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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

•(1005)

[*English*]

The Speaker: Order, please. Since today is the final allotted day for the supply period ending March 26, 2003, the House will go through the usual procedures to consider and dispose of the supply bills.

In view of recent practices, do hon. members agree that the bills be distributed now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order (36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 11 petitions.

* * *

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans entitled, "Custodial Management Outside Canada's 200-mile Limit".

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report within 150 days. The report deals with the examination of the government's response to our first report, the rejection of the government's response and the reiteration of the points in our first report.

PETITIONS

MARRIAGE

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions signed by numerous people from a variety of places but mainly from the Nepean and Ottawa areas. Both petitions call upon Parliament to reject any requests to change the traditional definition of marriage, family and spouse, to continue to affirm the importance of the family as the foundation of Canadian society and that nothing in the future will change its fundamental role in society.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Mr. Ovid Jackson (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, pursuant to Standing Order 36, two petitions from my constituents of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

The first petition indicates that in society there are many diseases and problems with illnesses, including spinal injuries. They feel that adult non-embryonic stem cells is the way to go and that we should follow that particular legislation.

TOURISM INDUSTRY

Mr. Ovid Jackson (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the second petition comes from the Bruce Peninsula.

Yesterday the minister announced some \$811 million for parks. There is a visitor centre that is overdue. They have started road construction. Our petitioners are asking the minister to go ahead with that project this year since it is very important for tourism in the district.

FIREARMS REGISTRY

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Carleton, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, last weekend I was presented with a petition containing the signatures of 10,000 residents of eastern Ontario on the subject of the long gun registry. It had been presented to Ontario's minister of public security, Bob Runciman, but because it was a federal matter it was passed to me to present in the House, with his approval.

Supply

The petitioners call upon Parliament to take into account, when voting on Bill C-68, the fact that expenses are 500 times over budget; that the Auditor General has indicated that the government has failed to keep Parliament informed with regard to the cost of the gun registry; that a majority of long gun owners in Canada have not registered their guns; that the government has failed to provide any conclusive or verifiable evidence that the registry results in a reduction in crime; and that the registry has the effect of withdrawing resources that could be used for the reduction of criminal offences with firearms.

I present this petition to the House.

* * *

• (1010)

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURN

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if Question No. 136 could be made an order for return, the return would be tabled immediately.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Return Tabled)

[Text]

Question No. 136—**Mr. James Moore:**

Responding with a list in both printed and electronic formats, what are the government's holdings in all its vehicle fleets as of December 31, 2002, including: (a) vehicle class; (b) model type; (c) model year; (d) colour; (e) size of engine (rating as per number of cylinders); (f) department holding the ownership; (g) original purchase price and date; (h) individual assigned to the vehicle (if applicable); and (i) fuel type?

(Return tabled.)

[English]

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

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—FIREARMS PROGRAM

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance) moved:

That, as this House supported the reduction of funds for the firearms program in the Supplementary Estimates on December 5, 2002, this House should continue to support the reduction of funds for the firearms program in this supply period and subsequent supply periods until the government can provide a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis for the program and provide an accurate total of expenditures to date and a realistic estimate of future costs of implementing the Firearms Act including the total cost:

- (a) to fully enforce the Firearms Act;
- (b) to verify the 5 million unverified firearms in the registry;

(c) to verify and correct the information in the 4 million records in the Firearms Interest Police database and to bring it into full compliance with the Privacy Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms;

(d) to register the ten million unregistered guns in Canada;

(e) to licence the half million unlicensed gun owners in Canada; and

(f) to the economy and jobs.

He said: Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time, as will all Alliance members today.

No program has been a bigger failure or a bigger embarrassment for the government than this seven year old billion dollar firearms fiasco.

The Auditor General said that Parliament was misled. We need to go back to the drawing board because that is true.

Today Parliament can decide to stop the misleading. Today is the day the process to uncover truth about the gun registry can begin. Today Parliament can do the job we were sent here to do; to start taking control over the waste of money on useless government programs. Now is the time to do what is right and that is the purpose of our debate today.

The Auditor General made it clear that the cost of the gun registry would be more than the billion dollars that she reported. The President of the Treasury Board admitted that she still did not know the total cost of the gun registry to date when she appeared before committee last week.

Before the Prime Minister whips his MPs into tears and forces them to vote for another \$59 million tonight, should he not tell them how much the gun registry has cost so far and how much it will cost to fully implement? None of that has been told here. If the members opposite would listen to the debate today they might learn something.

Today we are asking the government to stop pouring good money after bad. We are asking the government to stop registering guns until a cost benefit analysis has been completed or at least cabinet releases the one that has already been done. How can we support a program if we do not know what this cost benefit analysis is?

In March 1994 the justice minister was clearly told in a briefing note from his own officials, which we obtained through access to information:

Accurate information about costs and benefits must be obtained before any firm commitment can be made....

That was in reference to the gun registry. That was never done.

Why should we approve more money when we do not have that information? The sad fact is that the cost benefit analysis was done. It just has never been released by cabinet.

Last week the new CEO of the Canadian Firearms Centre admitted, in a briefing for opposition MPs and senators, that cabinet has refused to release the cost benefit analysis. All Canadians must wonder why it would want to hide this information. All Canadians must wonder what the Liberal government is hiding, not just why.

Supply

Given the reality of violent crime in Canada, taxpayers would have to wonder why the government has chosen to go down the gun registry trail of wasted loonies. Why not spend the money in the most cost effective manner: target the root causes of violence and of crime in our society?

Some past justice ministers have claimed that the gun registry is saving lives, but every year Statistics Canada data proves the opposite. In 2001 only 31% of homicides were committed with a firearm and almost two-thirds of these were with handguns. The RCMP has been registering handguns since 1934 but 74% of the handguns recovered from firearms homicides were not registered. Therefore it is obviously not working. Surely 69 years of registering legally owned handguns is long enough to prove the registry is a failed policy option.

In December, Toronto police chief, Julian Fantino, confirmed this when he said "A law registering firearms has neither deterred these crimes nor helped solve any of them".

In 2001, 65% of the persons accused of homicide had a Canadian criminal record and 58% of these had previously been convicted of violent crimes. Over half of their victims also had a criminal record. Known criminals are the problem, not millions of responsible firearms owners.

The justice minister even trots out a police chief every once in a while to say that the billion dollar registry is worth it even if it saves one life. This is precisely why we need a cost benefit analysis. Without that cost benefit analysis we cannot make a proper judgment.

On March 17 the newspapers reported that there were an estimated 10,000 deaths in Canada each year because of medical mistakes. How many of these lives could the million dollars a year wasted on the gun registry have saved if the money had been spent to mitigate these mistakes?

Finally, here are the main reasons that the justice department's future cost estimates are so wrong. I will focus on this for the next few minutes.

• (1015)

First, there are more than five million firearms registered in the system that still have to be verified by the RCMP. What will it cost to go back and fix that? We have never been told.

Second, up to four million records in the RCMP's Firearms Interest Police database, called FIP, have to be corrected in order to comply with the Privacy Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. There are four million Canadians on that list. What will it cost to go back and fix it?

Third, 78% of the registration certificates have entries that were either left blank or left unknown and they still have to be corrected. What will it cost to go back and do that?

Fourth, there are more than 540,000 gun owners who still do not have a firearms licence and they cannot register their firearms without a licence. What will it cost to go back and fix that?

Fifth, more than 300,000 owners of registered handguns do not have a firearms licence authorizing them to own one and they cannot

re-register their guns without a licence. What will it cost to go back and fix that? The government has never told us.

Sixth, up to 10 million guns still have to be registered or re-registered in the system. What will that cost to complete?

Seventh, the registry attempts to track two million completely honest citizens but fails to track the addresses of those persons who have already been proven to be most dangerous to society. This includes 131,000 persons prohibited from owning firearms by the courts; 35,000 people under court restraining orders; and more than 9,000 persons who have had their firearms licences refused or revoked. The government does not track them but if people are gun owners and they do not notify of a change of address in one month, they could get a criminal record.

I will not have time to list all these but I will just go to my tenth point. The Department of Justice has never released its calculations on the cost to the economy and jobs.

On August 16, 1999, the department denied Parliament and the public the entire 115 page report on the economic impact of the gun registry. It was declared a cabinet secret. This is a 115 page report on the economic impact of that registry, which the House is not allowed to see. What is the government hiding? This is a Liberal ram it down their throats federal-provincial relations plan. No national program can ever work without the co-operation and full support of the provinces.

The justice minister claims that the gun registry has refused and revoked more than 9,000 firearms licences but he refuses to admit that it did not even need a gun registry to do this. He gives the impression to the public that this is somehow part of the benefits of this whole program but he does not tell us that they never follow up to see if these people do not have a firearm. We do not have enough police resources to go after the criminals in our society today. Instead we waste it on a paper pushing exercise.

We need a better administered firearms licensing system. Administer that, ensure it is working and scrap the registry.

The justice minister also keeps Parliament in the dark by refusing to acknowledge that the statistics from his own department show that the firearms licence and refusal rate was twice as good under the old RCMP firearms acquisition certificate program, FAC, than it is now. The government gives the impression that somehow it is doing a better job with the billion dollars it is spending now. If we look at the facts, it is actually worse.

Supply

Finally, the gun registry is a joke, an expensive joke, perpetrated on taxpayers and a cruel joke perpetrated on law-abiding firearms owners. It is time to put an end to this. It is time to scrap the gun registry. By the time this debate is done today I want to see the cost benefit analysis. I want to see the government produce the study that shows this is worth the \$1 billion, \$2 billion, \$3 billion which will be spent on that in the next few years.

I put out a report yesterday issued by the Library of Parliament. It clearly indicates that in the next few years \$1 billion will be spent on enforcement alone. If only one-tenth of the gun owners in Canada, who now have not complied with the law, are charged, we will spend on average \$1 billion more.

• (1020)

Before we do that, we should be saying no to the \$59 million for which the government is asking. That is what the vote is about today. I hope that there are enough people on the other side of the House who will stand up on their hind legs and start to make democracy work.

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I highly appreciate the informative speech by the hon. member. He has done tremendous work on the gun registry issue. He has been following and carrying the ball on this issue for a very long time. In fact he is the only person in the House of Commons who has been pursuing this issue for so long. Still, I believe there is some misinformation and some of the facts on this issue are disputed.

I know that Parliament and Canadians were kept in the dark on the issue of violent crimes and the use of guns. I remember that in 1997 the commissioner of the RCMP wrote to the deputy minister of justice to complain about the department's misrepresentation of the RCMP's statistics on this issue.

Could the hon. member throw some light on that, with some facts and statistics on the use of guns in violent crimes, and the misrepresentation of facts by the government to Canadians and Parliament?

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz: Madam Speaker, the member has asked an excellent question. It strikes at the very heart of what the government tries to do.

The government has tried to spin this out as a public safety measure, that somehow the gun registry is equivalent to gun control. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact the statistics to which the member refers are precisely that the RCMP had investigated over 88,000 actual violent crimes, as an example. That was back in 1993, I believe. Of the 88,000-plus violent crimes investigated, only 73 involved the use of a firearm. If we put that in percentage terms, .08% of violent crimes involved a firearm. It begs this question. What good would a registry even do to prevent that .08%? It would do nothing.

The government continues to give Canadians the impression that this is somehow a public safety method of reducing violent crime. We could take the \$1 billion, or \$2 billion or \$3 billion that will be spent soon on this and actually target it toward the root causes of violent crimes in our society. We ignore the other 99.92% of violent

crimes and we zero in on that .08%. Even the registry would not have effect on that.

The point the hon. member should be making is that this really will not do anything to improve public safety. It is a waste of a billion dollars. We would better off to put more police on the street to go after the violent criminal.

• (1025)

Mr. Joe Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened intently to the member. I just met with representatives of the Canadian Police Association. Today is the association's lobby day. In its kit is a very strong statement of support for this registry. In fact, in its press release it says that it would be irresponsible to scrap any element of it. Also included is a list of anecdotes of how this registry and system have enhanced public safety.

The member accuses the government of leaving Canadians with the impression it is a public safety issue. How does he reconcile that view with the fact that not only is the government saying this but the association that represents the frontline police officers in the country is saying it as well?

I know he is very good at referring to anecdotal evidence but at the end of the day that party is very quick to cite police support in its criminal justice public policy issues. That is all well and good. Could he explain to the House and to Canadians if the police confused? Are the police acting in a political way? Do they not understand the issue as well as the member?

I am having a hard time, when I get very clear signals from not only the Canadian Police Association but from the chiefs of police and the coalition of issues for—

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Joe Jordan: The member may not want to hear this but he is the one who talked about a responsible debate. There is a gap in what he is saying and the reality we as members face.

Could he specifically address the position by the Canadian Police Association? Without attacking the association, as they sometimes do, how does he reconcile the fact that frontline police officers, through their association, have said it would be irresponsible to scrap any element of this program?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): We have run out of time but I will allow the member, if the House so wishes, a minute to answer.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz: Madam Speaker, I need quite a bit of time to answer the question properly. Let me give the hon. member one example. The RCMP in Saskatchewan took a survey of their frontline police officers. Over 90% of them said to scrap the registry, get rid of it.

I am really questioning what the member is saying. I have talked to frontline police officers. I have even had reports. This month the Regina police have put out a—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Resuming debate. The hon. member for Provencher.

Supply

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to address the motion presented today by my colleague, the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville. As members have heard from my colleague, the purpose of the motion today is to compel the Liberal government to determine the total cost of the firearms program and to provide a comprehensive cost benefit analysis for the program.

As for the question from the member opposite about why the CPA and the executive might be supporting this particular program, I think it is clear that if they actually had a copy of that cost benefit analysis they would soon change their minds about this horrible waste of money.

Minister after minister responsible for the Firearms Act has failed miserably to inform not only our front line police officers but Canadian taxpayers generally how much money this wasteful registry will cost and will continue to cost. Even the numbers that were eventually provided by the justice department were called into question by Canada's top auditor last December.

I can understand the police saying, "On the basis of what the Liberals have shown us, it seems to make sense", but since the Auditor General has specifically stated that the Liberal government has misled Parliament, I think the CPA needs to re-examine its position. Let it be told the truth. We would not have a worry about debating this issue if the truth were told. Unfortunately, as the Auditor General said, we are not getting the truth from the government. Canadians are starting to wonder who exactly is minding the shop and why they should trust the Liberal government with their money.

Events and revelations during the last number of months have shown that the law concerning firearms registration in Canada is so dysfunctional, so unrelated to the actual task of tracking down and eliminating gun related crime, and such an embarrassing example of government mismanagement that to consider putting more money down a black hole would be absurd.

I ask members to look at some of the editorials put out today. The *National Post* of Canada: "\$59-million more down the hole". The editorial in the *Winnipeg Free Press*: "It's still a waste". No one who thinks about this in any rational way can in any way justify the expenditure of government money—no, better put, taxpayers' money, because that is whose money it is.

Although the Canadian Alliance has held this position in opposition to the firearms registry, it is clearer than ever that funds flowing into the firearms program must be reduced until a total cost benefit analysis and accurate cost projection has been completed.

When the Canadian Alliance claims of over-expenditure and mismanagement of the registry were finally confirmed by the independent Auditor General last December, the Liberal government was at a loss as to how to respond because the facts were impossible to deny. Canadians know that this registry has been riddled with administrative errors, budget overruns, mismanagement and lack of accountability since it was implemented in 1995.

We also know that the costs have ballooned to almost \$1 billion. We must remember that when the Auditor General said \$1 billion, it was not in fact \$1 billion: That is where she ran out of paper. There

simply was no paper to confirm any of the other expenditures. She has stated that she needs another three to four years to determine what these costs are because she has to wait until the program is implemented. The program will not be implemented for another three to four years. A Library of Parliament research paper now has stated that the registry is likely to cost an additional \$1 billion over and above the current \$1 billion, just over the next five years. Let us think of it: another \$1 billion over another 5 years, or \$200 million a year. Given the track record since last December, it has spent over \$60 million. I am beginning to mix up my *m's* and my *b's* because the expenditure is so unbelievable, but it has spent \$60 million just since last December, so the projection of \$200 million a year is not unreasonable.

• (1030)

Most people simply cannot imagine how much money that really is. To put it in real terms, a billion dollars could have, for example, financed the purchase, installation and operation for one full year of 208 MRI systems in cash strapped Canadian hospitals. At least we know that in that context the money would have saved lives. Instead, we have individuals in Winnipeg and Manitoba hospitals dying in waiting rooms because they cannot get treatment. This government and this justice minister are pumping money into a gun registry that is not preventing crime and our citizens are dying in waiting rooms in our hospitals. It is shameful. The solicitor general, who has been dumped on with this unfortunate project, is now trying to say, as he has to, that it is a great system and "I am there to make sure it works".

