, which we believe in; it is how the bill can be applied that gives us a great deal of concern. The new definition would provide new legal protection for a number of living organisms which have never before been provided with that kind of protection. My second concern with this piece of legislation is that it removes a protection currently provided under section 429(2) of the criminal code for persons who use animals for legitimate, lawful and justifiable practices, moving animal cruelty from under the umbrella of property offences into a new section emphasizing animal rights as opposed to animal welfare.

This throws it wide open to jurisdictional interpretation, where judges are allowed to perhaps favour special interest groups when it comes to animal rights. I see this change elevating the costs that are already overburdening our court system as frivolous lawsuits from animal rights activists skyrocket.

In my riding of Yellowhead, raising animals on farms for food has been a way of life for generations. I have raised dairy cattle and beef cattle and I currently raise elk at the same time. I know a little about what happens. The reality is that if we treat our animals poorly they will not be healthy. Sick and injured animals are not able to be productive and if they are not able to be productive, one is not going to be a farmer for long. I do not believe that is actually is happening on most of our farms that deal with the husbandry of animals. The fear of much of the agricultural community in my riding is that they have had the experience of activist judges or aggressive animal rights activists calling the shots. The skills of raising animals on farms have been developed and handed down from generation to generation.

• (1550)

Madam Speaker, if you have ever been on a farm you will know that everything that happens with regard to animals is not necessarily pleasant. Castration, dehorning and vaccinations might be seen by the outside viewer as harming the animal. The truth is that they are necessary for the strengthening and survival of the herd. It is not much different from a spoonful of honey making the medicine go down for children. We must do it because we love the child. Most farmers I know love their animals, look after them and do whatever is necessary to keep them healthy.

We must look at what motivated the former Minister of Justice, the hon. member for Edmonton West, to give animals special status.

In a fundraising letter in the winter of 2002 the director of the Animal Alliance of Canada claimed responsibility for the minister's narrow election win. Could Bill C-15B be political payback for its work on her behalf?

I cannot emphasize enough the importance the Canadian Alliance puts on the welfare and safety of animals. The provisions currently in force within the criminal code could provide the required protection through increased penalties for violators. The scope of Bill C-15B is not clearly outlined. It would provide the government another opportunity to target law abiding farmers and hunters as criminals. I therefore cannot support Bill C-15B.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The question is on Motion No. 1. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

Some hon. members: On division.
(Motion No. 1 negated)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The next question is on Motion No. 4. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

(Motion No. 4 negated)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The next question is on Motion No. 9. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The recorded division on Motion No. 9 stands deferred.

• (1555)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The next question is on Motion No. 5. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The recorded division on Motion No. 5 stands deferred.

• (1600)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The next question is on Motion No. 6. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I declare Motion No. 6 carried.

(Motion No. 6 agreed to)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The question is on Motion No. 7. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The recorded division on Motion No. 7 stands deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The question is now on Motion No. 8. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The recorded division on Motion No. 8 stands deferred.

* * *

PEST CONTROL PRODUCTS ACT

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.) moved that Bill C-53, an act to protect human health and safety and the environment by regulating products used for the control of pests, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to begin second reading debate on Bill C-53, the Pest Control Products Act, and to outline the reasons why this bill deserves the support of all members of this House.

[*English*]

First, the purpose of federal pest management regulation is to protect Canadians and their environment from the risks associated with pesticides. To pursue this goal we need to replace the 33 year old Pest Control Products Act with a new, forward looking statutory foundation for pest management regulation in the 21st century.

Much has changed since the Pest Control Products Act was enacted in 1969. Scientific knowledge about health and environmental protection has greatly expanded. Canadians are better informed and more concerned about risks to their health and the environment. They want a greater say in how such risks should be managed.

Government Orders

Pest management technology has become much more sophisticated. Major pesticide users are better educated and trained. Federal, provincial and territorial pesticide regulators operate with greater transparency and in closer co-operation with one another. International harmonization has become a fact of life in pest management regulation.

Bill C-53 seeks to safeguard Canadians, especially children, from the health and environmental risks posed by pesticides. It would help ensure a safe and abundant food supply. I will provide an overview of the bill before discussing in greater detail how it would improve the current pesticide registration system.

Bill C-53 has three main objectives. First, it would strengthen health and environmental protection. It would do so by requiring special protection for infants and children, taking into account pesticide exposure from all sources including food and water, considering the cumulative effects of pesticides that act in the same way, and supporting pesticide risk reduction.

• (1605)

[*Translation*]

The second objective of the bill is to make the registration system more transparent by establishing a public registry to allow access to the detailed evaluation reports that Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency prepares on registered pesticides, by allowing the public to view the test data on which these pesticide evaluations are based, and by allowing the PMRA to share scientific studies with provincial, territorial and international regulators.

[*English*]

Third, Bill C-53 would strengthen post registration control of pesticides. It would do this by requiring pesticide companies to report adverse effects; making it mandatory to re-evaluate older pesticides 15 years after they are registered; providing the Minister of Health the authority to remove pesticides from the market if the data required for a re-evaluation or special review are not supplied; and providing for increased powers of inspection and higher maximum penalties of up to \$1 million for the most serious offences when pesticides are not marketed or used in accordance with the law.

We have learned much over the years about how pesticides affect different populations. The proposed new PCPA would ensure Canada's children and other vulnerable populations were given special protection from the health risks posed by pesticides. It would do so by enshrining in legislation the requirement to incorporate modern risk assessment concepts including additional safety factors to protect our children.

For example, risk assessments done by the PMRA often include a safety factor of 100. To take into account the special sensitivities of children the new law would require an additional tenfold safety factor to be used, resulting in a safety factor of 1,000. This would be done unless reliable data indicated a higher or lower safety factor was more appropriate. The additional safety factor would recognize that children are affected by pesticides in a way that is different from adults.

Canadians and the international community must have confidence in the manner in which pesticides are regulated in Canada. By enhancing the transparency of our pesticide regulatory system the

new PCPA would enhance public confidence here and abroad that Canadian agri-food, forestry and other products are safe.

One way we are doing this is by allowing the public to verify the grounds on which decisions are made about products. In addition, our ability to share information more easily with other countries' pesticide regulatory agencies would facilitate the international joint review of pesticides and give Canadian growers equal access to newer and safer pesticides so they could be competitive in the marketplace.

The preamble to Bill C-53 sets out the context and principles of pest management regulation. Among other principles the preamble recognizes that health and environmental risks can be associated with pesticides; that pest management is important to the economy and other aspects of our quality of life; that sustainable pest management contributes to meeting our need for food and fibre in an economically viable manner while protecting health, the environment and natural resources; and that safe and effective pesticides can make an important contribution to sustainable pest management.

It is important to keep in mind why we regulate pesticides. We do so for a variety of reasons including the following: Some pesticides may pose risks to people and the environment; many pesticides are released into the environment; our exposure to many pesticides is involuntary; and redressing harm from pesticide exposure is generally difficult.

Human exposure can occur when pesticides such as those used in agriculture, forestry, lawn and garden care, and on golf courses are released into the environment where people may be exposed to them involuntarily. In addition, since pesticides are often applied to crops and livestock we may be exposed to their residues involuntarily through the food we eat.

It is important to recognize that acute health problems attributable to pesticide exposure are relatively rare. They usually stem from accidents rather than from using pesticides according to label instructions. Most health concerns associated with pesticides tend to center on potential long term effects that would be difficult to attribute to specific products. This means we must focus on preventing such potential long term effects rather than seeking redress or medical attention after the fact.

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In Canada, the United States, the European Union and most other OECD countries no pesticide may be imported, manufactured, sold or used unless the relevant regulatory authority has given its official approval. In Canada we call this approval registration. In addition, no pesticide may continue to be registered if it cannot meet current regulatory standards.

I will discuss for a moment the broader issues surrounding this piece of legislation. What do we mean when we refer to pesticides and pest management? Pesticides or pest control products are general terms for a wide variety of products designed to control pests. Common examples include herbicides to control weeds, insecticides to control insects, fungicides to control certain types of plant diseases, and preservatives to control the decay of wood and other material. Most pesticides are chemical or biological. Biological pesticides include insects, bacteria and viruses.

● (1610)

Pesticides are used widely and do have a variety of benefits. In homes and businesses, they control insects and other organisms that may threaten human health. They can provide benefits to the environment by controlling exotic organisms such as the zebra mussel or purple loosestrife.

Pesticides are used widely in agriculture to control many different kinds of pests and for similar purposes in other industries such as forestry. On the farm, using herbicides to control weeds instead of tilling may reduce soil erosion which is a significant environmental problem.

Pest management refers to any activity designed to control pests. For example, pest management can involve spraying pesticides on crops to kill weeds, insects and fungi. In addition, it can involve activities unrelated to pesticides, such as implementing an effective crop rotation plan.

The Canadian regulatory authority of pesticides is the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, or PMRA, which is located within Health Canada and for which I as the Minister of Health am responsible. The PMRA administers the pest control products act in the name of the Minister of Health.

In accordance with the acts and regulations, the PMRA publishes guidelines which provide details about the extensive information that companies must submit to the agency when seeking a registration decision. Most applications are made by manufacturers of pesticides. A successful applicant may need to submit additional information to the PMRA for various reasons. For example, should a registrant wish to change the approved uses of a product or when the product needs to be re-evaluated, more information will be required by the PMRA.

As is the case in most developed countries around the world, the bulk of the information required by the PMRA is in the form of results of extensive rigorous scientific studies that the company must conduct. The PMRA evaluates the study results to determine whether the health and environmental risks associated with a pesticide are acceptable and whether the product has value as a pest management tool.

Our goal is to ensure that risks associated with products are acceptable before they reach the market but it is also important to ensure that products registered some time ago can meet today's

standards of safety and efficacy. That is why a program for re-evaluating older products is part of any sound pest management regulatory scheme.

We will explore in a moment how Bill C-53 strengthens the post-legislation control of pesticides.

[*Translation*]

Since the regulation of pesticides is of concern to all levels of government, it is important to look at the relationship and responsibility each level of government has with respect to pesticide regulation.

[*English*]

Since the regulation of pesticides is of concern to all levels of government, it is important to look at the relationship and responsibility each level of government has with respect to pesticide regulation.