Three justice ministers have been unable to do anything with this and what the government is now doing is dumping it onto the solicitor general, the new guy on the block. Why is it doing that? The government is doing it so that it can hide the true operational costs of the registry in operational programs.

What it will do is pump up the budget for the RCMP and then tell all Canadians to look at how much money is being given to the RCMP. As it pumps up that budget, it will use the money not for front line policing but for the gun registry and it will at the same time say, "Look how supportive we are of the police". These are the kinds of devices that mislead not just front line police officers but the Canadian taxpayer generally, and it is disgusting.

Why is the government not prepared to show that cost benefit analysis? It is not prepared to show that cost benefit analysis because that would expose what it is doing in terms of hiding where this money is going.

Statistics Canada told us that the implementation of Bill C-68 has not resulted in any quantifiable decrease in gun related crime. We remember the former justice minister, the current industry minister, saying that it saved 300 lives a year. Pure rubbish. Pure nonsense. And yet these kinds of statements are made deliberately without any basis in fact. Statistics Canada does not support it. The justice minister's statistics do not support it, and indeed, the cost analysis the government is hiding from the Canadian taxpayer will not support it.

Supply

Why will the government not show the analysis if it demonstrates money paid for good value? Why will the government not show it? Because it realizes that it has gone down the road of blowing a billion dollars here and a billion dollars over the next five years, and it is too ashamed to show Canadians. The government simply wants to get past the hump of the next election and then let the thing fall apart.

Madam Minister, why cannot Canadians see the facts today? Why?

Hon. Martin Cauchon: Madam Minister? A promotion?

Mr. Vic Toews: Well, she certainly has been more attentive than any minister has ever been, so I am confused. I am sorry, Madam Speaker.

Clearly the Liberal government has from the beginning been more interested in the appearance of public safety rather than public safety itself. The current justice minister, the solicitor general and their Liberal colleagues continue to politicize the ideal of public safety, which all Canadians support, by suggesting that gun control did not exist before this government came along.

• (1035)

Everyone knows that is ridiculous and it is nonsense, yet the government continues to criticize the Canadian Alliance, which wants to bring in a responsible mechanism to ensure that guns stay out of the hands of criminals. Why do the Liberals not do that? They are simply too proud to now admit that they have made a mistake.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the member from the Canadian Alliance who just spoke. He said a few minutes ago that this program costs \$1 billion a year. I would like to ask that he correct this information because I believe that the \$1 billion to which he is referring is actually over a projected 10 year period. I think it is important that we talk specifically and accurately about the amount of money involved.

I would agree that there have been a lot of issues around the management of this program, but it is also fair to say that something like two-thirds of the costs that have been spent or are anticipated actually have to do with the licensing under this program. The Alliance always likes to focus on the issue of the registry, but in actual fact about two-thirds of these funds are associated with the licensing.

Is it the position of the Canadian Alliance that it is also wanting to scrap the licensing that applies to people who own firearms? Is the Canadian Alliance in favour of scrapping the licensing program when it refers to this \$1 billion?

• (1040)

Mr. Vic Toews: Madam Speaker, if in fact I said \$1 billion a year, that was a mistake. It was \$1 billion up until this year, that we know of. That is what the statistics are. That is where the Auditor General ran out of paper to confirm this. Clearly the new estimate of the parliamentary research is somewhere in the range of \$200 million a year.

In respect of the licensing program, the statistics are that the federal government spent, prior to this, about \$10 million a year on

licensing. We have gone from \$10 million a year on a licensing program to now \$200 million a year. Something is very, very wrong. Indeed, the member should be asking and joining with us to ask for this cost benefit analysis that the Liberals are hiding from Parliament. The Auditor General has already stated once that the government misled the House. Now it is trying to do the same thing again.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I would just like to say quickly that I spent 30 years in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, with 14 years on uniform duties and 16 years on plainclothes work, dealing with the proceeds of crime, the financial drug business, so I know a little bit about the subject. My friend from Provencher was the attorney general of Manitoba, a justice minister, so over here we have the expertise to make a proper assessment.

I supported and support the firearms acquisition certificate program in Manitoba. I am a holder of an FAC, now of course a licence to possess and acquire firearms. My expertise is in the area of justice. What I have recommended to my party, and the reason that we support the licensing of individuals, is that the registry has absolutely zero use in fighting crime. I know that from personal experience. The statistics that are coming out today, if we look at what the police are putting forward, show that in most instances it has nothing to do with the registry and has a lot to do with other criminal activities.

Right now police resources are being wasted on the firearms registry. What we need is to have more put into the child pornography fight, which is something that could use \$1 billion.

I would ask the member, based upon his experience as a justice minister, is there not a better use for this money than this stupid registry?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I will caution the hon. member on the use of certain words in the House. So far there have been two or three words that are unparliamentary, so I would caution the hon. members present.

Mr. Vic Toews: Madam Speaker, in terms of having to administer a budget as a provincial attorney general where the federal government passes the laws and then the province has to enforce them, what has been happening, of course, is that the federal government continues to reduce its financial contribution but downloads responsibilities. This gun registry has been siphoning direct funds away from support of front line police officers.

When I was the attorney general in Manitoba we specifically supported the hiring of more Winnipeg city police officers. We would have liked to have seen more of that, as well as more RCMP officers. Simply, the money was not there because the government refused to support front line police officers.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first I would like to inform the House that I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague, the Solicitor General.

Supply

●(1045)

[English]

I rise today in response to the Canadian Alliance motion. I welcome the opportunity to address the House once again about the government's commitment to gun control, a commitment shared by a large majority of Canadians, and the government's action plan on gun control as well.

It is not a surprise that the official opposition raised this motion today. The official opposition does not support our government's gun control program and it never has. This is very serious.

When we live in a global marketplace, we must ensure that we keep building a society that reflects who we are as Canadians and what we are as a country. We will keep building a society that reflects our Canadian values. When we talk about the notion of gun control, it is about Canadian values. It is about culture. It is about ensuring that we will keep building a safe society.

When we talk about values and gun control, we are not the only country in the world to do that. There are other countries that have gun control with licensing and registration. Members opposite know that very well. I just do not understand why that opposition party keeps trying to make politics out of a serious program that is strongly supported by Canadians.

Canadians support our government's gun control program. An Environics poll taken in early January revealed that 74% of Canadians continue to support the gun control legislation. Even those who are closest to gun owners support the gun registration. As a matter of fact, 77% of respondents who live in homes where someone else, a spouse, a roommate, a parent or others, has guns support the program.

[Translation]

I now want to address the specific issue before us today. Essentially, there are two amounts being discussed. The first one, for \$59 million, comes up in the supplementary estimates. The second amount, for \$113 million, represents estimated expenditures by the firearms program during the next fiscal year.

All the hon. members of this House will remember that a request for \$72 million was withdrawn last December. At the time, the minister explained that the program would operate until the end of the fiscal year at a minimal level. I confirmed this myself in the House.

Due to the approach taken at the time, this request, as we know, has now dropped to \$59 million. This amount is essentially part of the \$100 million allocated for this year. This is not new money.

For the next fiscal year, the main estimates include this amount under the firearms program. Canadians, and government and opposition members asked the government to show more transparency in terms of the costs associated with this program.

And it has. I confirmed, here in the House, that the program budget for the next fiscal year would be \$113 million. I am sure that this amount will be carefully examined by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in its consideration of the main estimates a little later this year.

[English]

Let me turn to another matter raised in the motion. The opposition has referred to the efficiency of the program as well as the question of supporting the program. Have the Canadian people and various organizations across Canada given support to the government on gun control?

When we look at support, there is strong support from the Canadian Police Association, Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime, Canadian Safety Council, Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, Canadian Public Health Association, Canadian Federation of University Women, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, National Association of Women and the Law, St. John's Status of Women Council, Canadian Medical Association Journal, B.C. Institute Against Family Violence, Quebec Federation of Municipal Police Officers, and I could go on.

Those organizations understand why we decided as a government, as the Liberal Party that shares Canadian values, to proceed with such an important program that gives a great contribution to our society in terms of public safety. The opposition knows this very well. There are large numbers of associations working in public safety across Canada supporting such a valid program, in both licensing and registration.

There are two important components of that important safety tool that we have as a society and that Canadians share. The opposition talks about results and efficiencies. Let us look at the statistics. As I have said many times in the House, but the opposition just does not want to understand. However, Canadians understand why we decided to implement such a program and they support the program as well.

Today, according to statistics, public officials have refused or revoked over 9,000 firearm licences. Do members know what that means? It means that the system works and it works well. It means that through the screening process that we have put in place through the gun control program we have been able to increase safety in our Canadian society. This is something that we as Liberals and the government share with Canadians.

This is why we decided to acknowledge and accept the recommendation of the Auditor General. We accepted to meet with various organizations to prepare an action plan that would ensure that we keep going and heading in the right direction in the future. We want to ensure that as a government and as a party we would have a good, sound and efficient gun control program.

There are also other statistics. We put in place a notification line so that people would be able to get in touch with the department and inform us about problems regarding questions of public safety. These are problems that could raise concerns about the firearm centres. The firearm centres have received over 26,000 calls. People are using the system.

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Law enforcement agencies across Canada have accessed the online registry 2.3 million times since December 1, 1998. These are results. When we are talking about values and results in our society, the number of lost or missing firearms has declined by 68% from 1998 to 2001. Finally, another statistic, the number of stolen firearms has decreased as well by 35% over the same period of time.

When we look at the numbers, overall the opposition is talking about a billion dollars and it knows full well that we are not talking about a billion dollars. All the permanent government programs somewhere down the road will cost a billion dollars, but at the present time the opposition knows very well what the numbers are.

• (1050)

The opposition knows very well that we have put in place a good action plan. It knows that these programs make all the difference in our Canadian society in terms of public safety. However, all the opposition wants to do is cheap politics.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I have a lot of questions and I will quickly go through them.

I want to make a comment, before I ask my questions, on the bogus statistics that the minister has trotted out. For example, he said that the number of stolen firearms has decreased 35%. Just to point out how ridiculous a statistic that is the number of reported firearms stolen has decreased, but the numbers stolen is probably much bigger. The Toronto Police Association has reported that over 70% of the handguns that are used in crime are unregistered. People are afraid to even report this anymore because the victim now becomes the criminal. That is a bogus statistic.

I could do that with every single statistic that the minister has trotted out here. It is ridiculous when he talks about social values. What do Canadians value? They value money well spent, their tax money spent effectively reducing violence and crime in their society. Because the minister has refused to release a cost benefit analysis they are beginning to suspect that the Canadian Alliance is right and the Liberal minister is pulling the wool over their eyes portraying this as gun control.

Why is the justice minister hiding the cost benefit analysis from Parliament, the police and the rest of society? That is my first question.

My second question is, what are the police enforcement costs going to be? The Library of Parliament yesterday released a report that it will be \$1 billion in the next few years. That is only one cost among many that the minister is hiding. The billion dollars that the Auditor General reported were not the complete costs. The minister has not told us what the rest of the costs are, why not?

My third question is, what will it cost to go back and correct all of the errors in the system? About 78% of registration certificates contain errors. Hundreds of thousands of firearms owners do not have licences. What will it cost to correct that? There are probably 10 million guns that are still unregistered. What will it cost to register them? There are 4 million Canadians in the firearms police database. What will it cost to go back and correct that? There are 5 million unclarified firearms in the system, incorrect and not verified.

It is unreliable and the police cannot use it. The Regina Police Association says it has no use for this registry and it never uses it.

A lot of what the minister is saying is completely false. I have only given an example of five things that must be corrected and the costs will be horrific. The billion dollars has been wasted already and we have not even been told what it will cost to go back and correct this. When will the minister come clean with the cost benefit analysis?

• (1055)

Hon. Martin Cauchon: Madam Speaker, in French we used to say “il s'agirait essentiellement d'inflation verbale”.

I cannot understand why the opposition keeps coming back using numbers that it knows do not hold water and trying to destroy the statistics that I just mentioned. Those statistics are indeed valid, have been approved and are supported by the various associations that I referred to. Having said that, if the opposition wants to talk about numbers—

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz: I want a cost.

Hon. Martin Cauchon: He cannot stop talking either because he does not like what I am saying.

The moment I talk about Canadian values and public safety the opposition does not like it. The moment I say that gun control makes a good, strong contribution to public safety the opposition does not like it. It does not support the policy and that is it. It should come forward and tell Canadians that maybe it is a good program but that it just does not support it and politically speaking it cannot support it. At least for once it will be clear.

On our side it is clear. We support gun control and we will keep supporting gun control because it is good for our society and public safety.

Having said that, the opposition member says that a billion dollars has been wasted. I challenge him to look at the Auditor General's report where she said that a billion dollars was wasted. She never said that and he knows that very well. The opposition is trying to mislead Canadians and that I cannot accept as justice minister.

The opposition wants to talk about numbers. It knows what the numbers were for the centre for the last fiscal year. We are talking about \$688 million for the centre. The opposition knows what the numbers are for this fiscal year and the coming fiscal year. We will be voting on that tonight and we will be pleased as a party and as a government to support that because it makes all the difference in our society—

• (1100)

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Auditor General said the cost benefit analysis had not been done.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): That is not a point of order. That is a point of debate.

Five minutes have already elapsed in terms of questions and comments. Resuming debate.

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Hon. Wayne Easter (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is too bad that discussion had to close. The Minister of Justice was starting to outline some of the real facts on the issue, but I welcome the opportunity to speak to the issue.

What do we want from a gun control program and what do Canadians expect? I believe they expect a program that keeps guns out of the hands of those who should not have them and prevents illegal guns from entering our country. Also, we want and I believe Canadians want a program that respects the legitimate interests of hunters, sports shooters and others in society who use guns in a lawful way. Quite simply, we and Canadians want a program that helps to make our communities safer, but they do not want a program at any cost. That is what Canadians expect and that is what Canadians deserve.

Part of the answers lie in the common sense proposals of Bill C-10A. Before getting to why Bill C-10A is such an important piece of legislation, and I would ask the opponents on the other side to support us in that legislation, I want to make a couple of other points.

The Canadian firearms program is an important fit for my portfolio, that of the Solicitor General. We are confident that we have the strength in the portfolio to run this complex national law enforcement program. We are already consolidating law enforcement functions by moving the national weapons enforcement support team, or NWEST, from the Canadian Firearms Centre to the national police services which is administered by the RCMP on behalf of all police forces in Canada. This move places this crucial service in an environment more aligned with its enforcement support mission.

To align the rest of the Canadian firearms program operations as efficiently and cost effectively as possible and to make the Canadian firearms program fully meet its goal of public safety, we need Bill C-10A. Bill C-10A is critical to achieving a firearms program that better responds to the needs and expectations of Canadians while maintaining public safety. The sooner it is adopted, the sooner Canadians can reap the benefits of a program that is more efficient and cost effective while continuing to keep firearms out of the wrong hands and enhancing the safety of our communities.

Let me repeat that. Bill C-10A will make it possible for us as the Government of Canada to run a program that is more efficient and more cost effective—

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We are debating our supply day motion today. I think the minister picked up the wrong speech.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): That is not a point of order. The Chair is not here to make a comment on the content of someone's speech. Resuming debate.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Madam Speaker, I am surprised at the member's question because the whole thrust of his opposition day motion basically refers to inefficiencies in the system.

What I am explaining for him, and maybe he does not want to hear it, is how we can create those efficiencies in the system. Bill C-10A is a very important aspect in creating those efficiencies in the system. Let me repeat that to make this program more efficient and cost effective while continuing to keep firearms out of the wrong

hands and enhancing the safety of our communities, we need Bill C-10A.

Let me explain what the bill does and how it does it. Bill C-10A includes amendments to the Firearms Act to provide better service and reduce costs. Bill C-10A simplifies the requirements for licence renewals. Bill C-10A increases the use of the Internet and other automated channels for applications and issuance of documents. Bill C-10A staggers firearm licence renewals to avoid a surge of applications in five year cycles. In other words, it allows efficiencies in the system.

Bill C-10A establishes a preapplication process for temporary importation of non-resident visitors. Bill C-10A streamlines the transfer process. Bill C-10A grandfathers additional handguns that were prohibited in 1995. Bill C-10A extends the terms of firearms business licences. Bill C-10A clarifies the licensing requirements for the employees of firearms businesses.

Every single one of these amendments will make the Canadian firearms program more accessible and responsible to the needs of those people who use the system. A program that is accessible and responsive to the needs of its users is a program that has a far better chance of meeting its goals. In this case the goal is public safety.

As Bill C-10A is passed, we will also implement the following changes for an improved, less costly gun control program.

The member for Yorkton—Melville has been on his feet on this issue so many times. I ask him, if he really believes what he himself is saying in terms of efficiencies in the system and waste of money, how could he and his party, the Canadian Alliance, possibly oppose Bill C-10A and all those proposals and efficiencies that Bill C-10A will give the Government of Canada, indeed the people of Canada, in terms of administering this program?

We will streamline headquarters and processing operations. We want to achieve greater consistency and better coordination. We will establish national work performance measures and cost standards for all aspects of the gun control program. We will work in consultation with the provinces, territories and other partners to achieve this. There is no question about it, some provinces have been opposed. We understand that is not an easy consultation and discussion to have but we are going to do our best to achieve it.

Federal and provincial gun control managers will be more accountable in meeting these standards. This will ensure, in my view, consistency of program delivery, quality and control of costs by all partners involved in the gun control program.

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We will as well restrict computer system changes to those that are critical to achieving the core mission of the gun control program and to reducing costs. These improvements to the management and structure of the gun control program will be made by early 2004 or even sooner. They build on the cost saving measures that are a part of Bill C-10A. The aim is to establish a clear management framework for the program that focuses on its essential core business, the licensing and registration of firearms.

• (1105)

We are also continuing with the improvements that my colleague, the hon. Minister of Justice, has already been putting in place. The Internet registration system is working reasonably well. The government introduced online registration on February 7 and the Canadian Firearms Centre is receiving hundreds of firearms registrations and applications daily through its website.

Applications received online result in substantial cost savings to the program and faster service to the public due to simpler processing requirements. We are continuing to reduce registration processing delays. We are not all the way there yet, but we are improving that with the goal of processing properly completed registration applications within 30 days of receipt. We will be implementing a targeted outreach program.

Finally, we will honour our commitments to parliamentarians, to stakeholders and the public to seek their input in consultations this spring in improving the design and the delivery of the program. These consultations will give gun control program stakeholders, partners and members of the public an opportunity to provide direct input into this essential public safety program. We will also appoint a program advisory committee made up of members external to government with management and system expertise.

I encourage members opposite, if they really believe what they are saying, to support Bill C-10A and the estimates that go along with making Bill C-10A possible for us to have those efficiencies in the system.

• (1110)

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, the Solicitor General asked us a really good question of why we would oppose Bill C-10A.

Bill C-10A perpetuates bad legislation that was passed back in 1995. That is what is wrong with Bill C-10A. It is continuing along with the path of Liberal gun control. It is not along the path of Canadian Alliance sensible firearms legislation.

Before Bill C-68, the Firearms Act, was passed, and I am saying this having been a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for 30 years, we could seize firearms from somebody who was going to commit a crime. We could seize firearms when a criminal was intending to use them or had used them. All the law-abiding citizen had to do was get an FAC, a firearms acquisition certificate and get checked out by the police. The Canadian Alliance supports that.

We support firearms legislation that is cost effective and effective at reducing crime. That is the difference. That is the question. The Liberals on one side have a mammoth system which is hugely expensive and which does not reduce crime with all that added expense. The Canadian Alliance wants to spend money on firearms

legislation but it will be an effective one where we go after criminals and not after the law-abiding citizen.

Does the minister not see the difference, that the firearms registry targeted at law-abiding citizens is not doing the job to reduce crime? He has not been asked yet whether he would be willing to produce a cost benefit analysis substantiating the spending of that money. Will the Solicitor General provide to the House that cost benefit analysis?

Hon. Wayne Easter: Madam Speaker, there were many points in that question. However I want to correct the member on one essential point, which is the problem the Canadian Alliance has with its misplaced logic on this issue.

I know the Canadian Alliance made a lot of political hey in the last number of elections and it wants to continue to do that but we are interested in making sure there is better public safety.

The member was offside when he said that the gun control program was targeted at law-abiding citizens. It is not. The gun control program is targeted at those who use illegal guns and those who might use firearms in the wrong way. The Minister of Justice talked a bit earlier about 9,000 registrations being refused. That was done to protect public safety. There were some concerns about those people who were applying and who might cause trouble in society.

The fact is that the system has worked in targeting the program, not at law-abiding citizens but at those with illegal and misplaced weapons.

Since NWEST was established, which is part of this program, it has assisted police on the front line with over 250 warrants. NWEST has assisted frontline police officers in 3,000 incidents. It is true that it has traced over 1,900 unregistered guns in co-operation with United States authorities but sometimes, because there is a registered gun in the system, it finds there is also unregistered guns, which are certainly illegal in this country.

What we have here is a difficult position for the Canadian Alliance. It is in such an entrenched political position that it does not want to see the good points in Bill C-10A which will make this system more cost effective and do what it was intended to do in a better fiscally managed way.

• (1115)

Mr. Julian Reed (Halton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today is Police Lobby Day. I have been lobbied by the Canadian Police Association and the RCMP who have been to my office already.

I am curious to know what members of the Alliance will say when the police lobby them and tell them that they support the gun program. When they are given the information as to the positive impact that the program has made so far, even though it is not complete, I wonder what they will say. I wonder what we could advise the Alliance to say to the police lobby.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Madam Speaker, it is certainly beyond me to advise members of the Canadian Alliance. They might not accept my advice in any event.

I spoke at the Canadian Police Association meeting yesterday and I had a very fruitful breakfast meeting with the Canadian Police Association this morning during which time it made its position very clear to me. I am looking at ways in which we can make this system work. I said at the beginning that there were some problems that we had to fix and that we were doing our very best to do that.

However the CPA and an RCMP officer who was at the meeting made it very clear to me that we were not to change the licensing and registry system. We will have to work within those parameters and make the necessary improvements.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to advise you that I will be splitting my time with the member for Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier.

We are obliged today to address a very important principle: the firearms registry and the necessity for it to be put in place. What is involved is a register, the recording of gun possession and the issuing of gun permits. We are obliged to defend the program today, but not the financial fiasco surrounding it since 1995. Where the problem lies with this program is not its underlying principle, but how it has been handled.

The Minister of Justice has just said that all the permanent government programs somewhere down the road will cost a billion dollars. When they wanted to establish the firearms registration and licencing program in 1995, they told us that it would cost \$2 million in all, not a billion. The problem is as follows: when we are told that all programs cost \$1 billion, how can they try to sell us on the idea that a firearms program would cost so little?

This is a big problem. Just because they are telling us it will cost *x* amount of dollars, now that the program is up and running, does not mean that the amounts will be any more accurate. Establishing a program requires an assessment of the real cost.

The Bloc Québécois feels this is a program we must have, but not at the cost of the financial fiasco the Minister of Justice has created. The problem we must address today is whether the program is necessary. That is not where the problem lies; it lies in the way money is being spent in order to have a functioning system. Seven years later, if the Department of Justice had really done its job, we would not have been asking ourselves whether the firearms program is or is not any good.

Unfortunately, the motion calls for reduction of funds for the firearms program in order to eventually eliminate it. This program must exist. Moving it from Justice to the Solicitor General does not mean it is going to be made to disappear and that the Justice Department's incompetence will not come to light. We must be given the real costs and the breakdown of where this money went.

Today we are aware that opposition to the motion does not have to mean we are against the program, or vice versa. Today we must say that the program needs to be retained, but the government must be required to explain the reasons for the financial fiasco.

It is essential to protect the people of Quebec and Canada in order to avoid a repetition of senseless killings like those that occurred at École polytechnique de Montréal on December 6, 1989. According

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to the surveys conducted in 2003, 74% of people support this program, developed in response to pressure from those affected by the tragic events at the Polytechnique and from the public generally. But we cannot go about this blindly; this program must not become another fiasco because it is being handed off to another department without a closer examination of what happened. We need to have a detailed report of where all the money went.

For instance, between April 2000 and February 2002, the Department of Justice spent \$16 million on advertising and \$3 million on inviting hunters to have unforgettable experiences. Almost all of this money went through Groupaction. That explains everything; to us anyway.

• (1120)

We absolutely have to get to the bottom of where this money went. It is not enough to say, like the Minister of Justice says, "The entire program will one day cost \$1 billion." That is not true. The entire program should not cost \$1 billion, especially when in 1995, we were told that it would cost \$2 million. Imagine, \$1 billion. That would take years. Maybe his grandchildren will see the day when that amount is reached. Come on. It is much more serious than that.

To be told today that the cost of setting up the program, registration, and issuing permits is on the mark, is not true. Since the program was developed based on estimates that were made, how can there be such a large discrepancy? This discrepancy is unacceptable. We are told that in seven years, costs have gone from \$2 million to as high as \$788 million today. Remember that a third of the people have not registered their firearms. This is serious.

Now we are supposed to believe that modifications to Bill C-10A will reduce the costs considerably. However, there are some things that I would like to share with the House right now about this. In fact, there is a big problem with Bill C-10A. And I am not just talking about an administrative problem. Obviously, if the bill were to bring down the costs, we would support that. However, there are other, more important things that need pointing out.

When the government wanted to establish this firearms registry program, Quebec supported it. The government also had the backing and the expertise of the SQ. However, there is now concern that Bill C-10A will also create a federal agency to manage firearms that could, and probably will, be privatized. If that were to happen, it would strip away all of Quebec's responsibilities, by diminishing the powers of the chief firearms officer, who comes under Quebec's jurisdiction, and also by drastically cutting the funding for the Bureau de traitement and the Centre d'appel du Québec, which are currently a responsibility of the Sûreté du Québec.

So, this bill used Quebec's know-how and support to try to strip away all of the powers that are properly Quebec's. These are powers that work well, and are working better and better in Quebec.

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Some provinces chose not to take part. That is why the government is once again trying to centralize the powers and to reduce the powers of the chief firearms officers, who are located in the provinces and in Quebec, powers designed to improve the management of the program.

It is important to remember that the Sûreté du Québec looks for a criminal record when issuing permits. I can assure the House that centralizing everything with federal agencies is not for the purpose of improving management. The purpose, once again, will be to appropriate powers and to centralize them.

It is important to remember that even though we are against the Canadian Alliance's motion because of its objective, this does not mean that the Bloc Québécois does not support the firearms registry. On the contrary. The Canadian Alliance wants to scrap the firearms registry program altogether.

However, no one wants to give the government a blank cheque any more so that it can produce one fiasco after another. For seven years now, huge sums have been invested, and the firearm registry is not even complete. One-third of all guns have yet to be registered. But we must not lose sight of the problem: registration is voluntary. Therefore, if two-thirds of all firearms have been voluntarily registered at a cost of \$788 million to date, with one-third still left, how much will it cost to "force or convince" the remaining one-third of all gun owners to register?

There is an attempt to make us believe that the money will always be available. I refuse to believe this.

• (1125)

We will be voting in favour of the supplementary estimates, in which the government is asking for between \$59 million and \$60 million to continue this program. But we will certainly not be voting in favour of allocating supplementary funds each time, without knowing how this money is being spent.

As I said earlier, just because the program is moving from the Department of Justice to the Department of the Solicitor General does not mean that we do not want to know where this money went. This is a huge amount.

With regard to the first part of the Alliance motion, on this point, we must know where this money has gone and details must be—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The member for Burnaby—Douglas.

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Madam Speaker, first I would like to say that I was one of the members who voted in favour of Bill C-68 in 1995. I continue to support the principle of this bill.

[*English*]

I strongly support the principles of strong, tough and effective gun control. I want to make it very clear as well how disappointed I am in the incompetent administration by the Liberal government of the program. It has made our challenge a lot more difficult, frankly, those of us who strongly support effective gun control, to take the message out to the Canadian people. It has given ammunition to the Canadian Alliance which from the beginning has done everything in

its power to destroy the program, to kill the gun registry and to in effect suggest that we not fund this important program.

I want to pay tribute to the Coalition for Gun Control and to other groups including the Canadian Police Association, which is on Parliament Hill today, to the Canadian Public Health Association and to others who have made a strong and powerful case for the need for strong and effective gun control legislation, and that means both licensing and registration. There are many examples of the need for that.

The Canadian Public Health Association said just last month:

The public health communities are on the record saying that strengthening the laws has contributed to a decline [in firearms-related deaths]. The research is abundant... The areas where we have seen the greatest progress are in the deaths associated with rifles and shotguns. The rate of homicides involving firearms has declined by over 35 per cent since 1991 and the rate of homicides with rifles and shotguns, the focus of the legislation, is at its lowest in 25 years.

I would note as well that this is a very grave problem. Guns kill more youth in the age group between 15 and 24 than cancer, drowning and falls combined.

I stand here today to thank the hon. member for his comments and to make it clear that I strongly support the principles of the legislation. I believe it must be funded properly to enable us to carry forward the essential program, both in terms of licensing and registration. Yes, we have to take tough steps to ensure that it is an efficient program and that there is no waste and incompetence as the Liberals have implemented it so far.

Finally, I want to note as well that in the vote this afternoon many of us are in a very difficult position because the Prime Minister has said that this is a vote of confidence in the government. Do we have confidence in the government? He has put the whips on.

I certainly do not have confidence in this government but on the other hand I am not prepared to stand and vote with the Canadian Alliance to destroy gun control in the country. That is the dilemma we are in. I expect that I will abstain on the vote because on the one hand while I cannot vote confidence in the government, on the other hand I will not stand and vote with the Alliance that wants to destroy the gun control program in Canada.

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ): Madam Speaker, this is precisely what I am trying to get across. We are in the same situation. We thanked the member for voting in favour of Bill C-68. The Bloc Québécois did the same.

It is essential for the program to exist. The problem is that in its current state, it gives the Canadian Alliance ammunition to do away with it by citing poor management by the Department of Justice. More importantly, it was initially supposed to cost \$2 million to administer the program. Think about what the Auditor General has given us. In 1995, the program was supposed to cost \$2 million. To set up and implement it there was talk of \$119 million, but \$117 million would be recouped, reducing the cost of the program to \$2 million. Implementing the program would cost \$119 million less what was going to be recouped, namely \$117 million.

In the meantime, the government noticed that it was hard to get people to register. In other words, it did a poor job explaining to people why they had to register their firearms and why there needed to be a registry and permits. It did a poor job and was forced at one point to waive the registration fee. This cost the government a great deal of money and, in the end, resulted in poor management of the program.

This is only one of the problems, but others have been raised. The government wants to implement a registry as large as this one and we see there are others it wants to implement. With the bill on the sex offender registry—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time is up. The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier.

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by asking the following questions: can we have any greater responsibility as legislators, as elected representatives of the people, than to ensure the safety and security of our fellow citizens, of those who have elected us?

You will understand that my answer to this is no. The members of this House have no greater responsibility than to ensure that the people of Quebec, the people of Canada, live in a healthy and safe environment.

You will understand from my introduction that I am opposed to the Canadian Alliance motion. The Bloc Québécois is in favour of the firearms control program. We are, moreover, not alone in that.

This morning I met with representatives of the Canadian Police Association, an association that does a remarkable job all year long. They come to us once a year to share their concerns and express their grievances. This very morning in my office they again repeated their support of the firearms control program, and I was pleased to hear it.

I have also spoken recently with the officials responsible for the Coalition for Gun Control, including Dr. Chapedelaine and my friend, Caroline Gardette, also an exceptional person, who accompanied him. They, too, reiterated how important the coalition felt the firearms registry program was, and rightly so.

However, we condemn the administrative fiasco that the government has made of the program. All punning aside, this Liberal government's administrative fiasco has claimed two victims. First, obviously, the pocketbooks of Quebec and Canadian taxpayers who have paid for this program, and second, the very principle of gun control, and that is very serious.

Those who are ideologically opposed to the principle of gun control—such as the leader of the Canadian Alliance—have been all over the Liberal mismanagement, using it as ammunition to shoot down the very idea of gun control.

The Minister of Justice and his predecessors are largely responsible for this. They have made life a lot harder for the thousands of people across the country who advocate for gun control, because people are telling them, “Look at the fiasco, is it really worth it?” We believe it is, of course. But what a waste.

What a waste to give this kind of ammunition to the Canadian Alliance and its henchmen, who have been fighting against gun

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control since the beginning. It is ironic, by the way, that a party that claims to be a grassroots party is against gun control, when a majority of Canadians support it. Incidentally, the place with the highest percentage of support for gun control is Quebec. This little tangent just demonstrates the specific character of the homeland we share, Madam Speaker. So, it is ironic that members of the Canadian Alliance are ignoring what Quebecers and Canadians are telling them.