I would like to highlight the fact that in Canada pest management regulation includes many more elements than the federal legislation and the PMRA. Provinces and territories work in co-operation with and build on the federal regulatory system to ensure safe transportation, sale, storage, use and disposal of pesticides. Provinces and territories can add to federal restrictions to fit their local needs but cannot relax them. Currently federal, provincial and territorial authorities co-operate to enforce their respective pesticide legislation. Bill C-53 would strengthen this co-operation.

Municipalities may place whatever restrictions they wish on the use of pesticides on lands which they own. In addition, where duly authorized by provincial legislation, a municipality may establish bylaws to restrict or ban the use of pesticides on private land within its jurisdiction. Indeed some municipalities have banned the use of chemical pesticides on public lands and in some cases on private lawns. Public interest groups have called on the federal government to do the same thing under this proposed new pesticide legislation.

● (1615)

One does however have to remember that the federal authority for the pest control products act relies primarily upon the use of the criminal law power which is intended to address serious threats to the public interest. To include in this legislation a ban of the use of pesticides for what people refer to as cosmetic use could be exposing individuals to criminal prosecution for engaging in an activity which has not been proven to constitute an unacceptable risk. Such a measure I would submit would be beyond the proper scope of the criminal law power.

At the same time, citizens of a particular municipality may decide they do not want to have the pesticide used in their community no matter how small the risks. They may convince the municipal authorities to establish a bylaw banning all pesticides for a specific use.

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Bill C-53 reflects the important contribution of many Canadians over many years, including parliamentarians, some of whom are here today, stakeholders and provincial and territorial pesticide regulators. The bill reflects their concerns and their recommendations. I would like to acknowledge and thank those who have provided their views and in so doing have participated in the development of this legislation. We owe a debt of gratitude to these groups and individuals.

I would now like to explain in greater detail the three main objectives of the bill to which I referred in my opening remarks: strengthening health and environmental protection; making the registration system more transparent; and strengthening post-registration control of pesticides.

Bill C-53 will help to move pesticide regulation in Canada from a focus on the safety and efficacy of individual pesticides to a wider appreciation of the potential impact of decisions and activities on pest management and its effects on health and the environment.

Among the benefits of the new broader regulatory perspectives called for by Bill C-53 will be clearer authority for minimizing health and environmental risks associated with pesticides and the ability to incorporate modern risk assessment concepts. As I have already mentioned, this includes a special safety factor to take into consideration the needs of children and a consideration of the different sensitivities of other vulnerable groups such as seniors.

Bill C-53 provides authority to minimize risks, not just to keep them at acceptable levels. Minimizing risks is important in health and environmental protection. It helps for example to reduce the likelihood that problems will arise because of any adverse cumulative impacts resulting from pesticide use. One way that Bill C-53 does this is by having clear definitions for the terms health risk, environmental risk and value associated with pesticides.

Health risk means the possibility of harm to people resulting from use of a product or exposure to it, taking into account how it is to be used.

Similarly, environmental risk means the possibility of harm to the environment, including its biological diversity. Environment is defined broadly to be consistent with the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. Environment includes the components of the earth, all layers of the atmosphere, animals and other living organisms.

Value means the actual or potential contribution of a product to the management of pests and includes its effectiveness. Value also encompasses a product's benefits to health, safety and the environment and its social and economic impact.

The clear broad definition of value will strengthen an important basis for minimizing the risks associated with pesticides. Under the new legislation, as under the current act, a product's value must be acceptable before it can be registered. This does not mean that a determination of acceptable value can override any determination that risks are unacceptable. It simply means that people should not be exposed to any risks from a pesticide unless its use has been determined to be beneficial.

● (1620)

Bill C-53 specifies some of the considerations that must be taken into account in order to incorporate the most modern risk assessment concepts when conducting evaluations of health risk. These concepts have already been adopted in practice but until now they have not been specified in the law. As well as the additional tenfold margin of safety to protect children from risks posed by pesticides, cumulative effects of pesticides that act in the same way and aggregate exposure, that is, pesticide exposure from all sources including food and water, must be assessed.

The bill also contains provisions designed to allow comparative risk assessments. This means that it will be possible to replace registered products, products that have been assessed as posing acceptable risks with other products that pose even lower risks. These provisions support minimizing risks and encourage the development of innovative safer pest control technology.

I would now like to highlight the provisions of Bill C-53 that are designed to make the pesticide registration system more transparent for all Canadians.

Decisions about the acceptability of health and environmental risks of pesticides are based on internationally accepted science. Bill C-53 recognizes however that Canadians have a right to be involved in regulatory decisions that could result in people or the environment being exposed to significant pesticide risks.

Accordingly, Bill C-53 provides for public consultation before a major decision concerning the registration of pesticides is made; the establishment of a public registry containing information about registered pesticides; the establishment of reading rooms where the public can view confidential test data which are the results of scientific studies on which the PMRA's evaluations of risk and value are based; and the opportunity for the public to request the minister to reconsider major regulatory decisions.

The bill requires that the minister consult the public before making a decision for full registration concerning a product with a new active ingredient, or a product under special review or re-evaluation, or a decision that concerns new uses of a registered product that might significantly increase the risks to people or the environment. The documentation released for public consultation would contain a description of the product and its proposed uses as well as a summary of the PMRA's assessment of its risk and value. Also included would be the proposed decision and the rationale for it.

A final registration decision would be issued after the public's comments were reviewed. The company's consent would not be necessary to release the documentation for public consultation as is the case under the current legislation.

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The minister would also be required to establish a public registry containing information about registered pesticides. It would include the PMRA's detailed evaluations of the risks and values of pesticides, as well as information about applications, re-evaluations of older pesticides, and special reviews. The only categories of information that it would not include would be confidential business information and test data. All information in the registry would be available to the public either electronically whenever possible or in hard copy.

Confidential business information will be defined very narrowly in Bill C-53 and will include only financial information, manufacturing processes and formula ingredients that are not of health or environmental concern. This means that the identity and concentration of formulas that are of health or environmental concern will not be held in confidence and can in fact be made available to the public on labels and material safety data sheets and through the public registry.

The test data generated by companies and provided to the PMRA are considered confidential under the Access to Information Act, but Bill C-53 will make it possible for the public to view this confidential information once a product is registered. The data will not be available to the public electronically or in hard copy, but the public may examine them in a reading room.

• (1625)

The public would have access to summaries of the evaluations used by the PMRA to make major decisions before they were finalized. After a pesticide was registered they would be provided with the PMRA's detailed evaluations via the public registry and they would also be able to view the test data on which the PMRA's evaluations were based.

In addition, the identity and concentration of formulants that are upheld for environmental concern would not be held in confidence and would be made available to the public on labels and material safety data sheets and through the public registry.

This openness and transparency would go a long way to facilitating informed public participation and fostering public confidence in the regulatory system.

Information in the public registry as well as confidential business information and test data could be shared with federal or provincial and territorial regulators to facilitate collaboration. Those regulators would be required to protect the confidentiality of that information.

Under the current legislation only applicants and registrants may request that the minister convene a panel to review major registration decisions. Bill C-53 would give any member of the public the same opportunity.

The minister would have discretion to decide whether to establish the panel and would be required to provide the reasons for the decision to the requester. The public would continue to have the right to seek judicial review of decisions.

I want to talk about strengthening post registration control of pesticides. Our responsibility must obviously not stop at registration. Post registration control is very important.

That is why the bill would strengthen post registration control of pesticides by enhancing the PMRA's existing capacity to re-evaluate pesticides systematically and to conduct special reviews, notably by providing authority to take action against registrants who fail to provide the data needed to conduct the re-evaluation or special review.

The bill would also specify that the precautionary principle must be taken into account when determining whether interim action needs to be taken while a re-evaluation or special review is in progress.

Re-evaluation is important to ensure that older pesticides meet today's higher standards. Strengthened capacity to conduct re-evaluations would translate into better health and environmental protection.

There are times when action needs to be taken well before a registered product comes up for re-evaluation. That is why Bill C-53 would make it mandatory for applicants and registrants to report on any adverse effects that their pest control products are having on health or the environment. Reports of adverse effects could trigger a special review or immediate action, if necessary.

Bill C-53 specifies two new conditions of registration for all pesticides: that product safety information, including a material safety data sheet, must be provided to workplaces where the product is used or manufactured; and that information on sales of the product must be provided to me to help monitor pesticide risk reduction.

Bill C-53 would bring offences and punishments into line with modern standards. It would allow higher maximum penalties to be set, up to \$1 million for the most serious offences that result in harm being done to health or to the environment.

The bill would include extensive provisions that clarify what is prohibited and what is permissible. It would enhance the powers of inspectors. It would bring compliance and enforcement up to date.

I would like to point out that careful consideration has been given to issues that should be addressed in Bill C-53 itself, and the issues that should be addressed through regulations, policies and guidelines. The approach reflected in Bill C-53 is to ensure that when it is enacted it would provide a strong, forward looking foundation for pest management regulation.

Procedural issues would be addressed mainly through regulations and details through guidelines and policies. This approach is designed so that law and policy could adapt continually to emerging risks, new products, new technology and new ways to manage risks.

The public and stakeholders would, of course, have opportunities to contribute to the regulation making, guideline and policy development processes.

Government Orders

We think that this approach is better suited to adapting to the inevitable changes in science and technology and public attitudes that characterize pest management regulation. We can adjust to change without having to wait for the enactment of legislative amendments.

In conclusion, Bill C-53 is an important step in the comprehensive process to reform Canada's pest management regulatory system. That process has benefited greatly from the active involvement of parliamentarians, the public, the provinces and territories and many other stakeholders. It represents the key priorities that Canadians want to see reflected in pesticide regulation in Canada, the protection of their health and their environment.

• (1635)

Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to split my time with my colleague from Selkirk—Interlake.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Rob Merrifield: Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise and speak to this important piece of new legislation. It is a remarkable piece of legislation and important to all Canadians.

We are all concerned with the environment, our health and safety and what we are doing to our environment, whether it is air pollution, our water supply, or what the person next door is doing. As our population grows Canada and nations around the world become challenged in some ways.

Bill C-53 deals with some of the things we are doing with pesticides, herbicides, insecticides and fungicides. There is an overwhelming desire for consumers to understand and discern exactly what is happening to the environment. It is important for them to understand what is involved with the use of herbicides, pesticides and fungicides. To that end this is an important piece of legislation and comes at a time of tremendous interest by the population.

I am a farmer and come from a farming background so I have some personal experience with working with pesticides. There is not a farmer I know who really enjoys working with pesticides. It is something we do as a matter of practice because they are a tool that is available for us to efficiently and effectively look after our lands in the most effective way possible

When dealing with pesticides we must realize that there is a need to respect the dangers as well as the benefits of their use. There are a tremendous number of benefits but there are perhaps some fears and other things that we should be cautious about.