• (1135)

On December 6, 1989, when the massacre took place at the Polytechnique, I was a first-year law student. I clearly remember being in a restaurant in Quebec City, where Université Laval law school students were celebrating. It was our class's first Christmas party. When we received the first reports of the massacre, during which 14 women were killed and 13 others were wounded by a mad gunman, in that instant, everything changed.

There are such moments in history. We feel we are at a point of transition, that everything has changed. We felt it immediately. People became subdued. They wanted to listen to the different radio stations to learn what was happening. The young men and women there said, “This must never, ever happen again”. The coalition was created in that instant, with the results we see today.

It is very unfortunate that the Liberal government was unable to manage a program that, really, should have been quite simple. Registering firearms is not very complicated. We have been able to land on the moon for 30 years now. So I refuse to believe that it is so difficult to register guns.

Despite transferring the firearms program from the Department of Justice, which proved its incompetence, to the Solicitor General, the government must still tell us what is going on. Not only that but, starting today, it must ensure that the program administration is transparent. It must ensure that the public and the members of this House have access to all the information needed to ensure that the government cannot, once again, prove its incompetence, as it has here.

In Quebec, the program was implemented by Quebec's ministère de la Sécurité publique and the Sûreté du Québec. From having spoken with staff at the former, I can tell you that things are going smoothly; program registration and application are going well, and they are sticking to the initial budget.

I should also mention that Quebec and the federal government have signed an agreement making the Quebec government responsible for issuing the permits, and this is also going well.

Supply

When the Firearms Act was being implemented the Government of Quebec cooperated by sharing its expertise on firearms and how to monitor them. Given that this works well in Quebec, we must avoid handing the program back over to the federal government, because there is no reason to do so.

We want to maintain the firearms program and we support the existence of the Bureau de traitement and the Centre d'appel du Québec, which do very good work and employ a significant number of people.

We want to avoid creating a federal firearms management agency, which would place the program back in the federal government's hands, since it has shown in the past that it is unable to manage such a program.

In conclusion, I reiterate the Bloc Québécois' support for the firearms control program. We are going to vote in favour of the proposed budget this afternoon and I call on all members from all parties, including the New Democratic Party, to do the same. I am a little disappointed to hear my colleague and friend, the member for Burnaby—Douglas, say that he will abstain from voting. Despite the fiasco and the somewhat difficult situation that making this a confidence vote places us in, the fact remains that beyond all this and beyond the political posturing, the safety and security of Quebecers and Canadians is what is most important. The firearms control program will ensure that there is better security for all our fellow citizens. I call on all members of this House to vote in favour of the proposed budget this afternoon and against the Canadian Alliance motion.

• (1140)

[*English*]

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I want to begin by agreeing with the way the member began his remarks. We have no greater responsibility in the House than to provide for the safety of the people of this country. I agree with him there. I think that is something we should all remind ourselves of.

I want to touch on one of the things he raised in his speech, which was that the Alliance was not listening to Canadians. I want to make the point absolutely clear that the gun registry is not gun control. The government uses that term all the time and gives the impression that this somehow is gun control and improves public safety.

I have scratched beneath the surface on this issue and I challenge the member and all Canadians to do the same thing. I will use the same example that he used.

Fourteen women were killed at the polytechnical institute. That was a terrible tragedy and I agree with him. However the registry would not effectively have prevented that. How does laying a piece of paper beside a gun prevent a madman from using it in a crime?

If in fact we had a licensing system that did the proper background checks and if we had enough police on the street to effectively enforce that, then we might have a better chance of preventing that kind of a crime.

That is why we in the Canadian Alliance have said that this is not gun control. If we were to use that billion dollars and begin to target

the causes of violence and crime in our society more directly, we might do a better job.

When we were told that it would cost \$2 million to the taxpayer to implement this program some people said that we should go for it. However, once it becomes a billion dollars we are talking about a completely different question. That is what we are raising today.

I appeal to the Bloc members to look at our motion. We are saying that a cost benefit analysis should be done of the firearms registry. The government has done that but it has not released it to us. Why is it hiding this?

Every opposition member should be calling upon the government to tell us why this is a better expenditure of funds than targeting the root cause of violence.

The member said that the system was working well in Quebec. A study done in Quebec indicates that many firearms owners in the province do not have licences nor have they registered. In fact, non-compliance in Quebec could be higher than in the other provinces. That is something for the member to ponder.

Without a cost benefit analysis how can the member support this program? Tax dollars are not unlimited. How do we know that we are not much better off spending this money elsewhere, targeting the root cause of violence?

• (1145)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Marceau: Madam Speaker, in the six years that I have been a member of the House, if there is one thing that I have learned over the course of the work I have done here, including committee work, it is that there are some people who know more about certain situations than we do. As legislators, we have to be jacks-of-all-trades because we vote and make decisions on all kinds of things. However, there are people who are much more knowledgeable about different subjects.

This morning, for example, the Canadian Police Association came to reiterate its support for the firearms registration program. These men and women who work on the streets, in the neighbourhoods, in the country and in the cities say that despite all of the problems with the program's management, they believe in it because it is useful for them.

I would say to my friend from the Canadian Alliance that we must trust the experts, the police officers of Quebec and Canada, who are telling us to keep the program, since they use it.

[*English*]

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz: Madam Speaker, the question that should be asked of the Canadian Police Association is: "If you were in charge of this money how would you best spend it? Would you rather have more colleagues on the street helping you enforce a licensing system?"

The Canadian Police Association has not seen a cost benefit analysis either. If it were to see that, if it were in charge of the funds and if it had to make the decision on the best way to target the root cause of violence and crime in our society, what would it then say?

That is not the question it is answering. I will tell the member right now that it is just the people with whom he has been talking. If he were to talk with the police in the street he would get a much different answer. I have been talking with the police in Regina and I have been given a very different answer.

• (1150)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): There is not much time left, but the hon. member for Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier can, if he wants, make a brief comment.

Mr. Richard Marceau: Madam Speaker, they were quite unequivocal and clear. They support the program. Does this prevent them from asking for additional money for more police officers in the streets? Of course not.

However, the fact remains that they support the program. When it comes to this, I trust the expert judgment of this country's police officers.

[*English*]

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

The first thing I want to say is that public safety is of paramount concern to New Democrats. Violence from the use of firearms is of huge concern to us and a program around gun control is something that we very much support. In fact, one thing that needs to be stated very clearly today is that in looking at all the costs associated with what is often characterized as the registry, about two-thirds of the costs actually are associated with licensing of the program rather than the registry.

As federal New Democrats, we are on the record as being strong proponents of gun control, and I speak for all my colleagues on that basis.

However I do want to make it very clear that on the issue of the registry we do have different opinions and views within our caucus. Some of our members are opposed to a registry. They question the effectiveness of a registry and the procedures that it has required people to go through. Some of our members who have concerns or opposition to the registry are also very concerned about the impact the registry has, for example, on aboriginal treaty rights. We have voiced those concerns in the past.

We also have other members of our caucus who are in strong support of the registry and, indeed, gun control, as we all are, including our leader, Jack Layton, who, I want to say, was one of the founding members of the white ribbon campaign in 1991 which provided a voice for men to speak out against violence against women. This program now exists in 30 countries around the world. Our leader, Jack Layton, was a founding member of that organization. He has been very committed, as a city councillor and in his national role, to the issue of gun control and supports the need for a registry.

Having said that, I want to point out that the issue before us today in terms of gun control and the registry has to do with the amounts of money that have been used by this program and how that has been

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managed. We too, as New Democrats, have voiced these concerns very strenuously both in the House and in committee.

However, in terms of the registry I want to point out that the Coalition for Gun Control, which has about 300 member organizations, including safety, health, police, and suicide prevention experts, has pointed out and has provided information that in the 1980s, on average about 1,400 people were killed with guns every year. That was reduced to about 1,000 people per year by 1999. Those are significant improvements but clearly there is an enormous amount of work that still needs to be done.

I will quote from the Canadian Police Association, which is on Parliament Hill today visiting many members. It points out that "registration increases accountability of firearms owners by linking the firearm to the owner". It says that this "encourages owners to abide by safe storage laws". It also makes the point, and it provided a whole brief, that "registration is critical to enforcing the licensing". It points out that "without registration, there is nothing to prevent a licensed gun owner from selling an unregistered weapon to an unlicensed individual". It gives a number of other reasons as well.

I would also point out some of the concerns that have been expressed by members of the Coalition for Gun Control. Dr. Richard Schabas, the former medical health officer for Ontario, says in his brief that:

Prevention is rarely glamorous. Gun control is no exception. The deaths and injuries prevented don't grab headlines. It is often all too easy for governments to lose sight of the benefits and to see preventive programs as a tempting target for cost-cutting. As the Government of Ontario learned from the Walkerton tragedy, you never stop paying for your "savings" in prevention.

I think that is a very powerful reminder because part of the tragedy with the Walkerton situation was the privatization of water control systems and operations in the Province of Ontario. As a result of the tragic deaths that took place there that was under public scrutiny as the inquest unfolded.

• (1155)

As federal New Democrats, we want to firmly place on the record today that the government's proposals to privatize the gun registry is something that we will firmly and strongly oppose. We think this is a completely false premise, to privatize the program or to outsource, as the Minister of Justice likes to say. We should be looking for greater accountability and controls within the government operation and management of the program.

I have made it clear that within our caucus there are different views about the registry itself. We respect the diversity of those views. However we have also, as a caucus, very much focused on the management of this program. In fact our finance critic, who has very ably done a job at the public accounts committee, the member for Winnipeg North Centre, has been zeroing in on the incredible problems with the management of the program. The fact that 70% of the financing of the program has had to come through supplementary estimates rather than through main estimates is in itself an indictment of the way the program has had to be managed by the government, because it has been completely unable to account for the cost. As we know, the Auditor General has also zeroed in on the program and has said that the government has kept Parliament in the dark, that there has been a lack of transparency.

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I want to be very clear that while some of us strongly support the registry and we all support the need for effective gun control in the country, we will take issue with the government in the management of the program. We will use every vehicle we have, whether it is the public accounts committee, questions in the House or any other forum to hold the government to account.

I agree with my colleague, the member for Burnaby—Douglas, when he points out that the mismanagement of the program and the scandal that has resulted has really placed the program in a great deal of jeopardy. That is why we now have these motions coming forward. Clearly there are very important issues around the fiscal management but we also know the Alliance has a different agenda. Its members want to undermine the program and they want to see it abolished.

This debate is important. However I would urge members in the House, whether they are on the government side or on the opposition side, that in terms of the program and the registry itself, we need to focus on the issue of financial accountability and ensure there is an effective program in place.

On the question from the Alliance member earlier, as far as the position of the Canadian Police Association is concerned, it has clearly stated that it favours the registry and it outlines the links in its work and how it is an effective tool. I do not think it is reluctant to speak its mind. It has its own independent opinions and presumably if it had some other strategy, it would articulate that. However clearly it has said that it is in favour of the registry.

I would just like to reiterate from the point of view of federal New Democrats, we are strongly in favour of measures of gun control. Public safety is very important. The violence that results from the misuse and abuse of firearms is of huge concern to people, whether they are in the urban environment or in smaller communities. How these weapons are used and how they are a major contributing factor to violence in our society is something about which we are very concerned.

We have different opinions about the registry. We are very respectful of that and we work within that in our caucus. However we are with one voice when it comes to the management of this program and we oppose the privatization of the registry. We will be clear in holding the government to account in ensuring there is proper management and ensuring there is effective gun control in the country.

• (1200)

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Vancouver East, our House leader, for her comments on this important motion.

Once again to be very clear, I oppose the motion. Were there an opportunity to vote on this opposition day motion, I would vote against the Canadian Alliance motion. I would be in support of strong and effective gun control legislation, both licensing and the registry. It is not a votable motion.

However, as we all know, there will be the vote later in the day which the Prime Minister has declared as a vote of confidence in the government. That is, as I indicated earlier, the dilemma in which those of us who do not have any confidence in the government on

the one hand but support the principles of strong and effective gun control, as set out in Bill C-68, are placed.

As well, I want to note a couple of other points with respect to the substance of this issue.

There has been a lot of reference to the report of the Auditor General and certainly a lot of, I think, well-founded criticism of the Liberals' incompetence in implementing this very important program. However I want to underscore the fact that the Auditor General, Sheila Fraser, said that it was too soon to judge the actual impact of the legislation itself. She said, "We did not audit Program efficiency or whether it is meeting its objectives".

It is important to note that this was not an indictment of the objectives of the program. It was an indictment of the Liberal administration of a program which many of us believe is very important.

I want to point out as well that prevention of gun injuries and death is not cheap. Even operating at \$70 million per year, this is obviously not cheap. However I would point out that there are other safety and prevention programs in place as well on which we recognize we have to spend money.

The meningitis inoculation program that was initiated in Quebec last fall, which came in response to 85 cases being reported in 2001, cost the one province \$125 million to save lives. However the fact of the matter is that more than 1,000 people die every year in Canada as a result of guns compared to 3,000 who are killed in automobile crashes. For example, in New Brunswick the federal government is investing \$400 million to widen a stretch of highway known as suicide alley, where 43 lives were lost between 1996 and 2000.

The point I am making here, and my colleague might want to comment, is that we cannot put a price on human life. If this program will help to reduce the number of injuries and deaths, whether it is from suicide or weapons that are not stored safely, and if it will help the police to track perpetrators of these crimes, it is money well spent. Our challenge now is to try to get the government to ensure that it is also money which is spent wisely and effectively.

Ms. Libby Davies: Madam Speaker, of course the member for Burnaby—Douglas is correct. How can one put a price on the issue of public safety and the lives that are lost? This is something with which I think all members of the House would agree.

However, in dealing with the motion today and the votes that will happen tonight, what is also at issue is the credibility of the government in managing this important public program around public safety, whether we characterize it broadly as part of gun control or whether we focus in on the registry itself. I think we have more than enough information from credible independent sources, such as the Auditor General, to point out that the government has really botched the way this program has been run.

It is very important to keep in perspective the bigger objectives of what we are trying to achieve here but also to recognize that we also have a job to do in holding the government to account and to ensure that there is a full analysis, an accounting and transparency about the way in which these funds are being used.

Supply

From that point of view, we should be welcoming input from organizations like the police association or the gun control coalition or from people or who are opposed to the registry. When we have that kind of transparency, we then can ensure that the program is managed in a sound and efficient way and that it meets the public objectives of public safety and gun control.

• (1205)

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I want to pick up on something the member said. She said that the Canadian Police Association supported this. I hope the association is not playing politics and is actually representing its members. We have Chief Julian Fantino saying, “a law registering firearms has neither deterred these crimes nor helped us solve any of them”. There is an obvious disconnect to the police I am talking to and what the member is saying.

Ms. Libby Davies: Madam Speaker, it is rather shocking that a member would attack an organization which has a democratic process for arriving at whatever position it takes. I am sure it is not totally unanimous. I am sure any one of us could find a member anywhere with a different view. This is an association that obviously has done its work. This is its view and I would expect that the member would respect that even if he does not agree with it.

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Madam Speaker, I too wish to say a few words on the opposition motion before the House today. If the motion were votable, I would be in support of the motion before the House today. I will be voting tonight in opposition to the additional money for the gun registration bill, as proposed by the member of the Canadian Alliance.

My main concern is public safety, which has to be the main concern. The debate is how we achieve the maximum amount of public safety. Our party has a very long and proud record of supporting gun control bills in the House of Commons.

I was first elected in 1968. I and my party have supported many gun control bills over the years, including restrictions on long guns, the firearms acquisitions certificates, the fact that people have to be checked out before they can get an FAC and issues of that sort. We have party policy in support of gun control. What we do not have in the NDP, and I want to make this very clear, is we have no position as a party on the gun registry bill.

I would like to give a little history about where the NDP has stood. I was not a member in 1995 when this bill came before the House of Commons. I was a member of the House of Commons in 1968. In 1993 I took a four year sabbatical, thanks to my voters, and came back in 1997. They made the wise decision. I learned an awful lot from that sabbatical. One thing I learned was to listen to my people. That is why I take this position now on Bill C-68.

When we go back to Bill C-68, at that time there were nine members from the New Democratic Party. The leader of the party, Audrey McLaughlin, and eight of the nine members voted in opposition to Bill C-68. One member voted in favour of Bill C-68, my friend from Burnaby—Douglas, who has taken a very principled and consistent position on this issue over time, and I commend him for that.

The first time I had a chance to vote on the provisions concerning Bill C-68 was in 1998. We had an opposition day motion before the

House of Commons on Bill C-68. At that time 11 members of the NDP caucus voted in opposition to Bill C-68 and 9 members of the caucus, including the members for Vancouver East and Burnaby—Douglas, voted in favour of the provisions of Bill C-68.