One of the things we need to be cautious of when we are dealing with pesticides is their application outside of the agricultural community. We need to be cautious of their use in urban settings where pregnant women and children can be affected. We must be concerned about how these pesticides are applied. It is fair to say that some of them are perhaps applied too rigorously in those situations.

We must recognize the value of herbicides in our society and in our agricultural community. As farmers use herbicides they need to

till their soil far less and this results in less air pollution. Diesel tractors go up and down the fields far less times, some say 7 to 10 times less, because of some of the pesticide uses today than compared to what has been practiced before. There is much less soil erosion. Pesticides are able to restore soil and farmers are able to utilize their soil more because they do not have to work the land so much.

There is more moisture conservation. We hear of a fear of global warming and the lack of moisture allowing farmers to grow crops and yet with the use of pesticides a tremendous amount of moisture is conserved to sustain agriculture in areas that would never possibly have been sustained before.

Agricultural efficiency has enhanced tremendously because of the use of herbicides and pesticides. Chemicals are tools that protect the environment from being overrun by pests from other countries which come in all the time and are difficult to control. We have herbicides for different foliage and weeds that come in from around the world and it is a way of keeping them in balance. If we never had pesticides we would have a very difficult time dealing with that problem.

Recently I have seen many advancements in safer chemicals. There is much less residue in herbicides used today than what was used back in the sixties when the first piece of legislation came to be. It is important that we discern and understand the new technologies coming in and take advantage of some of that technology, but at the same time we must be careful to think of the safety and health of our society. Our number one overwhelming responsibility is to look after the people we serve.

I make these personal remarks because of my understanding of where agriculture is at and what I sense as being some of the problems with the application of pesticides. I also have a primary hat that I would like to wear today as the senior opposition health critic.

• (1640)

The Canadian Alliance would generally support the intent of health and safety in the bill but we must be cautious listening to the minister's remarks. We will be interested in getting this to committee where we can take a good look at exactly how this piece of legislation would be applied. Generally we are in favour of a piece of legislation that would address the health and safety of the population but I will reserve my judgment on it until we get it into committee and we take a good, serious look at it.

We support the goals of strengthening health and environmental protection, making the registration system more transparent and strengthening the post-registration control of pesticides. However it is important too that our current regulatory framework, dating back as late as the 60s, be updated to incorporate the modern risk assessment concepts, to entrench current practices into law, to account for new developments in pesticides in regulations around the world, and to reflect the growing concerns for the health of children and others.

We believe there are some shortcomings in the bill and a number of amendments should be made. I will outline some of those concerns later in my presentation.

Government Orders

The primary objective of the bill is sound. It is to prevent unacceptable risk to people and the environment from the use of pesticide control products.

As health critic I am committed to promoting and protecting the health of Canadians. The health of Canadians should be paramount when it comes to pesticides. I believe that most farmers who use pesticides are committed to protecting human health as well. Their livelihoods depend upon producing safe and healthy food products.

There are three main objectives in Bill C-53. I will speak to each of them in turn.

The first objective is strengthening health and environmental protection. These are important goals. Increased efforts to protect the health of infants, children and pregnant women are welcome. Entrenching in law current practices of additional margins of safety for pesticide use around homes and schools is appropriate.

We support the provisions related to the labelling of pesticide products and the requirement that the product safety information be available in the workplace where these products are used or made. Those who make and use pest control products deserve to know what they contain and how they are to be used with appropriate and safe measures.

Labelling on containers, from my experience, is very important. We have come a long way when it comes to that. One of the problems we saw at the farm gate level when dealing with pesticides was when metric conversion happened in Canada. It became difficult for the agricultural community to be able to discern exactly how to mix appropriately. Labelling has come a long way. We must enhance that and become even more clear on the labelling. If members have ever read the labels on containers, it is easy to become confused.

The second objective is to make the registration system more transparent. The objectives of increasing transparency in pesticide regulation is noteworthy. Who would oppose more openness in the operations of government, particularly in the matters of health and safety? To that end we support the proposed establishment of a particular registry that would allow access to detailed evaluation reports on registered pesticides.

We believe that this commitment to greater transparency is so important that it should be carried over into areas of drug safety regulations because we have a serious problem when it comes to drug safety.

We think that the pesticide problem is large and is endangering our society. I will be explaining in the next few weeks just how dangerous it is and what actually is happening on the drug safety side of our society. I will not dwell on it now because of the bill that is before us, but I would suggest that if we can have such concerns when it comes to pesticides that we certainly can follow this as a pattern on the drug safety side.

•(1645)

The third objective is to strengthen the post-registration control of pesticides. The provisions requiring pesticide companies to report adverse effects are of obvious importance. Effective and meaningful provisions must be in place to ensure that pesticides, once on the

market, can be reviewed and if necessary pulled from the market. Again, this hearkens back to the drug safety issue.

Regarding the required re-evaluations of pesticides that have been on the market for over 15 years, we are somewhat concerned that this might unduly strain the resources of the pest management review agency.

As mentioned, we support the overall direction of the legislation but we have a number of concerns. Let me briefly outline some of those.

First, the bill's laudable objectives may be difficult to achieve if management problems and the misallocation of resources at the Pest Management Regulatory Agency are not corrected.

My colleague, the member for Selkirk—Interlake, the Canadian Alliance agriculture critic, is perhaps better able to speak on some of the shortcomings of the PMRA. He has done so on numerous occasions and will undoubtedly do so again as he speaks to the legislation.

Suffice it to say that there are fundamental flaws at the Pest Management Regulatory Agency which the bill has not sufficiently addressed.

Accordingly, we propose the following amendments. First:

That the PMRA be required to consider credible research and acceptable data from re-evaluations done in other jurisdictions where the pesticides are used under similar conditions.

I note that the bill specifies in subclauses 17(2) and (3) that information from other OECD nations and from other federal and provincial jurisdictions can trigger special reviews of registered pesticide.

On the positive side, the bill does not specify that information from such jurisdictions could or should be used to support the registration or the re-evaluation of the pesticide.

We would like to see the PMRA work more closely with the regulatory bodies in other countries and end unnecessary duplication and thus save valuable resources. We would also like to see it help to ensure that safe and efficient new chemicals come from the Canadian market more quickly.

Farmers in this country have expressed repeated concerns over the inability to access some of the new products because of the roadblocks set up by the PMRA.

Second:

That the re-evaluation provisions be amended so that the chemicals are only re-evaluated if an effective alternative product exists.

This is necessary to prioritize scarce PMRA resources.

We would also amend the bill to include specific approval procedures for minor use chemicals.

Unlike legislation in other jurisdiction, the bill requires manufacturers to show that their chemicals are more effective as part of the approval process.

Government Orders

I would like to refer to clause 7(6)(a) which states:

During an evaluation, the applicant has the burden of persuading the Minister that the health and environmental risks and the value of the pest control product are acceptable—

The notion of value is defined in the bill definitions under clause 2, Interpretation and, among other things, includes the notion of efficacy. The requirements to prove efficacy may add unnecessary costs and time to review the process.

The PMRA should only be concerned with safety. The market will decide if a pesticide is efficient and few companies will go through the process for a chemical that does not work.

• (1650)

We look forward to discussing and debating those proposed amendments in committee.

I would like to note that we were pleased to see that the bill did not impose a ban on the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes. We believe the government is correct in allowing municipalities to maintain control over such decisions.

While the official opposition is supportive of developing and using proven alternatives in urban environments, we do not believe that the moratorium on pest control products should be in place before there is a substantial body of conclusive scientific evidence that unequivocally links such products to human disease or ill health.

The official opposition believes that proven, sound science, domestically and internationally, should continue to be the cornerstone of debate.

In conclusion, we look forward to reviewing the bill at committee, to hearing from the interested parties and to proposing amendments that will produce the best legislation that we can.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, as my learned colleague said, I am the chief agriculture critic for the Canadian Alliance. I will be taking a bit more of an agriculture perspective on the bill.

The bill we are presently debating would enact the pest control products act. It is the primary legislation that would control the import, manufacture, sale and use of all pesticides including insecticides, herbicides and fungicides in Canada.

The bill was first introduced in 1969 and has not been significantly updated since that time. It is a positive note that the Liberal government has finally gotten around to updating the bill. In fact it has some potential to improve on the environmental aspects of the chemicals that we use at the present time.

The bill essentially would strengthen health and environmental protection, make the registration system more transparent and strengthen post-registration control of pesticides.

With regard to industry's reaction, the Sierra Club is not too happy with it and would like to see more of a complete ban on pesticides. I had the pleasure of hearing Sharon Labchuk from Earth Action speak in Prince Edward Island. The MPs from Prince Edward Island had better take notice of Ms. Labchuk's comments because the small land area that is in Prince Edward Island will be seriously affected by what the minister is saying, which is that this accidental spray

contamination, as she would say, off the very field that it is being applied to will come under the intense pressure in Prince Edward Island. I will be interested to see whether those members from Prince Edward Island can support the full impact of the bill.

The Canadian Alliance certainly wants to examine the bill and in particular the minister's speech in which she talked about using the precautionary principle. She talked about the potential impact of chemicals, pesticides, herbicides and fungicides.

She then used a term that will take a lot of examination. She tried to define some kind of value. That will no doubt be the value of the bureaucrats and the value of the ministers and those elected officials at the given time in the future. Who knows whether the values they have could be to the extreme of saying that there should be no chemicals in use whatsoever.

The concern with this is that it seems like the government is moving away from science based decision making and moving into this quasi-philosophical method of assessing our chemicals and their impact on the environment and people. I think that is a dangerous thing on first blush.

The second question I posed to the minister, as she and her government move into this area of fuzziness, as it would appear to be, concerned the trade implications if the government were to use this as a non-tariff trade barrier to harass importers of foodstuffs into our country.

These are a couple of our major concerns.

I note that Mr. Lorne Hepworth, president of CropLife Canada which represents the chemical industry, said that most of the practices outlined in the legislation were already in practice. The industry has done a lot up to this point to make sure that not only are the chemicals and pesticides effective but that they are safe for the environment and safe for people.

The bill would require that it be implemented once it is passed and in a logical, efficient and effective way.

• (1655)

This brings me to the current operations under the director, Claire Franklin, of the Pest Management Regulatory Agency. It would not matter how good a bill the House passed with the way the PMRA is being run at the present time. From the presentation Ms. Franklin gave to the agriculture committee some time ago, there is little hope of seeing any positive legislation implemented in a way that will satisfy the industry, the farmers and the environmentalists because of the inefficiencies and the philosophical attitude of the agency which is not in keeping with the attitude of the majority of Canadians.

The mismanagement at the PMRA is costing farmers money because they do not have access to newer, cheaper and more effective chemicals. These chemicals are in use in other countries. Were they brought into Canada, we would have less toxic chemicals that are more effective, that is, the new generation. That is not happening on a regular or timely basis because of the department.

Government Orders

The minister has had quite the history in the House. The minister is presently in charge of Health Canada. We see that as the provincial budgets come down, all the provinces will be spending over 40% of their budgets on health care. It is the minister's responsibility that health care is becoming untenable.

We are still battling it out in the House over her Bill C-15B, the cruelty to animals legislation. Once again, as late as April 3, the Dairy Farmers of Canada, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association and many other common sense average Canadian groups which are trying to make the economy of the country work and people who are trying to have their families and businesses progress in essence were hung out to dry. This lowers my confidence in the legislation. I mentioned the precautionary principle and the definition of some kind of value and the term "potential impact", as things that I am not sure the minister is really going to deliver as more effective or better for industry and for Canadians as a whole.

The rigidity of the PMRA's bureaucracy is denying access to those cheaper chemicals in other countries. The Farmers of North America Inc. is one group trying to import chemicals that are used just a few miles across the border. The EPA in the United States is probably much more strict in regard to its regulations, legislation and examination of chemicals than we are here in Canada. Our rigid ineffective PMRA will not let those chemicals come in. Maybe it is not because the officials do not want to; it is just that they are so bound up in their own bureaucracy and the system is everything and effectiveness is nothing. We are being hurt very badly by not having access to those better chemicals and getting rid of the ones that are toxic that could and should be replaced. We will see if the legislation actually does that.

The Canadian Alliance always has some solutions. In regard to Health Canada and the PMRA, we should work more closely with regulatory bodies in other countries. For example, the PMRA should accept data from tests done in other countries if the products will be used under similar conditions in Canada.

● (1700)

This would reduce the time required to move new products through the Canadian system. As well it would reduce the licensing costs for chemical companies and therefore increase the likelihood that they would apply for a Canadian licence.

At the present time our market is fairly small in regard to a lot of agriculture production and chemical use. As a result it does not necessarily pay to go through the full bureaucratic process in Canada of up to four years of evidence given to the government to try to get a chemical in that is licensed as safe in the United States.

The process for re-evaluation of older chemicals consumes a great deal of the PMRA's resources. There are about 7,000 chemicals registered for use in Canada at the present time. That was the last figure I saw. We have two problems. One is that the government is not putting enough resources into re-evaluating these older chemicals. I do not want my granddaughter, my children, neighbours or others to be hurt by chemicals that are no longer considered safe. In fact for many of these chemicals, if the PMRA were to get off its butt, we would have the new ones that are less toxic brought into Canada which would make things safer for the environment and for all of us.

The process for re-evaluation of older chemicals consumes a great deal of the resources. The efficiency of the PMRA would be dramatically increased if it would accept the data from recent pesticide evaluations done by capable regulatory agencies in other countries. The legislation fails to force the PMRA to consider scientific research done in other jurisdictions. Furthermore, the bill will force additional re-evaluations on the PMRA for all pesticides older than 15 years which will be reviewed automatically even if there is no reason to suspect that their toxicity or safety is in question.

The PMRA should only review existing pesticides if suitable and effective alternatives exist. That is a very important point. It needs to prioritize what it is doing in government. That way it can get at the real problem chemicals while not looking at the others. From what I heard at the agriculture committee when the director and others were making their presentations, this is certainly not being done.

The transparency at the agency certainly has to be improved. The bill does improve the transparency of the agency in Canada's pesticide approval process and I give credit for that.

As I said, the bill has the potential to do some good but with the PMRA's bureaucratic intransigence, I suspect it may not accomplish what it is intended to do. That will depend on good solid direction from the minister. That cannot be emphasized enough. To this point the previous ministers have not given that kind of good solid direction. Absolutely every presenter that has come before the committee in regard to the PMRA's activities has been critical of its operation.

I have indicated I do not have much faith in the minister being able to do the job. However, she does have the confidence of the Prime Minister to do it, so we will just have to see. As I say, a lot of us on this side of the House do not have much hope.

We have some additional unanswered questions with respect to the PMRA. Why does the pesticide approval process in the United States occur much faster than in Canada? Why has the PMRA failed to increase its acceptance of data from reputable scientific bodies from other countries?

The efficiency of the PMRA would be significantly improved if it accepted the data from pesticide re-evaluations. There is no evidence that accepting data on pesticide research done in other countries poses any threat to Canadian health and safety. Still the government has the philosophy and obviously has given instructions to the PMRA that it is not to be the case that those studies and scientific examinations can be admitted into Canada.

Government Orders

●(1705)

We would like to know what the environmental impact is of Canada falling behind in the licensing of new and more effective pesticides. I have outlined some of the concerns in that regard. Certainly the safety of the environment and individual Canadians is one of the big things.

The government is not going to take into full consideration the trade impact and how it will be used by the minister when we talk about the precautionary principle. The minister talked about the potential impact of chemicals without really having a scientific basis for it. She talked about values. Anytime a Liberal uses the word values, man, I run for cover just like most of my neighbours do. That is scary because Liberal values represent virtually no Canadian but it will be their values that they want to push onto the rest of us.

At the present time the Crompton Corporation is suing the Canadian government for \$100 million. It claims that Canada had no scientific basis to ban the chemical Lindane.

The government up to the present has shown a great deal of incompetence in regard to the operation of the health ministry as it pertains to the Pest Control Products Act and also in regard to the regulatory agency that is supposed to protect Canadians and facilitate industry, agriculture and the quality of life for all Canadians.

Reports have indicated that the PMRA is 40% less efficient than other countries, particularly the United States and Australia. This is in regard to efficiency in getting pesticide applications through the process. During 2000-01 a total of 22 minor use registrations were approved by the PMRA. Eighteen were for food use and four were for non-food use. During the same period over 1,200 minor use registrations were approved in the United States. More than 500 were for food use and over 700 were for non-food use.

The fact is that our industry, our farmers and our agricultural sector are competing directly head to head with the United States on virtually every commodity, with the exception of peanuts and some of the things grown in the tropics. There is a lot of work to be done. Canada imports U.S. fruits and vegetables grown using new chemicals not yet approved for use in Canada. It seems somewhat illogical that Canada would accept produce grown with more chemicals used by U.S. farmers but would refuse to license the pesticides themselves.

With that I will conclude by saying that the minister's speech should give all of us cause for concern. We should examine her words very carefully. We should examine this legislation before we throw our support wholeheartedly behind it.

We know of the pesticide anti-chemical bias in the government as evidenced by some of the bills that have been brought forward. In particular the one that really bothered me and a lot of Liberals attempted to say that somehow genetically modified foods were dangerous and scary. That was brought forward by a private member from the Liberal side. It was not based on science. It was based on bunk.

●(1710)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today on Bill C-53, an act protect human health and safety and the environment by regulating products used for the control of pests. This bill, more than 60 pages in length, was designed to improve a statute that dates back some 33 years, believe it or not.

Since I have been given 40 minutes, I will try to summarize our party's position, with four points.

I shall begin by outlining the current situation regarding pest control in Quebec and Canada. Then I will quote some of the recommendations from the report of the Standing Committee on the Environment—the Chair of which I now see opposite—the report on pesticides published in May, 2000. Third, I will discuss a recent report submitted to Quebec's minister of the environment on March 27, by the focus group on the use of pesticides in urban areas. I will also discuss the 1999 report from the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development. Finally, I will outline our position on Bill C-53.

First I would like to say that my party believes Bill C-53 to be a step in the right direction. It was time, as I will demonstrate later, that this statute dating back to 1969, and therefore close to 33 years old, be renewed. We believe there should have been legislation to improve the current law. As such, it is a step in the right direction, as I said, but naturally, we fundamentally believe that there needs to be improvements.

The precautionary principle must prevail at all stages of the study of this bill, including the examination by the Standing Committee on Health that I plan on taking part in, as well as during every opportunity given to parliamentarians to study this bill.

Second, we recognize that public health risks, especially those involving children, nursing infants and pregnant women, must be given special attention. We recognize that exposure to pesticides, especially the active ingredients found in pesticides, has a significant impact on public health. This might seem ridiculously obvious, but I believe that it is important that our first premise establish this as a priority.

As far as jurisdiction is concerned, jurisdiction over pesticides appears to be divided. The federal government has responsibility for the legislation relating to the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, or PMRA.

The purpose of this agency is to administer the Pest Control Products Act and to facilitate safe access to methods of pest control, while reducing hazards. The federal legislation controls the certification, marketing and labelling standards for products. At the present time, there are more than 6,000 certified products on the market and these contain more than 500 registered active ingredients. This is where the hitch comes in.

Government Orders

●(1715)

Until now, very little effort has been made as far as the mission and objectives of the Canadian legislation are concerned. Very little effort has been made by the agency precisely to make available products that are safe. I use that word because that is the very objective of the agency. When we come a little later on to look at the report by the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development, we will see that there are grounds for concern as far as reassessing the entire matter of products on the market which contain active ingredients is concerned.

There is one other aspect. As I said, the purpose of the PMRA is to ensure the availability of safe products on the market. It therefore has a certain responsibility as far as products containing biopesticides are concerned, products with the potential to be an alternative solution.

We must acknowledge that there are alternative products available on the market, the biopesticides. Unfortunately, however, their availability is very limited. At this time, only 30 biopesticides are available on the Canadian market, whereas there are in excess of 150 in the United States.

Not only is the Pest Management Regulatory Agency not involved in the reassessment of currently available pesticides, it is also not fulfilling its responsibility to provide alternatives to traditional pesticides on the market. Finally, under the federal legislation, the agency must monitor labelling standards for products.

Let us take a look at what I would call the federal problem. It exists because the current act dates back to 1969. The existing rules and standards are obsolete in many respects. In its current form, the act may be considered a danger to public health. In a few minutes, I will quote some comments made in 1999 by the environmental commissioner. These comments are disturbing to say the least, when we look at products currently on the market, in terms of their safety for women, children and infants.