At the provincial level, there has been opposition to Bill C-68 from the Manitoba NDP government, the Saskatchewan NDP government and from the Yukon territorial government. In fact the Saskatchewan NDP government is part of the court action to try to stop the federal government from going ahead with Bill C-68, the bill to register guns.

Today, the Saskatchewan NDP government, which is the most progressive, social democratic government over the last 50 to 60 years anywhere in North America, does not co-operate in the prosecutions of people violating the gun registry bill. I support the position my provincial government has taken.

That is a little history about the NDP on this issue.

What I want to do today is to point out, like my House leader from Vancouver East, that in our caucus we come from different perspectives and different points of view. We respect each other's points of view. We come from principled positions, and the member for Burnaby—Douglas has certainly taken a very consistent principled position and I respect him for that. I would do the same thing on the other side of the issue, reflecting what I think is right and reflecting what my constituents certainly tell me is their position.

In a democratic Parliament we should have more opportunities to speak our minds and speak on behalf of our constituents in terms of for what they elect us to come here. There is too often in our parliamentary system a throttling of, in essence, free speech by members on all sides of the House. It is the kind of parliamentary reform we should be looking at in getting a true reflection of the Canadian public.

The registration bill, Bill C-68, is not about gun control. We favour gun control. It is about the registration of firearms. In my opinion, and the opinion of people I represent, the registration of firearms simply does not work in reducing the number of illegal weapons in the country or in reducing the number of murders in the country. There is no evidence of that whatsoever. If it does not work, we can spend the money much better elsewhere to make our streets safer and to have public safety in our country.

• (1210)

Handguns have been restricted and registered for a number of years in Canada, yet Statistics Canada tells us that over 75% of the people in this country who commit homicides with a handgun do not register them. They have unregistered guns. When we talk to the ordinary police on the street and ordinary people around the country, it is hard to believe that if one registers a firearm one is going to deter any kind of crime in Canada.

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Most crime falls into three categories. There is organized crime. I do not think we are going to see people who are involved in organized crime registering a gun. There are crimes of passion, the fit of the moment. Whether a gun is registered or not, if someone is deranged or is motivated to commit a crime of passion, that crime is mostly likely going to occur. The other way that a lot of people die from firearms in this country is suicide, and again I do not see what the deterrent would be to have people actually register guns.

The other point I want to make is extremely important to me. I grew up with first nations people. Our farm near Wynyard, Saskatchewan was right on the Day Star First Nation and one mile from the Kawacatoose First Nation. I went to school all my life with first nations people and support very strongly their treaty rights and their right to self-government. I can tell the House that the opposition to the gun registry among first nations people is very strong. Today the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations is challenging the legality of Bill C-68 in the courts. I support that challenge. I hope our first nations people win. I support our first nations people. In my opinion, it is a violation of their treaty rights and their hunting rights, which are actually enshrined in our Constitution. They should be protected for the first nations people of our country.

I have in my riding 12 first nations, 10 others and the two Indian bands that I have already referred to. I also have many thousands of urban aboriginal first nations and Métis people. I have Métis people in the rural part of my riding. I stand with those Métis people in their opposition to the registration of firearms as a violation of their rights and privileges.

Those are some reasons why if this were a votable motion I would be voting in favour of the motion, let alone the feedback that we get from our constituents. I remember running into an 80 year old grandmother over Christmas who registered her 13 guns. She kept one, she said, because she used to shoot racoons and badgers from her back porch when she lived on the farm. She was annoyed that she had to register these guns. She felt that it was a violation of her rights, but she did it anyway because most Canadian citizens, of course, are very law-abiding.

I want to make one last point, which is the cost of this program. I have been in Parliament since 1968 except for my four year sabbatical and I can honestly say that I have never seen such a financial boondoggle of mismanagement in my life. It is something that is absolutely incredible. A program that the minister of justice of the day said would cost \$2 million is now going to cost more than \$1 billion. When the Canadian public thinks about that, it can think of so many better ways to spend that \$1 billion.

In Saskatchewan, a \$60,000 firearms safety program was cancelled because of the lack of money, yet the Liberals will shovel millions and millions of dollars to their friends in Groupaction and other groups and consultants right across the country.

I was reading in one of the newspapers that a consultant was billing the government for \$1,000 a day 365 days a year in terms of the gun registry program. With that kind of financial boondoggle, there is no way under the sun that I can vote to add another \$59 million or \$68 million for the registry, not when we have this public squandering of money. I appeal to the government to come to its senses in terms of this financial waste and financial mismanagement.

●(1215)

Let us just think what could be done with that money: more hospitals, help for children living in poverty, affordable housing, public safety, and police officers on the streets. Two Regina police officers were in my office this morning and they told me that we need more officers on the street. With that, I ask members of the House to support the motion before the House today even though it is not votable.

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Cumberland—Colchester.

I listened to the member's speech and was impressed with his comments and the fact that he took a look at this and is following the issue objectively. He has taken a principled stand.

It is a complicated issue that is much more basic than the government would like us to believe. I would ask Canadians to think about this issue for a moment in terms of the cost. At the end of the day and in terms of costs and the success of the bill, I would ask them to think about what has changed in their communities with regard to long gun registration. What has changed on the street they live on? What has changed in their homes? What has changed in the overall safety of our schools and our communities after we have spent \$1 billion trying to register long guns that are owned by law-abiding citizens?

As the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle already mentioned, screening was already in place under Bill C-17, the Conservative gun control bill. Firearms acquisition permits were all there previously as well.

This long gun registration is smoke and mirrors. It just obscures a number of other issues concerning justice, safety and public safety. It does nothing to make our streets any safer. It does not take guns out of the wrong hands, because Bill C-17 did that. It does not strengthen the storage responsibilities of a gun owner, because Bill C-17 did that. This legislation does not put in more licensing requirements, because Bill C-17 did that.

What it does is force all of the people who have already jumped through the hoops under Bill C-17 to prove they are safe firearms owners and to register their firearms. The very group of people that we have already spent hundreds of millions of dollars on to ensure that they are not a threat to public safety are now being told they have to register their firearms. But the people who are a threat to public safety, the criminals, the bike gangs, the organized crime groups in this country who routinely eliminate their competition, are not about to register their firearms.

Not only that, the majority of gun owners, I would say, have no criminal records. Many of them are seniors who have hunting rifles in their homes that are used for deer hunting or duck hunting. They have refused in large numbers to register their firearms. I do not have one or two neighbours in rural Nova Scotia who have not registered their firearms, I have hundreds. These people stop at stop signs. They do not have any speeding tickets. They have said, "We feel this is ridiculous and we are not going to register". They are law-abiding men and women, yet the government is going to force this down their throats. There is something seriously wrong with this.

I have no difficulty at all rising in this place and supporting reasonable, responsible, sensible gun control. I have a responsibility to my constituents to do that. I have a responsibility to members of my own family to do that. Safe storage, safe handling, screening of prospective gun owners, common sense: all of it was there under Bill C-17.

• (1220)

The new bill was brought with the promise that it would cost \$2 million a year to operate. We spent \$1 billion, with which every page in this place could have free tuition and, not only that, every one of their brothers and sisters in this country could have free tuition. If we want to help the youth in this country and do something with a billion dollars, there are a lot of things we could do with it. For \$1 billion, every university student in Canada could have free tuition this year. If we want to spend \$1 billion wisely, I suggest that this would be a wise use of \$1 billion.

This has stirred up more controversy and, quite frankly, wasted more debate time in this House, when there are other issues we should be debating, than any other subject I am aware of. We should take a look at the Auditor General's report. I urge Canadians to read it. She stated that the Department of Justice currently estimates the program costs at \$1 billion but this estimation "does not include all financial impacts on the government". In November 1994 when the government tabled its bill, the estimated cost of the program was \$2 million. This \$998 million is not just a miss; we are not even on the same map.

She also stated, "...the Department of Justice did not provide Parliament with an estimate of all the major additional costs that would be incurred" even though there was a "regulatory" requirement for the department to do so. What does that say? The government broke the rules, broke its own laws and kept Parliament "in the dark". Somehow that is okay because the government will mask this as public safety instead of just filling Liberal pockets like they usually do.

Funds were allocated to various other government entities such as Correctional Service of Canada and the National Parole Board. Of the \$126 million allocated to these two departments, only \$7 million was actually used by them, with "\$119 million of the original \$126 million" reallocated "to the Department of Justice for the program". Canadians were lied to. The money was allocated to one department, was surreptitiously taken out of that department under the cover of darkness, and transferred to another department.

The Auditor General's report states that only a mere "30 percent" of the total funds of \$750 million, which was the amount in 2001-02 used for the long gun registry, was acquired "through the main

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appropriations method", meaning that 70% of the funding for the implementation of the program was acquired through supplementary estimates. That is not what the supplementary estimates are meant to be used for.

Again it is this: break the rules, steal from the public, persecute a group of people who have no criminal records and have never broken the law and make a decision that they have become a danger to society when there is absolutely no statistical evidence to prove that.

I have only a minute left, but I want to know when the government plans to start arresting all these people, because there is not a dozen or a half a dozen, there are hundreds and hundreds of thousands who have said, "We do not agree with this law. We have obeyed it up to this point. We agree with the safe handling, the safe storage and the courses and we agree that this makes us better gun owners and more responsible citizens, but we are not going to register our long guns".

• (1225)

These are people's fathers, mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers. Does the government intend to start throwing them in jail because enforcement is what the Auditor General does and she now controls the package?

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the member for South Shore a question.

I was talking to a member of the board of the directors of a publicly created company the other day. He was telling me that when the company has a capital cost project of any consequence at all it has a standard cost overrun procedure, an accountability automatically built in. He said that if a project estimate goes over 5% the officials and engineers or whoever is involved with the account must come back, report to the board, and explain why it is over 5%. If it goes to 10% or looks like it is going to be a 10% cost overrun the project must stop. That is a publicly traded company in the private sector.

Does the member think the same standard should be applied to the government? We know that when this bill was sold to Parliament and Parliament voted for it we were told that it would cost a net of \$2 million a year. Now the Auditor General says it will be \$1 billion in the end. This is a cost overrun of unbelievable precedent setting proportion. Does the hon. member think the government should be held accountable and should there be some kind of accountability for the government the same as there is in the private sector?

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Mr. Speaker, I absolutely believe that the government should be held accountable, including every minister of the Crown who touched this project and allowed the cost overruns to continue. I am not a lawyer but in law it would be called aiding and abetting a criminal act. They aided and abetted \$998 million of public money to be hidden and circumvent the parliamentary process.

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It is not uncommon to have cost overruns in any capital project of 5% or 10%. Many members in this place would not disagree with that statement. If someone planned to build a house tomorrow, most contractors would say there is a 10% margin of error for capital cost overruns. However, I do not even know what the percentage is of \$998 million versus \$2 million. Is that 100,000% greater or something like that? It is a phenomenal number.

Yes, there will be cost overruns, but a criminal act has occurred. The main estimates are supposed to be put through the Parliament of Canada unless there are unforeseen costs, then they are put in the supplementary estimates. The Treasury Board supported this.

An hon. member: That's not a criminal act.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: That's right, it should not be referred to as a criminal act. It should be referred to as an omission of justice because that is exactly what it was. The ministers responsible for the Treasury Board, justice, and the subsequent ministers responsible for this knew they were not following parliamentary procedure and deliberately hid the costs from the Canadian public.

They went a step further than that. They also did not hold their deputy ministers nor their assistant deputy ministers responsible. They did not hold anyone who touched this project in the civil service responsible. It has always been my submission that politicians should be responsible for the civil service and not the other way around. I think in this case it is so blatant that the whole gamut, the entire group of people who touched this, should be held accountable for it.

• (1230)

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to the motion and I too will refer to the government's request for more money.

The member for Regina—Qu'Appelle came here in 1968, but I came in 1988. I was retired in 1993 and was recycled again in 1997. When I was here during the first term, our Conservative government explored the options for gun control. I clearly remember our caucus being given presentations on the different things that were available. Based on the advice from the department we were told the most appropriate things to include in a proposed gun control bill.

We chose safe storage of firearms, training and firearms acquisition certificates, but we specifically ruled out the registration of long guns. It was for a number of reasons, one of which was the cost, and department officials indicated there was no purpose in it. It was a possibility but the cost far outweighed any advantage so we took it off the table.

If I remember correctly we brought in Bill C-17. It passed and has done well but there was no long gun registration. For some reason the justice minister of this government decided on his own when he came in—like a private mission—that he was going to have a long gun registry no matter what the cost, inconvenience or benefit. He was going to ram it through.

I understand that the government has now said that this will be a confidence vote. That raises questions about how one could have confidence. How could anyone have confidence when the Auditor General said it has been a cover up, that the government has not

consulted Parliament, and that its cost overruns have gone from \$2 million to a billion dollars to implement the program?

How could we have confidence in that system? I have a man in my riding who registered one gun and he received five registration stickers. What does that tell us about the ability and credibility of the gun registry? He got five stickers so he could pass them out to his friends if he wanted to. If the police were to check the guns they would look like they were registered but they would not really be registered anywhere. They would be the wrong guns. It is incredible.

Another man brought in a cancelled cheque. He paid his bill in 2001. The registry will not acknowledge that it received the money even though he has a cancelled cheque. It is stamped on the back that it was deposited by the firearms registry but it does not know where the money went. How could we have confidence in that?

Another gentleman, a doctor in Springhill, who registered five guns only got three registrations back and he still does not understand what is going on.

An hon. member: And he is a danger to society.

Mr. Bill Casey: Oh yes, he is a very dangerous man, this doctor.

How could we have confidence in a system that the government said would cost \$2 million and then all of a sudden it is at a billion dollars?

I believe that there has been a lot of misleading information. I talked to a former employee of the gun registry. He told me that when the computers broke down employees were instructed to tell people they were upgrading the computers when in fact they were just broken. These are the billion dollar computers.

I do not understand how we can spend a billion dollars when all that is being done is the creation of a databank with firearms and owners in it, tying the two together and providing access. I do not know how that could cost a billion dollars. But the employee was told to mislead Canadians citizens when they called and tried to get their registration done. They were told to say they were upgrading the computers when in fact the computers were just broken.

We remember the words of the Auditor General who said the House was kept in the dark. I do not know how we could have confidence in a system like that.

This is not about gun control; it is about gun safety. We should talk about gun safety. That is the issue here. How can we make guns more safe, how can we make storage more safe, and how can we improve the storage and ensure that they are safe? Registering them does not make them safe. A registered gun can still be used for the same purposes as an unregistered gun.

We have required handguns to be registered for decades in this country and they are still used for criminal acts and violence against people. Does registering them do any good? It is about squandering valuable funds. It is an incredible waste of money.

•(1235)

These funds could buy according to one estimate, 200, 300, 400, 500 or 600 MRI machines in the country. Every single person in this Parliament has people waiting to have an MRI. MRIs could save far more lives than registering rifles. In fact, I do not believe registering rifles will save any lives.

The same amount of money could be used for drugs for seniors and the disabled. Speaking of safety, it could help buy helicopters. We could do drug research. Instead, we are pouring the money down a black hole. How could anyone spend this much money on a databank, a computer that takes people's names and their gun details, and associates them and gives access to it. It is not complicated and it should not cost millions of dollars. I predict that some day when the auditors get into this and find out where the money went, then we will find some awful information.

Last December the government asked for \$72 million more to add to this program. Then for some reason it withdrew that amount. Now the government is asking for \$59 million. I wonder where the \$13 million difference went? Did the government not need it in the first place, or did it find someplace else to bring it in from? Why did the government ask for \$72 million then and \$59 million now? Next year it is projected to be \$113 million.

We say enough is enough. People who say they support the gun registry regardless of how much it costs is a stupid thing to say. Do they say we will have the gun registry whether it costs \$2 million as it was originally projected or a billion now, \$2 billion, or \$3 billion? Does cost not matter? I do not see how that response can be accepted. We certainly do not accept it. Every dollar must be spent wisely.

We must get value for our taxpayers' dollars because it is their money. We should be responsible and ensure that it is spent wisely and that it is accountable.

The Conservative Party is against the gun registry. We are totally in favour of gun control and gun safety. We brought in Bill C-17 which was a wise and sensible approach to gun control. However, before all the aspects of Bill C-17 were even implemented the Liberals brought in this other layer of gun registry even before they knew if Bill C-17 would work or not. It has worked well and most gun owners now comply and agree, use it and value it.

Before it was even allowed to be totally implemented the government brought in this other registry for long guns. Officials told us that it was not even sensible and viable.