For example, the problem with some pesticides that are currently on the market has to do with the active ingredients that they contain. There are 500 active ingredients in the pesticides currently available on the market. Believe it or not but, out of these 500 active ingredients, 300 were approved before 1981, and more than 150 were approved before 1960.

This means that there are currently on the market pesticides that are sold to the public, even though they contain active ingredients that were assessed based on standards that were often far from those that are now deemed acceptable, both from a scientific and a public health point of view. This is all the more reason to act quickly. This is also why we believe that the existing pest control legislation had to be reassessed, redefined and updated, since public health is at stake. We must act in the best interests of Canadians.

Let us not forget—since I am dealing with jurisdictions—that pesticides are a shared jurisdiction. The federal government has a responsibility, but so do the provinces. I should point out that Quebec has had its own pesticide legislation since 1987. The purpose of this act is to avoid and reduce threats to the environment and public health.

The primary responsibility is to develop public awareness through sustained campaigns on the dangers related to the use of pesticides. Second, we must support municipalities and organizations and, third, the government must fund research and development on alternatives, including biopesticides.

●(1720)

The government of Quebec supported establishing a pesticide management code that would govern the entire process, from pesticide production to the sale and storage of pesticides.

Another aspect concerns municipalities. In recent years, the responsibilities of municipalities for pesticide management and control have increased. Why? Because following a ruling by various tribunals in Quebec and based on supreme court decisions regarding the passing by the municipality of Hudson of a bylaw prohibiting the use of pesticides, certain courts in Quebec ruled in favour of the municipality of Hudson in its decision to ban the use of pesticides.

In recent years, the authority municipalities have to establish regulatory codes has increased. Under the Cities and Towns Act, municipalities may regulate and prohibit the use of pesticides. As a result, we have seen, and will continue to see municipalities pass regulations prohibiting the use of pesticides in the coming months and years.

In response to these court decisions and to Quebec's tendency to reduce and ban the use of pesticides, the government established a committee, a focus group that submitted its recommendations to the environment minister on March 27. The committee's main recommendation was to develop a management code to govern all activities involving pesticides.

It is important to recall that this work and this bill were not dreamed up overnight. Here in the House, and more particularly, within the Standing Committee on the Environment, there was a great deal of thought given to this important phenomenon involving the use of pesticides and their impact on health. In its recommendations made in May, 2000, the committee urged and proposed that the new act establish human health and the environment as priorities by creating databases on the sale of pesticides, their adverse effects, and alternatives to pesticides.

One could even go so far as to say that the bill fulfills these expectations. The problem lies with the committee's second recommendation, the most important one, which would have made it possible to ensure that, by a specific deadline, the use of pesticides could be phased out in Canada. I am referring to Recommendation No. 2, in which the committee recommended, in May 2000, that pesticides used for cosmetic purposes be phased out within five years.

We can clearly see, and the government must also admit this, that there is nothing in the bill, which we are studying today and which we are going to study in committee, that sets any kind of deadline with respect to the non-use and elimination of pesticides.

Government Orders

We on this side of the House are very disappointed. Not only was this the position of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, but it was also one of the recommendations in the May 27 report by Quebec's task force on the use of pesticides in urban areas, i.e. that the use of pesticides in public areas be phased out over a period of three years.

● (1725)

Quebec's task force goes even further than the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development. The committee and Quebec's task force, which is chaired by Mr. Cousineau, an MNA, feel that we should phase out the use of pesticides in urban areas over three years.

When we look at this bill and see that there is no indication of any intention to phase out the use of pesticides at all, let alone over five years, we are rather disappointed. The House can rest assured that we will fight hard in committee to keep this bill. The government's tendency is to renew the legislation approximately every 33 years. We must be more vigilant than ever and ensure that this five-year phase out becomes law.

The standing committee on the environment made various recommendations. One of these was that the sole mandate of the Pest Management Regulatory Agency should be to protect health and the environment.

In the committee's opinion, PMRA should not also be responsible for encouraging the competitiveness of the agricultural, farming and manufacturing sectors. It felt that there should be an open and transparent process in order to build the public's trust in pest management, and that the new legislation should make it a condition of registration that applicants carry out ongoing monitoring after registration and that existing pesticides be re-assessed.

Once again, with all the measures proposed by the committee, there is no deadline set for re-evaluating these old pesticides. There is no deadline for the conditions for authorizing any pesticide. So we are in the most total vacuum possible.

Yes, this is a step in the right direction with the new process we want to put in place, but there are never any clear indications of the deadlines for attaining these objectives, whereas it would have been simpler to make provision for this, to say: we want pesticide use eliminated within five years, or three. But no, there is no measure relating to this, which is somewhat of a disappointment.

I have already referred to the Groupe de réflexion sur les pesticides en milieu urbain, whose report was released this past March 27. The federal government, as a government with a desire to work in collaboration with the provinces, could have waited for that March 27 report, having waited 33 years already to introduce an amended act. But no, they had to decide to move on it a few months ahead of time. I should remind hon. members that the decision was made last October 25 by the Quebec Minister of the Environment, André Boisclair, to mandate this task force on the use of pesticides in urban areas.

The task force met with more than 50 organizations or individuals who had submitted briefs. These came from health, environmental, ecology, business and municipal backgrounds. We are of the opinion that we are bringing to this House the Quebec consensus reached by

that task force, which was struck last October 25 and whose report was released on March 27.

The task force addressed this issue, and set out its objective as follows:

The objective is to identify avenues for solution which will enable Quebecers to reduce their dependency on, and the risk of exposure to, these products which are in common use in lawn care, ornamental horticulture and extermination.

The task force has indeed managed to come up with alternative solutions and an approach to true pest control in Quebec.

● (1730)

This report, on which the committee held hearings in January, contained a certain number of recommendations. There were 15 recommendations. The task force's first recommendation serves as a main underlying theme. We must quickly reduce the use of pesticides in urban areas. This is the main theme underlying the task force's recommendations.

The task force made 15 recommendations. First, it proposed banning the use of pesticides in public and municipal green spaces and in schools and daycare centres in three years' time. Therefore, the recommendations involve prohibiting the use of pesticides on lawns in three years, and on shrubs in five years. So, the shorter deadline is three years, and the longer deadline for public green spaces, whether they be parks, daycare centres, schools and all public green spaces, is five years.

Another recommendation consists of training stakeholders in environmental management. People must be made aware that the use of pesticides constitutes a threat to public health. If we start from the premise, as I stated at the beginning of my presentation, that the precautionary principle should guide all of our thoughts and actions, stakeholders need to be made aware of risks, and trained, whether they work in ornamentals or horticulture, as municipal employees, or in maintenance. They must be educated about the dangers of pesticides.

The task force recommends establishing a training program that would lead to a vocational diploma in the field to raise awareness among pesticide users, the stakeholders themselves.

Third, more emphasis should be placed on making alternative methods and less dangerous products available. If we set deadlines banning the use of pesticides, as we want to do, then we need to work now on making biopesticides, or alternative solutions available. So, we need to increase the availability of alternative solutions, in order to allow us to reach these same quality of life objectives down the line, using a very different approach.

Government Orders

Another issue is the establishment of a pesticide management code. In my opinion, this is probably, along with banning the use of pesticides within three years, the strongest recommendation of the task force. It is proposed to put in place a pesticide management code that would set standards regarding the sale, storage and use of pesticides. Why? Because, among other reasons, the rulings made by Quebec courts now give municipalities the option of regulating the use of pesticides.

Therefore, we believe that we must have regulations and legislation based on the same standard, and establish a single standard. What is being proposed is a Quebec management standard that would be put forward by this pesticide management code. In my opinion, this is probably the strongest recommendation.

The fourth point that I wish to raise is the issue of the environmental commissioner.

• (1735)

In 1999, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development tabled a very eloquent report on how the federal government manages the certification process for pesticides and their reassessment. The commissioner passed rather harsh judgment on the government's way of managing pesticides.

He emphasized the significant lack of reassessment programs. Moreover, he noted that Canada was seriously lagging behind other countries, including the United States, and that the percentage of expenditures allocated for the reassessment of pesticide certification, and also for the whole assessment process of pesticides, was very low compared to that of some other countries. The commissioner also said that pesticide reassessments were a rarity in Canada, something which is very worrisome from a public health standpoint. Again, the reassessment of pesticides is rarely done in Canada.

I remind the House that of the 500 active ingredients in the pesticides, 300 were approved before 1981 and over 150 before 1960, according to the environmental commissioner's last report submitted in 1999. In terms of public health standards, pesticides are now available on the market and have been evaluated on the basis of standards which I consider outdated, or which should at least be re-evaluated.

So, not only are re-evaluations rare, but there is a lack of transparency in the process on the part of this government.

Before continuing, I wish to cite four passages from the environmental commissioner's 1999 report. The first has to do with available re-evaluation programs:

The absence of an effective re-evaluation program means there is no assurance that Canadians are not being exposed to unacceptable risk.

This is what the environmental commissioner wrote in 1999. There is no assurance that Canadians are not being exposed to unacceptable risk. Here is another quote:

We are particularly concerned by the lack of clarity about the role of federal science-based departments [in the re-evaluation of pesticides].

This is from the 1999 report by the environmental commissioner. Here is the third quote:

Many pesticides were approved when the standards were much less stringent than they are today.

Again, this is taken from the 1999 environmental commissioner's report. I will give one final quote, although I could give many more:

We found Canada's track record to be one of inaction and unfulfilled commitments.

This is the fourth quote from the environmental commissioner. According to the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Canada has not done its work and, 33 years later, he is proposing a remodeled, redefined act which could meet the expectations of Quebec's task force on the use of pesticides in urban areas, which could provide a satisfactory response to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, which has examined this issue, which could respond to the expectations of environmental groups on this issue, and which could, above all, respond to the need of Quebecers and of Canadians to be protected from a public health point of view so that the precautionary principle is first and foremost.

As for Bill C-53, the purpose of which is to update the regulations governing the use of pesticides in order to protect the health of children and others, the government says it has adjusted its proposals in the light of the recommendations made by the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development.

• (1740)

If the government really wanted to provide a proper response and to adjust the present legislation to reflect the recommendations, it would call for elimination of pesticides over five years, as the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development has proposed, or it would propose, in keeping with the Quebec task force's suggestion, their elimination over three years. We are, however, forced to admit there are no such measures within the bill we are examining at this time.

We are disappointed because we believe that the principle of precaution ought to take precedence over any other as far as examination of this bill is concerned, not solely commercial and economic ones. The government must not be influenced by major pesticide producers but must instead put the health of Quebecers and Canadians first.

We are disappointed because we had thought there would be elimination over five years in response to the committee's demands. Disappointed as well, because we see there is no measure whatsoever that will speed up the certification process for less harmful pesticides. Nor is there any deadline for the accreditation of biopesticides.

Need I remind hon. members that an effective battle against pest control products requires alternative solutions? These will, of necessity, require the availability of biopesticides and pesticides that are less of a public health hazard.

I would like to quote some figures. In Canada at the present time, there are a mere 35 biopesticides on the market, under 150 brand names, while in the U.S. there are 175 different biopesticides marketed under 700 brand names.

Government Orders

What we want to see in this bill—and we will be presenting amendments in proper form in committee when the time comes—is that this battle against pests will involve speedier certification of biopesticides. There is no sign of this in the bill as presented by the minister.

A second aspect we also find disappointing is that it contains nothing in connection with the proposed use of less harmful products. I have already referred to the biopesticides but there are other more environmentally friendly solutions available in modern societies, as I hardly need remind the government.

Why would the government not have taken the time to develop legislation containing incentives to organic agriculture? Why not include in this bill incentives aimed at a real sustainable pest control strategy? Why has Canada not looked at what is being done in Europe and taken its inspiration from European countries that offer financial incentives to farmers to eliminate pesticides and synthetic fertilizers?

There is nothing in this bill to provide for alternative measures. There is nothing to provide for financial incentives for farmers to eliminate the use of pesticides. This bill does nothing to promote organic farming, it is as though it were a concept that was a surprise from a Cracker Jack box, and the government was suddenly made aware that it exists. This bill could quite easily have included measures to promote organic farming.

A fourth aspect proposed by the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, and that we would like to see included in this bill, involves the re-evaluation between now and 2006 of all pesticides registered prior to 1995. This bill does make an attempt to re-evaluate pesticides.

• (1745)

Yes, there are some measures to accelerate the registration of some older pesticides, but there is still no deadline, no specific timeframe, which is what the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development had wanted, to re-evaluate all pesticides registered prior to 1995 by the year 2006. It is not simply a matter of reassessing the 500 active ingredients contained in pesticides, it needs to be done in a realistic timeframe that also allows for the protection of public health.

The committee examined this issue and heard from young people, from children. They were victims of pesticide use in certain municipalities of West Montreal. On some golf courses, dangerous pesticides were used; had these pesticides been re-evaluated, some of today's victims might have been spared. One had to have sat on the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development to understand the impact of the use of these harmful products on the public health of citizens.

We must ensure that all products currently being sold on the market are re-evaluated based on adequate and modern standards by 2006. This is how we can truly provide pest control.

Another aspect to consider is the concept of special protection for children and infants. We are trying to understand, and we will be making presentations in committee on this concept of special protection for children and infants. I thought this was included in the

bill. We will therefore have questions on this concept of special protection for children.

I will conclude by saying that Canadians, but also Canadian businesses, those who use pesticides every day, are prepared to go along with the committee's recommendation, which is a five-year phase out. By way of example, I will simply mention the Fédération de l'horticulture ornementale du Québec, which said it would agree to use pesticides as little as possible, provided that alternative products were available. Civil society in Québec and in Canada is prepared to engage in this effort, to phase out pesticides, provided that alternatives are available.

These alternatives require two things: first, faster registration of Canadian biopesticides—there is no need for us to trail behind the Americans—and, second, the introduction of a sustainable development strategy for pest control. Among other things, this will require development of organic farming through financial incentives.

I will have an opportunity to debate this bill in committee, in the hope that the government will respond satisfactorily to the needs and expectations of Quebecers and Canadians, of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, and of Québec's task force on pesticides in urban areas.

• (1750)

[English]

Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at the outset let me indicate that I will be splitting my time with the member for Windsor—St. Clair.

We have had a rare sighting in the House today. We actually have a piece of health legislation before the Chamber. This is good news. It is good news that we finally can focus our attention on the number one issue facing Canadians and deal with substantive legislation in this very important area. You will understand my delight and appreciation, Mr. Speaker, for this moment in our Chamber today, considering the fact that for the five years I have been health critic for the New Democratic Party we have dealt with three pieces of legislation on the whole broad area of health care.

Shortly after the 1997 election we dealt with Bill C-42, a bill that actually weakened the Tobacco Control Act. Then we dealt with Bill S-17, a bill in response to the drug industry that extended patent protection for pharmaceuticals. We did deal with a positive initiative, Bill C-13, which established the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. On the other hand the water bill that came in for second reading disappeared. We had a brief sighting of a food safety bill. It was tabled, we were tantalized with it and it disappeared.

Government Orders

Finally we have a piece of legislation on health care and health protection. Thank heavens for that. I commend the new Minister of Health for doing something so early in her new term, taking over from a minister who is known for and will go down in history as the minister of unfinished business. I am glad to see we have some initiative on the part of the Liberal government today on a very important area of health care. I hope that it is an indication of some political courage, fortitude, strength and vision on the part of the government when it comes to health care.

We are dealing today with one of the two important pillars of health care in Canada today, that being health protection. The other important pillar is health insurance or our beloved medicare system. Both those pillars are crumbling under the neglect of this government. For at least as long as I have been here, we have seen nothing but neglect, delay and study. As a result, the institutions that have united the country and served Canadians well have been crumbling out of neglect and desperately are in need of vision and leadership from the government.

You will also understand, Mr. Speaker, my skepticism today when I indicate that we have been trying for many years now to gain recognition for the importance of protecting Canadians from the ill effects of toxins in food, water, air and in pesticides. We have tried tirelessly to get the government to act on a number of important issues of great significance to health and well-being of Canadians, particularly the health and well-being of children.

I want to remind all members of our efforts to raise the matter of arsenic in pressure treated wood. Did we get any concrete action in response to that? No. We raised the issue of mercury in fish, which is very dangerous to pregnant women and the children they are carrying. Did we get any action on that? No. Maybe we got some warnings hidden on an Internet site but there was no specific action. We raised the question of toxic substances in plastics that were a part of toys on which babies chewed. Did we get any action from the government on that important issue? No.

Time and time again the government has chosen to delay and wait until the damage is done; when it is too late. It is important today that we finally act on a very important issue pertaining to pesticides, clearly an area that has potentially devastating ramifications for human health, particularly the health and well-being of the children.

I am skeptical even as I speak about this bill just because of the record of the government on pesticides alone. Look at the issue of Dursban, a pesticide that was banned in the United States and which this government finally decided to ban it in June 2000.

• (1755)

Here we are and what is the news today? Dursban is still available on the market. It is like Lindane. We heard from the member for Selkirk—Interlake, on the other side of this issue of course, on the issue of Lindane. It was recognized as causing serious health problems and was banned.

However, both Dursban and Lindane are on the market. Why? Because of the pressure from the industry to allow it to get rid of the product already out there. Maybe there is a ban on creating new product or having new product on the market, but it is okay to allow poisonous substances to stay on the market, no matter the

consequences, no matter the ramifications? Does that make any sense? What is the point of a ban? Why spout about action when there is no real intention to act on the rhetoric?

We always try to teach our kids and their parents something that I think the government would do well to heed and that is the expression, "Say what you mean and mean what you say", and do what you say you're going to do. When it comes to health protection and toxins in our environment or the potentially hazardous substances in the food we eat and in the toys we play with, where is the government? It is sitting back and letting the marketplace be overtaken by products that could be dangerous as opposed to offering a proactive, regulatory approach in this whole area.

The bill is a move in that direction. I do not want to sit down without giving some credit to the government for taking some steps in the right direction. It certainly does that. It is long overdue. One has to ask why a bill that is 33 years old is only now being revised and revamped. One has to ask why, 10 years after the Liberals promised to bring in new legislation in the 1993 election, we are here today just beginning the process. One has to ask why the delay, when the former minister of health said last year that he would have legislation in the House by fall 2001. One has to ask why it has taken so long after the environment committee did such a comprehensive report on this issue in May 2000.

The good news is that we are finally here. We finally have a piece of legislation. We finally have something to put our teeth into and we finally have some hope to offer Canadians, especially children. The concern about the delay was best said by children's entertainer and health advocate, Raffi, who was here on the Hill not too long ago and reminded us of our obligations. As his song says, if children had a say, this would have been done by now. I think this is the real issue today: What are we doing today in this legislation to ensure that the health of children and all Canadians is protected?

The minister very rightly identified the fact that pesticides can have a disproportionate impact on children. Children face a special vulnerability because of pesticides. We have to recognize that and make sure that this legislation uses that as a measure, as a bottom line in terms of determining safety and taking cautionary steps. There are good parts in the bill. We certainly want to recognize the fact that in the bill there are more modern risk assessment practices, a mandatory re-evaluation of pesticides, a provision for increased public participation, a better method of reporting adverse effects and so on. I want to give credit to the minister for at least doing that much.

Government Orders

However, I believe the bill still falls short, which raises some very important questions that we have to raise now and at committee and need to have addressed before we bring back the bill for final reading. Those questions are the following. Does the bill encourage pollution prevention and reduce the use of pesticides? Does it actually keep pesticides off the market until they are proven safe? Does it ban pesticides for cosmetic purposes? Does it require clear labelling of all toxic elements of pesticides? Does it provide a clear mandate for the pesticide management review agency? Does it put in place resources and a mechanism for independent, science based research about the long term impact of pesticides on human health?

Those questions remain outstanding. Those questions must be answered. We look forward to the debate in committee and to the government's attention to those very important issues.

• (1800)

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to finally speak to the bill. It is one that the NDP, environmentalists, scientists and the general public have been calling for decades for the federal government to introduce.

The current legislation was introduced over 30 years ago. Not since 1969, when DDT was still in wide use, have there been any substantial changes to the legislation. If I may digress for a moment, I would like to try to set in context where we are at in this country. There are a few salient points that need to be addressed.

First, at the present time there are between 6,000 and 7,000 pesticide products registered for use in Canada, an estimated 50 million kilograms of herbicides, insecticides and fungicides each year. That includes everything that we think of as normal pesticides used in agriculture and in lawn care to the products used in combating head lice in children.

It is also important to note the main problem we have with pesticides and it is relatively simple. They are designed to kill. They are deliberately introduced into our environment and onto our food to kill. It is also interesting to note that only 1% of all pesticides used actually gets to the intended targets. The other 99% stays in the environment, affecting humans and wildlife.