•(1240)

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

It is a pleasure to rise in the House today and participate in the motion put forward by the Canadian Alliance, the official opposition. The motion asks the House to support a stop in the funding of the firearms registry until the government provides a cost benefit analysis and accurate accounting of spending to date.

Before I proceed I would like to point out, as have my colleagues before me, that I adamantly disagree with the government's strong-

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arm tactics regarding the gun registry and other legislation that it has brought in. The Prime Minister is warning any dissident backbenchers that a vote against increasing financial support for the beleaguered registry amounts to a vote of non-confidence in the government which could force a snap election or expulsion from the Liberal caucus.

The Prime Minister is warning them to stick with him through thick and thin on the gun registry without regard to the amount of dollars being thrown at it or there could be a snap election, he would not sign their papers, or there could be expulsion from the Liberal caucus.

I would like to caution those same members of Parliament that a vote against the wishes of their constituents could ultimately result in the very same thing. It could result in not only their removal from caucus but in their removal from the House. Regardless, during the next federal election I guarantee that their stand or lack thereof will become very evident to their constituents.

Last month the House was prepared to debate a motion put forward by the Senate seeking concurrence on the division of Bill C-10. The Senate attempted to split what was once Bill C-15B, creating two separate pieces of legislation: Bill C-10A, an act to amend the Criminal Code in relation to firearms; and Bill C-10B, an act to amend the Criminal Code with respect to cruelty to animals. The Senate has passed Bill C-10A without amendment but it is still in the process of considering Bill C-10B.

Unfortunately, the Senate motion was yanked from the House agenda as the Liberal House leader was uncertain as to how his backbench would vote, although he already had ensured, by way of time allocation, that the debate on this controversial issue was limited.

The government is attempting to do whatever it can to avoid further embarrassment over the firearms registry's horrific cost overruns. It is refusing to call a time out, at least until the exact costs of the firearms registry are revealed. The government is refusing, despite eight provinces, despite three territories, despite provinces, premiers and the public demanding that the gun registry be suspended or scrapped completely.

Five provinces and three territories have opted out of the administration of the gun registry completely, while Ontario is refusing to implement the gun registration requirements in Bill C-68. Several other provinces are refusing to enforce or prosecute the Firearms Act offences.

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In light of this lack of confidence and co-operation, I cannot understand why the government would be so resolved to proceed and not to suspend it or to at least call a time out. We need a clear, accurate cost benefit analysis done immediately so that Canadians, the general public, not the government, can decide if the firearms registry is an effective way of saving lives, or if that money could better be spent saving lives through increased cancer research or eliminating long waiting lines for heart surgery and improved preventive medicine, or even for resourcing police law enforcement agencies throughout the country in a different method.

I stand by the Canadian Alliance's longstanding position to repeal Bill C-68 and replace it with tougher sentences for those who use firearms in the commission of a criminal offence. With 22 pages and 63 clauses amending Bill C-68, Bill C-15 was a clear admission by the government that the firearms registry or that Bill C-68 was a complete failure.

•(1245)

Bill C-68, which was really the hallmark of this Liberal government, consisted of 137 pages of new laws with respect to firearms and weapons. The first enabling regulation introduced in November 1996 added an additional 85 pages, while those introduced on October 30, 1997 added approximately 65 pages to our changing firearms law.

It is important to note, especially for those such as myself who were not here in 1995, that there was a provision within Bill C-68 that stipulated that when these amendments were made, the amended regulations did not have to be reviewed by Parliament. As well understood under clause 119(2), "the justice minister may enact firearms regulations without parliamentary review if the regulations in his opinion are 'immaterial' or 'insubstantial'" and, under clause 119(3) "if the regulation is 'urgent'".

To date the government has enacted legislation using that clause 16 times. Furthermore, it failed to report these changes to the House of Commons as required by the Firearms Act until the oversight was exposed by the insight of the Canadian Alliance and one of our members of Parliament. Effectively, those regulatory powers negate our parliamentary system of checks and balances that are supposed to ensure that the government of the day does not exercise autocratic muscle stretching powers that it has so obviously wanted to do.

What may be immaterial, what may be insubstantial and what may be urgent in the opinion of the minister may be very material or very substantial and perhaps not even urgent to Parliament, particularly to members of Parliament who represent large rural constituencies where firearms are viewed more as a tool of the trade than a weapon.

We must be apprised of any and all changes to the firearms legislation in a clear and concise fashion, as must all Canadians, in order to avoid unintentionally breaking the law.

In closing, I would like to point out that since its inception in 1995, Bill C-68 has remained the most controversial and despised piece of legislation that has been put forward by the Liberal government, legislation that my party has fought every step of the way.

Repeatedly the Canadian Alliance has questioned, and we will continue to question, the necessity of registering the long guns of

law-abiding citizens. We also question the estimated cost of the firearms registry that the former justice minister originally projected to be approximately \$85 million. The minister remained adamant, even in the face of expert calculation, such as that put forward by Simon Fraser University Professor Gary Mauser, that the registry would not cost more than what he had predicted.

In a brief presented to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs in May 1995, Professor Mauser came forward and he noted that "according to my estimates, registering 'field and stream' firearms will cost Canadian taxpayers at least \$750 million and possibly more than a billion dollars over the next five years".

The former justice minister and his Liberal colleagues scoffed at the evidence Professor Mauser brought forward. The following is a quote by the minister, "we have provided our estimates of the cost of implementing universal registration over the next five years. We say it will cost \$85 million...We encourage the members opposite to examine our estimates. We are confident we will demonstrate the figures are realistic and accurate".

I think the former justice minister, the member for Etobicoke Centre, owes Professor Mauser, and many other experts who recognized the absolutely horrific cost of this registry, an apology because Professor Mauser was right and he was wrong.

Although the Canadian Alliance, especially my hon. colleague from Yorkton—Melville, has attempted to do so for seven years, the Auditor General finally blew the lid off the ridiculous cost estimates of the former justice minister and his two predecessors. She blew them out of the water. It was the Auditor General who determined that the government had been hiding the real cost of the registry from Parliament.

•(1250)

I again implore the House to reject the additional \$59 million in funding for the firearms registry. We must stop the bleeding now. I call upon the Minister of Justice and the Liberal Party to immediately put the registry on ice until a complete cost benefit analysis can be done.

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the remarks of my colleague from the Canadian Alliance. Before putting a question to him, I want to put on the record a couple of statements that have been made by people working on the front line against violence.

For example, I am sure the hon. member is familiar with the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime. Steve Sullivan, who is the president of the resource centre, said:

I am alarmed that the voices of the victims of gun violence are being drowned out by the controversy over costs. We know from the polls that the majority of Canadians continue to support this law in spite of the costs, but the vocal opponents seem to be dominating the media and the political agenda. We are here to say we have fought for this law and will not waver in our support.

That is a group representing victims of crime. The hon. member knows as well that the Canadian Police Association, which is on the Hill today, has strongly supported the bill.

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Chief Vince Bevan, the vice-president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, has said "Six inquests over the past decade, three of them here in Ottawa, recommended licensing firearms owners and registering firearms. If this legislation saves even one life it will have proven its worth".

The Canadian Public Health Association and groups like the B.C. Institute Against Family Violence have said that this is critically important legislation.

If the Canadian Alliance gets its way this afternoon, every penny that is allocated toward gun control in Canada under the provisions of the supplementary estimates will be wiped out. In fact, most of that money is going toward licensing firearms owners, not toward the registry but toward licensing.

Therefore, what the member and the Canadian Alliance seem to be saying is that they do not believe in the licensing of firearms owners or that people should have a background check before they apply for a firearm in case they have a record of violent crime or domestic violence. The Canadian Alliance is trying to wipe out every penny of money for gun control, including that for licensing.

How can the member justify that attack on public health and public safety?

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Mr. Speaker, first, let me make it abundantly clear that I am absolutely, unequivocally in favour of gun control. I believe that if we want effective gun control we need to ensure that someone who commits a criminal offence with a firearm will never have a firearm again. That is gun control. If we want to effectively deal with gun control we must stop the smuggling of illegal firearms from across the border. That means putting more money back into the hands of enforcement officers.

The member from Burnaby quoted someone who said that if the registry even saved the life of one individual it would all be worth it. We are taking a billion dollars out of the security or law enforcement budget and putting it into a gun registry that is not working and will not work.

My question back to the member is, would the dollars not be better spent in more resourcing, more law enforcement officers and fighting organized crime?

Are we in favour of gun control? Yes, everyone is in favour of gun control, but is everyone in favour of a billion dollar registry that will be ineffective, that will not work, that we were guaranteed would not cost more than \$80 million and which we are now in a place where it is becoming feverishly close to a billion dollars and could very well cost over \$200 million a year to maintain?

Members should make no mistake about it. We want effective gun control but a registry is not doing it. All we are asking for today is a cost benefit analysis. We want the government to show us that it will work. Victims rights cannot do it, the government cannot do it and nobody in the House can show us, except perhaps the Speaker, that it is effective and it saves lives.

If we put more officers on the street and gave them more resources to fight crime I believe we will then see those lives saved. That is what we are calling for, effective use.

● (1255)

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise again today on an opposition motion on the lack of credibility surrounding the Liberal government's firearms registry program, which was initiated in 1995.

There is some huge controversy surrounding this. There are a few members of the Liberal backbench who have found a stance, I cannot say courage in the House, that finally benefits their own constituents, the people who elected them. They are saying that they cannot support this. Whether they agree with the thrust of the legislation, when a billion dollar price tag is hung on it, they are saying that they are not getting any kind of value for our dollar or best value for this government program. They are saying that they want to step back and look at it.

The justice minister of the day, in December brought forward in the supplementary estimates (A) a request for some \$70 million dollars. He said that he needed that kind of money to keep the wonderful program alive, well and running until the end of the year, which comes up on April 1.

When the government decided that it did not have the support of its own folks, rather than face that embarrassment, it pulled the supplementary estimate (A) for the gun bill off the table. It took it away and we did not get a chance to say no to it. The Liberal backbenchers had a couple more months to go and check with their constituents, who are really upset.

I have had the opportunity to work in a lot of communities throughout Ontario and it is the number one issue. It is not about public safety. People realize that. If there were a real concern about public safety, we would have taken that money and put 2,000 frontline police officers on the street and done a great job.

An hon. member: Five thousand.

Mr. Gerry Ritz: A former policeman says that we could have done it with 5,000. That is even better and it makes it even more tragic that we have built this straw man into the gun registry, this placebo, that we will all be more secure in our streets and in our homes because people have a slip a paper beside their gun. We all know that does not work. It has been tried in other jurisdictions, and I will touch on them later.

The member for Halton spoke earlier about CPA day on the Hill, the Canadian Police Association. I had the opportunity to visit with three fellows from Saskatchewan. They did their lobbying on their issues. Part of their request was for more funding. I said that I would be happy to do that for them.

I have no problem with more funding for our frontline police. It should have been part of our security budget. Instead of this global thing of tracking down terrorists in the Mediterranean and God knows where, let us have some security at home as well in that \$7 billion budget of a year ago which the government called security. It is not showing up. We have less police on the streets today. We have a retirement rate that says that we will lose the well-trained guys and we will have to bring in some rookies to try to fill their spots which will create some problems.

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Organized crime is light-years ahead of what justice and police officers have been able to keep up with, with their contracting budgets. They have more areas to cover than they ever dreamed. The Internet has opened up a whole new world for criminals and the police just do not have the resources or the allocations to cover those off. Here we see money going in the wrong direction.

The government makes a big thing out of public support. It has the CPA onside. It might have the leader of that, a fellow from Saskatchewan who should know better, but his political ties say that he will support this thing. He also has a couple of quotes that are very telling.

The fellow's name is Griffin. He suggests that the police should tread lightly in enforcing this law and that they should use discretion when they run up against gun owners who do not want to comply with the law as an act of civil disobedience. He says that it is unenforceable, yet he supports it. His own guys are doing without and he says that they cannot charge these folks. He is absolutely right. There have been a few folks who have tried to become arrested and cannot. The government will not process it because it knows it does not have the constitutional backing to do it.

Here is another quote. It reads, "Peel Regional Chief, Noel Catney, has expressed concerns about the flood of cheap, illegal guns in Canada". It has gone up, not down. Chief Catney says that the import and trafficking of firearms is just as much a problem for them as investigating illegal drugs and that the cost of guns on the streets has declined drastically over the years. The black market is thriving under this.

I remember the justice minister from Edmonton at that time was warned by the member for Yorkton—Melville. He said that the black market was going to do well. She would not believe him. Here it is, the police officers themselves are saying that. Chief Catney said that about 1,000 crime guns were seized last year in his city alone. They were not registered and the registry did not help them all.

We all know what Chief Fantino of Toronto said. He said that this was a total waste of time, energy and money and they did not even use it.

I asked the CPA folks who visited me today whether they were part of the 2,000 hits a day that the government claims the police are doing on this registry because it is so wonderful. They said that they did approach it every once in a while but if they go back again and again, it is called redial. They cannot get through either. The Internet site is a dismal failure.

● (1300)

I have folks coming into my office who are trying to follow the program, and they cannot even get the application forms. Nobody answers the phone on the other end. An ex-RCMP staff sergeant, a tremendous guy, is the head of the CFC in my region and he cannot begin to keep up with all the calls that are coming through because there are no answers to the questions. Public safety, I do not think so. There is a lot of misdirection out there.

During question period the other day, I was talking about a multiple convicted child molester who had been released on the streets of my riding. Thank God the police warned the people about this guy being there because the government would not do it. This

guy is a multiple offender, but the government will not put him on its sex offender registry because it will not be retroactive. It will not do the same thing with its DNA database. It will not go retroactively so these guys can be caught quicker. The Solicitor General has said that it is all about privacy and all about constitutional challenges. What is different between that and Bill C-68? The government is invading my privacy with a very intrusive form that I have to fill out. It is invading my constitutional rights.

Dr. Ted Morton from the University of Calgary did a tremendous paper on the constitutionality of Bill C-68. The government does not have a leg on which to stand. The Supreme Court does not have a leg on which to stand. To that end, the FSIN native group from Saskatchewan is challenging it. Eight provinces, three territories, everybody, is going to challenge this thing or not support it. This is a law to which nobody will adhere.

The justice minister said on March 21:

The criminal law is a blunt tool; it is only effective if it is applied consistently and if it reflects true social consensus on an issue.

That statement flies in the face of everything that is happening today. When he stood in the House this morning, why did he not say that what he said the other day and what he was saying today totally contradicted each other. He does not know from where he is coming. He is trying to get a political answer to a policy situation that has no merit.

I invite Liberal backbenchers to stand up tonight and vote against this money. They should not hide. They should not absent themselves from the vote because their folks at home will know. The whip told Liberal members why they should vote for it. She said:

I think that when Canadians elect a Liberal government, they expect us to fulfill the policies on which we ran, and that means that those people who ran on those policies and supported the gun registry in two elections are expected to support it.

A lot of those Liberals were elected in spite of the gun registry. Some of them were darn close, 50 votes and so on like that. This is the issue that will drive that wedge. Thankfully, folks out there are waking up and they will demand accountability on their folks here tonight. If it brings down the government, because the Prime Minister decides it is a confidence motion, then so be it. The public does not have confidence in this issue. They may have supported it at a cost of \$2 million, maybe even \$100 million, but at \$1 billion and climbing, there is no support for this.

There is no public safety because a piece of paper beside my firearm does not make it safe. The illicit trade of guns has gone sky high, and the police do not have the resources to catch up to it.

Editorials are popping up all across the country saying that this registry should be scrapped, that it is not worth saving. The Australians are a couple of years ahead of us on this. Here are the first year's results in Australia: homicides are up 3.2%; assaults are up 8.6%; and armed robberies are up 44%. In Victoria alone, homicides with firearms are now up 300%.

We had a handgun registry. We had a long gun registry during the wars and during uprisings. In 1950 the justice minister of the day, Stuart Garson, told Parliament that 45,000 handguns originally registered in 1939 could not be found. They were lost. I happen to have a couple of those now. I am standing here as a criminal because some bureaucrat somewhere lost my registration from years ago. If I go to re-register these guns, I will be told I am a criminal just because someone messed up on the paperwork on guns that I owned. I am ready to fight that one all the way.

While the ownership of ordinary rifles and shotguns continue to remain completely unregistered following World War II, homicide rates and suicide rates in the forties, fifties and sixties were actually lower than they are today.

• (1305)

There we have it. This is a totally failed program. The minister stands over there and he will never release the numbers. Even the other day he was asked and he said that he could not release them, but he did release them. His deputy minister released them in the Senate.