As well, over the last 30 or 40 years we have learned that many of those 6,000 to 7,000 pesticides I mentioned do not break down. They in fact accumulate in the environment, oftentimes in human beings, affecting the reproductive systems and the immune systems of both humans and animals.

It is also interesting to note that in the last while we have developed some alternatives, specifically in Ontario, where the World Wildlife Federation and the Ontario apple growers have developed an ecological program that is now producing five million pounds of premium apples. That program dramatically reduces the use of pesticides, at least in that province. There are a number of other alternatives like that.

It is impossible to address the legislation without looking at the report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, released in May 2000 and entitled, "Pesticides: Making the Right Choice for the Protection of Health and the Environment". This report was the result of widespread consultation among scientists, academics, labour groups and community

organizations from coast to coast to coast. Many of those individuals gave evidence and supported the committee's report. As a party, we encouraged the government to take action immediately after that report was tabled and to implement the extensive recommendations of that committee.

There were a number of important recommendations. I believe that the most pressing was the call on the Minister of Health to introduce new legislation as a matter of top priority. Of course it has now been just about two years and we are just finally getting it, only at committee stage.

There are a number of recommendations, but I want to use that report as a litmus test, if I may, for what should have been done, as a test for assessing the viability of the legislation. Very quickly, the major recommendations made for what the act should cover were: to protect human health in the environment as the absolute priority in all pest management decisions; to apply the precautionary principle; to promote and increase reliance on pollution prevention strategies in order to eliminate or minimize the use of pesticides; and finally, to foster public confidence by actively informing and educating Canadians about pesticide use by involving them in the decision making process.

• (1805)

More specific, committee members are saying that the precautionary principle means that appropriate, preventive measures are to be taken when there is reason to believe that a pesticide is likely to cause harm even when there is no conclusive evidence to prove a causal relationship between the pesticide and its effects.

In effect they are saying that human health comes first. The onus falls on the producer of the product to establish absolute safety. Otherwise it does not go on the market and does not go into our environment. Unfortunately the government has not addressed all the concerns of that litmus test.

I would like to list a few points that still need further protection. One is that there is an inadequate provision for wildlife protection. The public is still denied full access to important information about pesticides. This is true both for the users of the pesticides and the workers who use those pesticides.

The information clauses in the legislation are not adequate. They paid lip service to the precautionary principle. It is mentioned in the legislation but is not operationalized. It is not a mandatory or functional aspect of the bill at all. There is a lack of streamlined process for registering low risk products for farmers, landscapers and other users to allow for the use of less harmful alternatives.

At the start of my address I mentioned that alternatives were available. One thing we have heard from the apple farmers in Ontario was that there were alternatives. The European Community in particular has a number of them that have not been registered in Canada because of the length of time it takes for that to be done. They need to be streamlined or fast tracked. In addition there is a lack of specifics in the bill. As the government so often has done, it has left way too much to regulation.

Government Orders

The greatest failure of the bill is the lack of the ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides. I believe the minister mentioned it again today as she certainly has in the past. She said not to worry about it, that the municipalities would take care of that. Approximately 37 municipalities have banned or severely restricted the use of pesticides for cosmetic reasons. The most recent one is Halifax which has introduced what in effect will be an eventual ban of all pesticides.

We have to set it in this context. Somewhere approaching 75% of lawn owners still use pesticides. Lawns and gardens in municipalities, in urban areas, are sprayed more heavily than farms. People still seem to consider that the use of pesticides is essential for lawn care in spite of the fact that a four to sixfold increase in incidents of child leukemia occurs when pesticides are used on lawns in urban areas.

A ban is necessary. We do not have the time in terms of protecting the health and well-being of Canadians to wait for every municipality to ban or at least severely restrict the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes.

In summary, there is no question the bill is a step forward. We have begun to address some of the problems the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development raised but it does not go far enough. It does not ban pesticides in urban areas. It fails to protect generally the health of Canadians.

• (1810)

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, allow me briefly to ask the hon. member for Windsor—St. Clair, whose judgment I highly respect, whether he has any comments to offer on the role of the agency in charge of this bill.

First, does the agency not find itself in a dual role, one of screening products and one of giving access to the market to the proponents of these products? Second, is it his opinion that the agency ought to be accountable to parliament by way of an annual report?

Mr. Joe Comartin: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from Davenport was chair of the environment committee at the time the report was prepared and published. I acknowledge all the hard work and excellent leadership he provided.

With regard to the conflict between the two roles of the agency, the committee addressed the issue in its report. It is impossible to on the one hand say we would review products and decide whether they would be allowed onto the market and on the other hand say we would have a role in promoting the use of pesticides in Canada. It is impossible to tell civil servants they must play both roles at the same time. It is clear there should be a severing of the two roles into two separate branches of the department or, preferably, two separate departments. That way the conflict would be allayed if not completely done away with.

I will answer the question another way. Other than at a preliminary level there has been no indication of or provision for adequate funding for the role to be played by the department in this regard. It is an issue we hope to address at the committee when the matter finally gets there.

Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, my question for the hon. member is related to two things. First, there is concern about the safety of pesticides, particularly the new generation of pesticides. The hon. member talked a lot about residue and said only 1% hits the mark. Many if not most new pesticides have zero residuals but I understand his concern. Most consumers are quite concerned about pesticides.

Second, the use of new generation pesticides has been tremendously reduced due to genetic modification of food. Could the hon. member comment on this?

Mr. Joe Comartin: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. First, I am unalterably opposed to using products that are genetically modified without the long term research that is required. We should not put products on the market that have been genetically modified in any fashion after only a year or two of review.

Second, with regard to the hon. member's comment that a number of products do not have residue, I would not go quite that far. That is not the case. A number of products are better alternatives to what we now have in terms of buildup and accumulation in both the environment and the human body.

We do not look at GMOs as the be all and end all. That is not where we are at. The science is not there yet. I do not know if it will ever be. If the bill were properly drafted we would have an answer and the precautionary principle would be applied. Products would not be allowed onto the market or in the environment until they passed the litmus test.

• (1815)

Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to participate at long last in this evening's debate. In my view and the view of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada Bill C-53 represents a lack of political will to bring forth the legislation we need to address the issue.

The framework legislation that currently manages pesticides was established in 1969. Over the past 30 years we have gained a more comprehensive knowledge of the effects of pesticides on human health and the environment. It is in good form for us to update legislation of that vintage.

I compliment the new minister who has been in the portfolio only a short time. The issue has been a thorn in the side of health care professionals, environmentalists and concerned Canadians from coast to coast for quite some time. Our hats are off to the minister for tabling this piece of legislation.

I am a bit concerned about the issue. A few weeks back I sent out a press release asking why the bill was being tabled at that time. Was it because of the myriad rumours we had heard in the House and in the hallways that the House could prorogue? It is reasonable to ask whether it is a disingenuous effort to table a bill that will never see the light of day in terms of royal assent. On the positive side, perhaps it gives the government a chance to test the legislation to see what benefits there should be.

Government Orders

I will refer to one aspect of the pesticide debate. Mr. Speaker, I am sure you read the Progressive Conservative Party's platform comprehensively throughout the election campaign of November 2000. I will bring to light a plank of our electoral platform. We called on the Government of Canada to bring in modernized pesticide management. There were two main points in the platform concerning pesticides. I will read them for the record:

A Progressive Conservative government would table new pesticide legislation that would modernize the existing 30 year-old legislation. Exposure levels and toxicity of pesticides will be evaluated with consideration on the effect on our most vulnerable populations.

This refers to the elderly, children and pregnant women. We would also establish a comprehensive reduced reliance program. The platform states:

A Progressive Conservative government would initiate educational initiatives to inform Canadians of the risks of pesticide use with a goal to reduce usage particularly for cosmetic purposes.

For the record, that is a goal the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada has had with respect to this debate.

I will illustrate how lax the government has been at tabling legislation. I asked the Minister of Health in December of 1999 when we could expect legislation given that Claire Franklin, chair of the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, had said draft legislation had been in place for three years and was coming soon. I asked again on November 22, 1999. The Minister of Health said legislation would be tabled shortly. I asked again on June 13, 2001, nine months ago. The government said it would soon table legislation that would reflect the recommendations and protect the health of Canadians.

We have been a little slow at this, so to make up for the government's lack of energy in getting the legislation tabled perhaps we can put our shoulders to the wheel and make some improvements.

• (1820)

I will speak to the bill itself. There are some solid aspects to Bill C-53 that deserve the appropriate accolades. One is Bill C-53 clearly places the burden of proof on the person who is trying to register the particular pesticide. The applicant must demonstrate to the minister that the health and environmental risks of that product are indeed acceptable to the Canadian public at large. We think that is a positive step.

It follows the report of the committee that was developed in May 2000 entitled "Pesticides: Making the Right Choice for the Protection of Health and the Environment". That was a comprehensive study by the standing committee on the environment of which I had the privilege of being a member.

Accolades to the government for being inspired by the United States food quality protection act. The government has said that when it comes to establishing toxicity levels, testing will be done on vulnerable populations, children, the elderly and perhaps pregnant women, as we advocated in our last platform. The act also enables the application of a 10-fold safety margin on pesticide standards and extra protection for children.

I think the government was also inspired by the report of the standing committee which was tabled in 2000. That plank was

recommended by all parties with the exception of the Reform Party at that time.

I also would like to provide some accolades on the issue that re-evaluations are required and special reviews are made possible. Most of the pesticides currently used in Canada were registered long ago. The act requires that the Government of Canada establish or initiate re-evaluations of registered pesticides at least every 15 years. Further, if a member country of the OECD, the Organization for Economic Co-operation Development, bans the use of an active ingredient, then the minister must conduct an immediate special review. That is a good thing.

I do not know if members particularly recall that the auditor general performed a comprehensive review of pesticide management in Canada. He pointed out that Canada was among the most lax of industrialized nations. As a testament to that, Canada and the Slovak Republic are the only two OECD countries that do not measure pesticide consumption. This is fundamentally important because further decisions would eventually include consideration of cumulative effects and aggregate exposures once the methods of doing so were confirmed.

That is the methodology the Government of Canada wants to follow, which follows the same train of thought that is in the U.S. food quality protection act. If that is so, then we need to ensure that we have a proper inventory of consumption of pesticides in the country. That makes a lot of sense.

If that re-evaluation will be a component of the act, then we need to ensure that Health Canada has the added financial capacity to conduct those reviews and do them in an extremely timely manner.

I would also like to touch on a few aspects that need some improvement. Some of those issues refer to the aspect that the law in its current form does not emphasize that it is necessary for us to reduce the reliance of the risk of pesticides. It is incumbent on the Government of Canada to educate the Canadian public at large, in particular on the cosmetic use of pesticides. There is indeed a cumulative effect and additional exposure and prolonged exposure does have a detrimental effect to human health and the environment

If that is true, then why does the federal government not initiate a public awareness campaign about the harmful and cumulative effects of pesticides, particularly in our urban areas, in the same stead that it does with anti-tobacco campaigns. In my view this is something that would at least ensure that Canadians think twice. That is one aspect for which we should find an innovative way of encompassing it in this legislation, perhaps in the preamble.

• (1825)

The Progressive Conservative Party of Canada believes that Bill C-53 fails to entrench the precautionary principle as a guiding principle or to effectively operationalize it. The bill needs to be amended to include the internationally acceptable precautionary principle in the preamble and purpose.

Government Orders

There is an accepted definition established at the United Nations for the precautionary principle. The all party committee called on the Government of Canada to utilize that form of definition. We reviewed the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. It was the intent of the committee when we tabled the review in May 2000 on pesticide management in Canada that it was a process that the Government of Canada absolutely needed to follow.

What is the precautionary principle? I would explain it as follows. If the weight of evidence and science says that there is an immense likelihood that a particular substance can have a detrimental effect on human health and the environment, perhaps potentially the loss of life, we do not have to wait for the absolute finality of information before the Government of Canada actually acts.

When it comes to public awareness the leadership on reducing the reliance on the cosmetic use of pesticides has not come from the federal government. I believe we should follow a public awareness campaign as we do for the use of tobacco by encouraging individuals to reduce their reliance on the cosmetic use of pesticides.

We have seen leadership from the provinces on some occasions but for the most part we have seen leadership at the municipal level. Cities, such as Halifax, and communities such as Hudson, Quebec were really the first municipalities to step up to this challenge.

We have public awareness advocates from coast to coast. Patty Donovan from Quispamsis in my riding of Fundy—Royal has been an ardent advocate for the reduction of pesticide use in Canada and particularly the cosmetic use. It is not some mission or crusade that she is on. For her it is the very vitality of her son Zack. If Zack were exposed in any kind of serious way to pesticides or pesticide residue it would have an immense effect on his human health immediately that may potentially cost him his life.

This is a clear indication that we need to manage pesticides in a responsible way and take into consideration where individuals could be at risk.

We see pesticide campaigns in the west as well. Jennifer Wright from Calgary has made a number of presentations to the municipality of Calgary encouraging it to reduce its reliance on pesticides.

Canadians and municipalities are way ahead of this and the Government of Canada should get with the program on that particular aspect as well.

Another good aspect of this proposed legislation which needs a bit of ratcheting deals with the pesticide management process. It must come out of the dark ages and recognize that public awareness and access to information is critical and that public consultation should be sought prior to registering any new substance. The Government of Canada has done a good thing on that particular aspect as well. It must ensure that we catch up with the rest of the industrialized world.

●(1830)

I have a document before me which was produced in September 2000. It is not even a comprehensive list. There is a list of 60 pesticides that are banned by other OECD nations but are still permissible here in Canada.

The problem is that the Government of Canada is not taking leadership in addressing this issue. Clearly, within the agricultural community pesticides are a responsible component to farming, but we need to ensure that access is available to lower risk substances. We should utilize substances that are already used in the OECD and which may be more cost effective. We have been denying our farming community access to these lower risk substances. We are putting the health of farmers at risk by leaving them with only products that are high risk to themselves, to human health in general and to the environment.

I must emphasize that any new pesticide legislation has to evaluate toxicity on the most vulnerable in our population: children, pregnant women and the elderly. The Government of Canada has moved in that direction. That is a step we should applaud.

When evaluating a pesticide, we need to ensure that we evaluate the formulants as well. Quite often the formulants in the pesticide can have a more detrimental effect as a toxin to human health and the environment than the active ingredient. As the legislation is shaped at the moment there is not the appropriate due process that challenges the proponent of a new pesticide, or an existing pesticide if it is at the re-evaluation stage, to ensure that all active ingredients are evaluated as well.

Our very learned health critic, the member for Richmond—Arthabaska, has recommended to me that the Progressive Conservative Party will support the legislation. It is long overdue. Sometimes that line seems extremely trite, but the existing act is 30 years old.

The Government of Canada spoke about this in its throne speech in 1999, three years ago. When something is in a throne speech it usually means that action will take place immediately and we are only seeing the legislation now. This is respectable framework legislation which we hope to have the capacity to improve at committee stage.

I am very pleased the Liberal Party of Canada has taken a page, page 25 to be exact, out of the election platform of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. It has followed our commitment to Canadians to provide pesticide legislation which includes evaluation for toxicity of formulants, evaluates the toxicity on the most vulnerable in our population and updates the current regime which is nearly 30 years old.

I look forward to the debate as the bill moves through the legislative process.

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his comments on the pest control products bill.

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I happen to be one of the lucky people who lives in one of the municipalities that has a progressive pesticide bylaw in place, and that is the Halifax regional municipality. Over a three year period we will see the elimination of pesticides altogether. First there will be a ban on municipal properties, then in the first, second and third years there will be a ban on schools, day cares, parks and playgrounds with the ban in the final year on all pesticide use. Given that we have heard today we are seeing five to six times higher rates of childhood leukemia because of the use of pesticides, we see how critical this is.

The member has made the comment that we need to see more public awareness campaigns regarding cosmetic pesticides. Can we not take a further step and ask the federal government to set up national standards which would include a ban on cosmetic pesticides?

We have heard from the Alliance that it is up to municipalities to look after that. I do not know what would happen to people who live in those municipalities that do not choose to take the ban seriously. Perhaps they would have to move somewhere else in the country.

Would the member from the Conservative Party support national standards, those national standards being much higher, including a ban on cosmetic pesticides?

• (1835)

Mr. John Herron: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her question because it really follows a fundamental plank of the pesticide management regime that we presented in the election campaign of November 2000. I was the author of that section of our national platform. The approach I took, and I will cite the language if I may, is that a Progressive Conservative government would initiate educational initiatives to inform Canadians of the risk of pesticide use with a goal to reduce usage particularly for cosmetic purposes.

Why would we take that approach versus an all out ban? It is possible, and I cannot think of an instance at the moment, where one may want to consider utilizing pesticides for a quasi-cosmetic purpose if the intent were to prevent something worse from happening. However, the real reason we did not use the word ban is it was far too provocative.

We still need to move the Canadian population a long way on this issue that empowering the municipalities to ban, like the Government of Canada is saying the municipalities can do, is an option. However the federal government has a leadership role here as well. That is why I do not know if the national standards aspect would be the appropriate route I would advocate, which would reflect the remarks I made earlier, that the Government of Canada should recognize there is a cumulative effect of pesticides on our environment, especially if they are condensed in an urban setting.

There should be a massive public awareness campaign of the same ilk as that regarding the detrimental effects smoking and tobacco use has on our environment. We have learned a lot over the 25 years since biologist Rachel Carson wrote the book *Silent Spring* which really sparked the debate on how we use pesticides and how they actually harm the environment. We have learned a lot on this issue but Canadians need to be engaged far more.

We could hit the ground earlier and harder in that even without the bill the Government of Canada could have a pesticides campaign. I

say to my friend and colleague from the province of New Brunswick who serves as the parliamentary secretary to the health minister that it is something the Government of Canada should seriously consider. It took up a very positive and aggressive anti-smoking and anti-tobacco campaign. The Government of Canada could consider a public awareness initiative of the same ilk on the cosmetic use of pesticides. He may wish to take that up with the Minister of Health.

I compliment the minister for tabling the legislation in short order after receiving her new portfolio.

• (1840)

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I commend and congratulate my colleague for the work he has done not only on this file but on a number of files involving the environment. It is fair to say Canadians recognize that he truly is a friend of the environment and a person who has brought forward both progressive and very proactive ideas on how we could improve the state of the environment not only in this country but internationally.

Perhaps he can tell us more about the bill, in particular how much consultation was undertaken. He has told us that this area of legislation has been 30 years in waiting. In looking at the situation and looking at the bill in particular, is he satisfied that industry, farmers, the agricultural industry and all other the stakeholders including the science, which obviously has to be taken into consideration when passing this type of bill, have been given sufficient opportunity to give input? What might their reaction be?

In the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia where both our mothers currently reside there is a real problem given the number of orchards and pesticides used in the control of certain insects that feed on various forms of vegetables and fruit there and throughout the country.

There is a very real need that we delve in this issue on the part of Canadians. Obviously the legislation starts in that direction, but does the member feel there has been sufficient opportunity for all stakeholders to get involved in the final process?

Mr. John Herron: Mr. Speaker, as critic for the environment for the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada I want to be a friend to the environment. I said in my first speech after the last election that I wanted to be benchmarked on four issues: as a friend to the environment, a friend to farmers, a friend to students, and above all a friend to Fundy—Royal.

I should like to add another one. Of course I also want to be a friend to Maccha MacKay and Audrey Herron in the Annapolis Valley. They are well aware of having to live in an agricultural area that utilizes pesticides.

The comment upon consultation is that the Pest Management Advisory Council is the principal body which the Government of Canada uses for input on pest management in the country. That group essentially was satisfied well over three years ago that draft legislation should be tabled and the government should proceed with legislation. We have waited well over three years for it.

Government Orders

In fact the farming community for the most part has said it wants access to safer products and to lower risk products from the human health perspective. It was sending out some very strong signals only months ago. It was the farming community that actually precipitated the debate when it built a coalition with the environmental community and health professionals. It has been out in front of the government on this issue.

We know as a point of fact that pest management and herbicides are a component of a responsible, integrated pest management regime. We need to afford our farmers access to products so they can stay competitive, but we also need to afford them access to the most modern products utilized in the OECD so that they can remain competitive not only economically but from a human health perspective.

Hon. Charles Caccia: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. May I inquire, with your permission, whether you would be inclined to see the clock at 6.50 p.m. so that we can resume the debate tomorrow?

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: The House has given its agreement and it is so ordered that for the purpose of the House of Commons and only in the House of Commons it is 6.50 p.m.

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a. m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.45 p.m.)

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