When the Auditor General says that Parliament has been left out and totally misled, this again reinforces it. The government will tell the Senate committee but it will not tell us in the House.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I know the member made reference to the procurement of handguns and illegal weapons. In any major city in Canada it seems to me that this is a common problem where illegal guns can be acquired on very short notice.

I was in Toronto about three years ago. I had a ride with an undercover city policeman in the City of Toronto who told me that an illegal gun could be obtained with enough money within two hours in any major city in Canada. The gun registry system does not deal with that issue. Yet it is a major problem and could be bigger than ever.

My colleague will know that we have had handgun registration since 1934. There are probably more crimes committed with handguns now than there ever has been, so it is a failed model from which to work.

What is the member's opinion on how the government intends to solve the problem of smuggling and acquiring illegal guns in our major cities.

Mr. Gerry Ritz: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question by my colleague from Peace River. He has felt the same thrust from his constituents as I have. They do not agree with this because they know sending in the numbers for something does not make it safe.

The government talks about the huge cost of doing this. The overruns were created because it did not have a computer system that could handle it. There were problems with all these numbers it had to

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work with, the descriptions of folks and everything like that. It is done on an annual basis in the province of Ontario.

The numbers of drivers in Ontario are about the same as the number of gun owners the government says are across Canada; roughly 3 million. The number of vehicles registered in Ontario is 7 million which is pretty close to what the government says there in firearms nationwide.

These are the same kinds of numbers. Ontario does it with serial numbers for cars, descriptions of the driver, hair colour and colour of eyes, and all those wonderful things. These are the same types of requirements, and Ontario does it on an annual basis.

The government has had since 1995 to do it and cannot get it right. I guess it bought the wrong program. Now it is talking about a new program. Why does it not go to Ontario and pirate that one, if it really wants to spend its money properly?

No one on this side of the House or anywhere out there in the real world has a problem with gun control. This program targets the wrong folks. It in no way addresses the black market or the bad guys that use illegal guns daily. They steal my gun and commit a crime. Am I liable? I do not think so. They broke into my house, they stole my gun and then they used it in the commission of a crime. They have been bad three times and because I own that gun, I am criminal under this stupid legislation. That is how perverse it is.

No one has a problem with safe storage. We have done that for years. It is called common sense. No one has a problem with safe handling. We have done that for years. Again, it is called common sense. We know which end goes boom and we do not point it at anybody. It is that simple. It is not rocket science. No one has a problem with training. It should be mandatory, and it was.

However now the federal government in its hurry for this public safety has cut the funding for training. How perverse. If we want people to be safe with firearms, we train them that way but the government has cut the funding for that. It just flies in the face of logic.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will give a scenario and I ask that the member comment on it. It is a situation that arose in Calgary not too long ago.

An elderly gentleman in his sixties came home and surprised a couple of burglars in his house. They assaulted him. He was transported to the hospital. The incident was reported to the police. The police officers attended. They searched his house and found a gun with a bolt in it, a .22 Cooney rifle, sitting in a closet. The police officers looked at that situation, rushed to the hospital, arrested the man, brought him to the police station, fingerprinted him, took his picture and charged him.

The issue was a 30 year old Cooney rifle. Could the member comment on how this gun legislation will encourage more of that?

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● (1310)

Mr. Gerry Ritz: That is tough to do in less than a minute, Mr. Speaker. I could go on and on for these types of things. I have a file full of the same type of thing, such as a fellow who is involved in a fender-bender and has his old gopher gun behind the seat of his truck. Suddenly it is a gun related crime. The same thing happened to this poor gentleman. He did not even bring the gun out of the closet. An old Cooley is probably a single shot and it makes a damn poor club; that is the best we can say about it

There is this whole concept that firearms somehow are a weapon. They are not. A firearm is a paperweight until somebody puts ammunition in it, points it and pulls the trigger. Until that point it is a paperweight. There is this whole perverse idea, especially in major cities, that a gun is just waiting to kill someone. No, it is not. There is no instance of this. I read the quotes from 1940, 1950 and 1960 when firearms were a lot more loosely held than they are now and there was no problem at all.

This legislation is doomed to fail, is bound to fail and will continue to fail and there is nothing positive we can say about it.

Mr. Joe Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am going to be splitting my time with the member for Ottawa Centre.

I have listened quite closely to the debate as it has unfolded today and thought I might just put some thoughts and issues and maybe some facts on the table, something novel; I might try that.

I was a little disturbed by the previous speaker. There is an old adage in politics that if we disagree with somebody we attack their argument. If that does not work, then we attack their motive. If that does not work, then we attack the person. I sat here and listened to that member attack the credibility of the executive director of the Canadian Police Association and the reason I say this is that there is a pattern. The people who oppose this legislation are very quick to attack people on a very personal level. It is a kind of ends justifies the means approach, but I think it should be very clear to Canadians what they are doing when they do that. They are defaulting on being able to attack the argument and they are defaulting on being able to attack the motives.

In fact, the Speaker of this House has been subjected to this. The gentlemen who prepared the management report that outlined the history and the costs associated with this found themselves at the other end of that. When I stood up today, they started yelling out my plurality and my riding. I am a backbencher. I am one of these people they would paint as having some sort of yoke around my neck.

An hon. member: You're the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.

Mr. Joe Jordan: I'm not the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister. Maybe you should keep up on events.

I will proudly stand in my place tonight. I think it is important to point out some facts. Late last fall, the Auditor General tabled a report that has been characterized in any number of ways, but at the end of the day she was absolutely clear that her report was not an indictment of gun control. I went to the public accounts committee when the Auditor General presented because I was interested in this.

She made a very specific complaint that the money was allocated through supplementary estimates rather than main estimates. Before I put Canadians to sleep on that technicality, let me say that she said that every cent "was approved by Parliament...". If the learned members opposite want to dispute that statement—

An hon. member: I will.

Mr. Joe Jordan: Go ahead. She said it. Maybe the member should keep in mind that he has two ears and one mouth.

What I said was, that was what she said. If you have a problem with the Auditor General, take it up—

The Deputy Speaker: Let me just remind members to make their interventions through the Chair. When we get to questions and comments members will have the opportunity to make the appropriate comments or ask the questions as they see fit.

● (1315)

Mr. Joe Jordan: Mr. Speaker, I guess the point I am trying to make is that it is very difficult to carry on a reasoned debate on this when it sounds like it is a zoo across the way.

It is also interesting to hear the members say that we should look at what Ontario does with its licensing of cars, that maybe we should just do what Ontario does. I have a copy of the Ontario auditor general's report, which discusses their computerization of the land registry system in Ontario, a project called POLARIS. It was supposed to cost \$28 million, is now at over a billion dollars and is 11 years late. Oh yes, let us go running to Ontario and have them implement this for us.

One of the issues that I think members have to get their heads around is that the ditches are littered with large scale information technology projects at any level of government. If members would have read the management report, I think they would have seen that the management consultant made it very clear that one of the problems in this particular case was structural. What we had was a consultant that was also a vendor. I am not criticizing the consultants, but that is a lot like putting on a blindfold and opening your wallet.

We had structural problems in how this system was put together. If we look at the KPMG report, we see very clearly that all money is accounted for. The Hession report, I think, outlines very clear guidelines about how we can move forward in terms of large scale projects. We can think ahead because, based on Romanow, we are looking down the road at a potential national health registry. I think we are in a lot better position now to look at how we implement large IT projects.

In Ontario, by the way, the very minister who tabled a petition through the member for Lanark—Carleton today in opposition to the gun registry oversaw an integrated youth justice tracking project in Ontario. It cost \$329 million. Ontario never even got it working. The people of Ontario have wasted money on that, but on our particular project here the critical difference is that we have an asset that works. Why do I say that? I am just quoting the Canadian Police Association:

In short, the system is now up and running. Approximately 90% of gun owners have been licensed, and at least 70% of all estimated firearms in Canada have been registered. It would be irresponsible to suspend or abandon any element of this program, now that it is starting to deliver the intended results.

That is from the organization that represents the front line officers in this country.

What do we get in response when we bring that up? Anecdotal things: “I talked to somebody somewhere and they said this”. I think this quote certainly has more credibility than anecdotal statements.

A member stood up and said that this is the number one issue in Ontario. The last survey I could find was taken within the last four weeks. If the members have another one I would be glad to take a look at it. The survey said that 74% of Canadians support the current gun control legislation. What are the Ontario numbers? In support for gun control by region, says Environics Research group, in Ontario in 2001 it was 79%. In 2003 it was 78%, within the statistical margin of error. On support for a firearms registry, and this is the part of the program that accounts for one-third of the costs, with licensing being approximately two-thirds, Ontario had 57% support, with 40% opposed. In light of those statistics I do not know on what the opposition members are basing some of the statements they are making.

To come back to the steps taken, what the government did, I think responsibly, is that the Auditor General's report was timed with the request for additional supplementary estimates. I think the government acted quite responsibly.

We took a look at the issue, at how we could get this program to meet some of the criticisms the Auditor General levelled at the structural components of this thing. We have an additional piece of legislation that addresses directly some of the lessons learned as we try to implement this thing. But at the end of the day, this is the way the argument breaks down for me. I took the time to attend all the briefings. I took the time to request and get a tour of the facility actually using this system, which the police are accessing over 2,000 times a day, to see what we have.

• (1320)

At the end of the day, the government has built a program. Let us use an analogy. We have built a house. The opposition argues, and there may be some merit to it, that we spent too much money on some aspects of that house. Is it responsible to the taxpayers to demolish the house in some of kind of childish fit now? The asset works. What differentiates this from the IT projects that Ontario is trying to launch is that this one actually works. This one is supported by the police that use it.

As I say, in the face of what can only be described as anecdotal evidence contrary to the statistics that I put on the table, I think we have to act responsibly and follow the lead of the front line officers

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in this country. If members think that nothing has changed from December, I think they need to take a detailed look at what the government has done to get this project back on the rails.

Coming back to Ontario, the other argument we hear is that if we just gave this money to Ontario, it could come up with much better ways of dealing with it. I just went to the Ontario auditor general's website, where there is a multiple page and very critical analysis of how it spends its money in institutional services young offenders operations in terms of early parole systems. It was a very scathing auditor general's report. How did the same minister who is criticizing us on the gun registry and ignoring his own IT projects respond to his auditor general? With a personal attack. He accused the Auditor General of Ontario of having a political agenda.

I distinctly remember graduating from grade two and I get sick and tired of those kinds of tactics being replicated in this House.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the remarks of this member and I find it really unconscionable how he has twisted the Auditor General's report. The Auditor General clearly said that this report was not a comment on whether the gun registry was effective or not effective. She said this was just a survey of the costs that she could determine. She made it abundantly clear that the costs will be at least \$1 billion by the end of next year, but she said that there are many other costs unaccounted for and it could go well beyond that.

The question I have for this member is one which he completely avoided. He is not even debating the motion that we have before the House today. The question I have for him is this: Is he going to support this gun registry no matter what it costs? If it goes 500 times over budget, he is still supporting it. The Library of Parliament yesterday released a report showing that it is probably going to be another \$1 billion in just the next few years just for the enforcement costs. If we look at our motion we will see the long list of other items that are going to be very costly and that the government has not talked about. The Auditor General made it abundantly clear that the main problem she had with the government and its handling of the situation is that it kept Parliament “in the dark”.

He did not tell the truth—

An hon. member: Order.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz: —when he said that all of the costs are before us, that Parliament has been told the full costs. The Auditor General said clearly that the costs had not been revealed to Parliament. The enforcement costs could be huge.

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Is the member going to support this no matter how much it costs, without a cost benefit analysis? That was the point of our motion: without a cost benefit analysis. His own justice minister did not answer three questions I asked today. Where is the cost benefit analysis? What about the enforcement costs? What about all the things that now have to be done to go back and correct all of the errors in the system? None of those questions were answered.

Mr. Joe Jordan: Mr. Speaker, how can I answer questions that have not yet been asked? He is just asking them now.

Let us go back to grade two, then, and show and tell. I come here with something to present, I reference statistics and I get called a liar by the member. It is a personal attack.

Mr. Mac Harb: He should stand up and say he is sorry, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Notwithstanding the very strong differences of opinion, I caution members to be very judicious in the choice of their words. I can appreciate that what might have been said previously from the other side of the House, I was attentive, but I do not think and I know we will not go anywhere near the remarks that followed, so let us be a little more judicious.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville.

• (1325)

Mr. Joe Jordan: Mr. Speaker, I will rephrase it and you can check the blues. What he said was that the member did not tell the truth.

What I would like to say in answer to his question is, yes. I went to the briefings and I looked at the program. Before this particular profession I was involved in IT projects. I am confident that the government is taking the necessary steps to put this back on the rails and I will proudly support the additional moneys in the larger scope of the strategy.

However, regarding the particular member who asked me this question, whose life revolves around this issue, I have just gotten off a website called the Law-abiding Unregistered Firearms Association. It not only links to the member's website but it has its own little special section linking to him. The association is responsible for something called operation overload. It is a little disingenuous for the member to stand here and criticize the costs when a vital part of the push-back strategy was to drive the costs up. I do not think he can have it both ways.

What it is announcing now is a project called operation CPA. It is so upset with the police in this country who are making a clear statement supporting this registry and program that it is now going to counsel its members to undertake some kind of strategy to undermine the police in this country. That is where we have to draw the line.

We pay these people. They are in the field. They are knowledgeable and at least as knowledgeable as these people. The argument against the CPA's endorsement is that the executive director is acting alone and that he does not speak for his members. The other thing I have heard is that the police do not understand it. Canadians know that their police understand safety issues and they support this program, as do I.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to this motion. I will go back in time to look at the objectives of the legislation when it was first introduced in 1995 as the Firearms Act. The act had several objectives including the deterrence of the misuse of firearms, the licensing of all firearms, registration, tracking and transfer of all firearms, and the prevention of smuggling of illegal firearms.

Under the act all owners and users of firearms had to be licensed by January 1, 2001, and all firearms had to be registered by January 1, 2003. There are approximately 2.46 million firearm owners and approximately 7.9 million firearms in Canada. Of those 2.46 million owners, 90% are now licensed and over 70% have registered their guns.

In the debate today there are two things taking place at the same time. There are concerns by my colleagues on this side of the House as well as on the other of the House on the way the whole management of the firearms registry and how it is shaping up. Some of those concerns and the debate makes sense. I would suggest that the government is listening and has been listening since the introduction of the legislation back in 1995.

This is a legitimate debate; people want answers. There have been some problems in the system and people want the problems to be fixed.

Mr. Speaker, as you already know, the government has responded to those concerns. A number of measures have been taken by both the Department of Justice and now in the Attorney General's office to respond to those concerns by taking action, addressing those concerns, and dealing with them.

However, there is another issue in the House and that is the whole notion of whether or not we want to have gun control legislation and a registry. This particular debate is bothersome to me personally and to my constituents, and to the vast majority of Canadians, because Canadians have spoken on the issue. Over and over again Canadians have told Parliament and members of Parliament individually that they support gun control and they want to see the government enact gun control legislation in the House. They want to see the government implementing gun control legislation.

I do not want to go back in history, but I want to bring this to the attention of my colleagues so that at least we will have an understanding of why we should put this debate aside for now about whether or not gun control should be in place because Canadians have spoken.

For the record I want to put on the floor of the House a quote which is attributed to the then member of Parliament who is presently the leader of the Canadian Alliance. When the issue was debated in the House on June 12, 1995, he said:

Specifically, on moral issues and on the issue of gun control, I have made a particular commitment to discover and to vote the wishes of my constituents.

He went on:

Consistent with that I supported Bill C-68—

That was the gun control legislation.

—at second reading despite my own misgivings about some elements of it... In the end the households that replied indicated about 60% overall disapproval of the bill. I reflect that in my vote. From my own personal standpoint I believe there are elements of gun control and specifically of this bill that could be helpful.

• (1330)

After having been either on the campaign trail or about to become the leader of the Canadian Alliance, the same member said that there had been some confusion as to his position on gun control. He said that he would repeal the Liberal gun registry and that he personally always opposed Bill C-68 and the Liberal approach to gun control.

These are two completely opposite statements by the very same individual. Let me be clear, people have the right to change their opinion and have the right to be confused from time to time about their stand on a particular issue. However, we cannot take Canadians for granted and we cannot use the same technique to confuse Canadians. Canadians have spoken and they have told us specifically that they support the legislation. In fact, 74% of them support it. According to an independent Environics poll taken back in January, they support licensing and registration.

This legislation is supported by the police who are the people on the front line, as my colleagues have clearly stated a little earlier. It is supported by the Chiefs of Police Association as well as by public health, safety and victims organizations across the country. There is widespread support for the legislation all across the land from different sectors of our society, from different neighbourhoods, and from different communities.

Does the system work? Let us see. In fact, the number of lost/missing firearms has declined by 68% from the year 1998 to the year 2001. Is that a positive thing or is it as a result of the legislation? The number of stolen firearms has decreased by 35% from 1998 to 2002. That is not a bad thing. Law enforcement agencies across the country have accessed the online registry 2.3 million times since December 1, 1998. I would suggest that at least one life would have been saved by that particular system. If that is the case, for me as a member and for my constituency, this is worthwhile notwithstanding the cost.

To date, public safety officials have refused or revoked over 9,000 applications for firearms licences. The firearms centres have received thousands of calls from people trying to find information. To that extent it has helped more than 3,000 police officers across the country who have tapped into the system to find information about potential crimes that may be committed in our communities.

In the debate, there is fundamentally one group which wants to see some amendments and some repairs to the system. We are with that group. However, there is another group which wants to throw the baby out with the bathwater. My colleagues will correct me if I am not using the proper terminology. That is totally wrong because the system does work as I have clearly stated in my statistical information to the House.

When the Auditor General appeared before the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, upon which I sit, she never stated that there was anything wrong with the administration of the system. Her problem was not with that. Her problem was whether or not there was clarification of the program when the estimates came before Parliament. The department accepted those recommendations fully. The Minister of Justice appeared before the committee along

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with the minister responsible for the Treasury Board and pledged to the committee that they would ensure those recommendations were implemented. To that extent I appeal to my colleagues on the opposition side, in particular to those in the Canadian Alliance, to please stand up and clarify their positions.

• (1335)

Also, I appeal to the Alliance members to leave the past behind and support this initiative. This initiative is necessary to save lives in Canada and to help Canadians.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Alliance position is 100% clear. We support the control of the criminal use of firearms. We support legislation that keeps a fully automatic firearm out of the hands of anybody in the country. Prohibit it. We support the fact that one cannot carry a concealed firearm such as a concealed handgun around.

What we do not support is the Liberal program which has in it a massive waste of money with no effect on crime. That is what Bill C-68 did, the Firearms Act. Bill C-10A that we will be voting on perpetuates that mammoth and ineffective misuse of taxpayer dollars.

The government is trying to misconstrue the Canadian Alliance position as being against any type of firearm legislation when in fact we are very strong on strong legislation that will actually reduce crime. The member can answer that generality.

He said that to him the saving of one life is worth the passing of the legislation and the perpetuation of the bill and we should just keep dumping money into it. In Manitoba last year there were three heart patients whose heart surgery was rescheduled and while they were waiting to get on the schedule again, they died. I can prove that 100% because it is in Manitoba's medical statistics. The federal government cannot prove the saving of one life because of this legislation.

For 30 years I was in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and we had plenty enough legislation. We could take firearms away from someone we believed was going to commit a crime, or someone in a spousal abuse situation. The courts could prohibit people from having firearms. The smuggling of guns over the border was always illegal.

The point is that the legislation that has been brought forward is so bad and that is why we are opposing it. Let us have sensible legislation. I would ask the member to respond to that.

• (1340)

Mr. Mac Harb: Mr. Speaker, I heard the member say that he is in support of gun control. I want him to stand up and tell his colleagues to state the same thing for the record and I will observe how the member votes when the issue appears before the House later on today.

Supply

It is extremely important to divide the issues. He is having a problem with some of the administration of it. We agree that some of the problems need to be fixed. In fact a number of measures have been taken by the government to address those concerns. I never knew why the gun control legislation and the registry had to be with justice and why it was not part of the Solicitor General's office. It is an extremely positive development that it is now under the auspices of the Solicitor General. By doing that we will have proper management of it.

I want my colleagues not to fear registration. People register their cats, dogs, cars, a lot of things. Registration is a good thing at the end of the day. If there are problems, and there are problems in the system, we have to fix them. For my colleague, I commend him. He is indicating there are problems with it. We have committed to take action and correct them.

Would the member stand up for the record and tell me and his colleagues that he would support it?

Mr. Howard Hilstrom: Mr. Speaker, he did not answer my question.

The Deputy Speaker: Well, time has run out. Resuming debate.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for St. Albert.

Mr. Speaker, first of all I congratulate the government for demonstrating, in actions, a contempt and display of arrogance through the \$1 billion Liberal gun registry that we in the official opposition could never put into words. There is the out of control spending, the blatant disregard for Parliament, so blatant that even members of the government party are pulling at their leashes because of the abuse the party puts on them, the abuse of the Commons using the Senate for a money bill, and the times that closure has been used. The list goes on and on.

Now I know why the government has been slowly disbanding our military. It fears the soldiers will join the protestors when the revolution finally comes, which brings us to the purpose of the Liberals' gun control policy, which is to disarm law-abiding citizens.

I shake my head in disbelief at the parliamentary proceedings before us today. The government is driven to trample on the rights of ordinary Canadians. There are no cost savings in Bill C-10A.

The government has admitted that the gun registry is not about cost. If it were, it would not be planning to throw another \$1 billion, \$2 billion, or \$3 billion-plus down the same hole that it threw the first \$1 billion. This is not a gun control issue; it is a government out of control issue.

Bill C-10A is being proposed as a partial fix to the severely flawed Bill C-68. The problems with the gun registry are beyond fixing. The gun registry must be scrapped. Try as the Liberals might, this issue is not going to go away.

In February I hosted a gun rally at a town hall meeting. It was to give information to the public on the gun registry. With minimal advertising and scarcely a week's notice, word spread quickly in a rural riding that relies on personal contact to spread the message. I stood in awe as the huge Renfrew armouries filled with people from

Arnprior, Calabogie, Hardwood Lake, Quadville, Wilno, Griffith, Barry's Bay, Foymount, Eganville, Douglas, Renfrew, Pembroke, Beachburg, Palmer's Rapids, Cormac, Combermere, Dacre, Killaloe, Westmeath, Golden Lake, Madawaska and every place in between.

Hunters represented their camps, which means they went back to the 12, 15 or 20 members of their group to report on the meeting. Just that one meeting represented thousands and thousands of Canadians. With the hon. members for Yorkton—Melville and Blackstrap in attendance, we witnessed grassroots democracy as the crowd swelled. Angry citizens were upset with the tired and out of control Liberal government that insists on treating law-abiding citizens as criminals.

Speaker after speaker got up to vent their frustrations with a government that attacks rural Canadians and our way of life. Rural people are smart. We see right through shallow people and we will not forget. The Sam Slick, fast talking Liberal city slickers may be able to fool the docile urban herds about the government's gun registry, but rural Canada is not buying their story.

Guess what? Urban Canadians are waking up. It will be interesting to see how they respond to the national identity cards with which the government plans to register all citizens. It will be interesting to see the shoe on the other foot. Only then will they realize what rural Canadians have had to put up with regarding the gun registry.

I do not feel sorry for the justice minister. If he had dealt with the mess left to him by the first two ministers in a forthright manner, Canadians might be forgiving. It used to be that the justice portfolio was considered to be the glamour portfolio. Now the justice portfolio is the kiss of death. Just ask the health minister and in particular the industry minister what it has done to their political careers.

• (1345)

Speaking of dashed political careers, ask the former MP for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke what his docile, slaving defence of Bill C-68 got him. Defeat. Defeat will come to the rest of the Liberal caucus on this issue too. Rural people are smart and we do not forget.

The industry minister has given rise to a new political phrase that should be added to the dictionary in its next revision. It is called gun registry math. For those who are unfamiliar with the term, the definition of gun registry math is where a government program is stated to cost one amount when in fact it costs 500 times more. When the term gun registry math is used, it will apply any time the government makes a promise on the cost of a particular program. When looking up the meaning of gun registry math, people are advised to look under the section government screw-ups.

Business of the House

Our town hall meeting asked me to take a message to the Liberal government in Ottawa. It asked me to deliver it loud and clear: scrap the gun registry.

Government members in rural ridings in Ontario, such as Haliburton—Victoria—Brock, Parry Sound—Muskoka, Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, Nipissing, Leeds—Grenville and Prince Edward—Hastings should take note that their constituents called me about the rally. Those who were not able to attend begged me to arrange a town hall meeting in their ridings because their own members refused to speak out against the gun registry. They assured me that anywhere I went across rural Ontario, and this is particularly true in northern Ontario, huge crowds similar to the one we had in Renfrew would come out to protest the Liberal gun registry.

Constituents will be watching the gun registry amendment vote very carefully. A no show for the vote will not cut it either.

The Minister of Justice and his colleagues want to push the fantasy that opposition to the gun registry is being driven by the official opposition. Nothing could be further from the truth. Opposition to the Liberal gun registry is being driven by the people.

If I am not speaking against Bill C-68, I receive hundreds of calls urging me to speak up on it again. On no other issue do I receive more encouragement to fight the government than on the issue of the \$1 billion wasted on the gun registry. We are listening to Canadians.

Recently the Solicitor General visited my riding to attend a party function. He was warmly greeted on a frosty valley night by a spontaneous demonstration. The protesters outnumbered the party supporters 10 to 1. They let him know how they felt about him, his party and his leader: scrap the registry.

The Solicitor General even had the nerve to tell some of the demonstrators that he agreed with them on the registry, that it was a colossal waste of money, but he refused to say what he would actually do about it.

Honour and integrity mean saying the same thing in public that one whispers in private. If the government truly feels it has the support for the registry, it should prove it by allowing a free vote. Let the power of logic rather than the threat of the whip determine the outcome. Above all, do not bully the members on how to vote.

Members of the government party are many things but they are not tools of the opposition. Why is it so hard for the government to believe that its own members' opposition to the registry is genuine and heartfelt? Members of Parliament were elected to take a stand on the issues of the day and I look forward to the vote.

While the government House leader will bluster and push the gun registry amendments, I hope he realizes that the people of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell hate the government's gun registry as much as rural Canadians in the rest of Ontario and Canada do.

I am truly surprised that the Prime Minister has taken such an ideological stance on this issue. In the past he has been quite adept at stealing Canadian Alliance policies when it suited his purpose, as adept as he has been at stealing the woolly headed ideas of the NDP. A pragmatic politician would have dropped the registry long ago.

● (1350)

I have to thank everyone who has called, written, come to the rallies and otherwise let their opposition be known to the Liberal gun registry. We will continue our opposition. We will have as many rallies as it takes to scrap the gun registry.

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the constituents of the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke care deeply about tough and effective gun control. I am also sure her constituents would want to ensure that screening of applicants for guns, providing safety training, offering an online registry to help the police do their jobs, efforts to combat gun smuggling, provide stiff sentences for those who commit crimes using guns, efforts to promote safe storage of firearms and individual accountability for gun ownership are promoted through the program.

However, what the Canadian Alliance is suggesting in its motion is that every penny of money that goes toward the gun control program, not just for the registry but funds that go toward licensing and the screening of gun applicants who may have a history of violent crime or a history of domestic violence, the Canadian Alliance wants to cut off all that funding as well. That is what the Alliance Party is suggesting to Parliament.

Members are agreeing that we should take away the tools from the police to screen gun applicants who may have a history of violence. I say that is an outrageous attack on public safety in this country. That would be the effect of the Canadian Alliance motion. It ignores the pleas of groups like the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime, the Canadian Police Association, the Canadian Public Health Association, the Canadian Medical Association and many others.

My question for the hon. member is the following. Why is it that the Canadian Alliance later today is seriously suggesting that we take away every penny of money that the police would have to ensure that those who apply to use lethal weapons do not have a history of violent crimes or domestic violence? Why that abandonment of her constituents and the constituents of Canadian Alliance members?

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there were consultations a few moments ago with all parties in the House and I believe if you were to seek it you would find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any standing or special order or usual practice, immediately after the division on government order, Ways and Means Proceedings No. 6, a minister of the crown may proceed with the introduction and first reading of the bill based thereon immediately thereafter.

An hon. member: Why?

S. O. 31

Hon. Don Boudria: Someone has asked why. This is to permit all members, particularly opposition members, to see the bill one day earlier, because we are debating it on Thursday, and it would permit them to see it today as opposed to tomorrow.

• (1355)

The Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Does the House give its consent to the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—FIREARMS PROGRAM

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, the member who asked the question helps the government perpetuate the myth that gun control did not exist prior to the Firearms Act. The people of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, the people in the Canadian Alliance, the people who oppose the gun registry do want the safe storage and safe use of firearms.

Prior to Bill C-68, and then the Firearms Act, laws were already in place to screen people who were purchasing firearms. Rules were in place for the safe storage and use of firearms.

What people are against is the waste of money on a useless database of people, which the police cannot use because it is 90% wrong. It does not even include the vast number of people who actually own firearms.

In fact, the gun registry, if anything, requires people who have not answered the questions correctly or who the government just does not want to have registered to turn in their firearms. It is not helping from a safety standpoint whatsoever. It is just having the people give up.

Mr. Joe Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, throughout the course of the debate today we have had a tendency to sometimes get emotional, myself included. I want to ask this particular member a very specific question.

It is easy to sometimes oversimplify the issues. I will read back to her what she said on September 21, 2000, when she addressed a sportsman's club in Pembroke. She said "Are we going to go like lambs to the gas chamber?"

She talked about integrity and honour. Does she really want to say to Canadians that this is the greatest atrocity that has ever happened to mankind, or will she admit that perhaps she went over the top and will take this opportunity to apologize and distance herself from those remarks that she made?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, the gun registry does nothing to stop the criminal element whatsoever. People from the member's riding of Leeds—Grenville are calling our office because they cannot get any help whatsoever in terms of dealing with this. I look forward to going to his riding and hosting a rally just like we had in Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke so democracy can be brought to his riding as well.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

ATS AUTOMATION TOOLING SYSTEMS

Mr. Janko Peric (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ATS Automation Tooling Systems, a very successful company in my riding of Cambridge, was named business leader by the Greater Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber of Commerce.

Founded by Klaus Woerner in 1978, ATS makes automated production systems, precision components and solar powered products, and employs close to 2,000 people in Cambridge and Kitchener.

Klaus and his wife Anna were both recognized for their extensive community involvement, including support of local hospitals and Conestoga College.

ATS recently launched a new subsidiary, Spheral Solar Power, and is moving aggressively to make solar power more practical.

I want to congratulate ATS and the Woerners for their economic leadership and philanthropic contribution to the greater community.

* * *

• (1400)

THE PRIME MINISTER

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, today we watch a leader humiliating his own people, a leader who will go to any length to maintain iron fisted control.

We watch him threaten his own people, intimidating them until they break and submit.

We watch as he uses those already brainwashed to roust out disloyalty and to hunt down dissidents.

We watch as he forces people to set aside what they know is right and to go against their own consciences.

We watch them acting against their better judgment, contradicting their own words.

We watch as untold millions and indeed billions are spent on a delusion.

Unfortunately, I am not talking about a foreign dictator. I am speaking about the Prime Minister in Canada today.

At 5:30 we will witness once again the spectacle of Liberal backbenchers quietly falling into line to support the ongoing disaster that is the gun registry.

Canadians must resolve now to change the government, to put members of Parliament in place that will stand for freedom, rights and responsibility. The Alliance stands ready to fill that void.

NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Mr. Tony Tirabassi (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority that is located in my riding of Niagara Centre. Its mandate is to further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources.

With the assistance of the federal government, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority has, and continues to, restore the ecological health of the watersheds in the Niagara region, that being only one of the many rehabilitation projects it has undertaken.

It also maintains conservation areas that offer spectacular views, sparkling waterfalls, unique trails, fascinating rock formations and rare plants and wildlife.

I want to congratulate Andy Burt, Mary Stack, Andrew Mack, all the staff and tee board of directors. I ask that they keep up the excellent work.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Andy Scott (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, New Brunswick residents are ready to act on climate change. Fifty-nine per cent, nearly two-thirds of respondents to a recent poll, said that they would be likely to buy a more fuel efficient vehicle in the next two years.

The Government of Canada, as part of its commitment to achieving its emission reduction targets under the Kyoto protocol, is helping these and other Canadians by working with the auto industry to make vehicles 25% more fuel efficient by 2010.

Even if a new vehicle is not in the picture, there are lots of ways to reduce emissions from transportation: drive less, use public transit, walk or bike whenever possible, when driving do not idle. It takes more fuel to idle for 10 seconds than it does to stop and start a car. Always check the tire pressure.

There are simple actions to reduce emissions and help Canadians reach our Kyoto targets.

* * *

HEALTH RESEARCH

Mr. Shawn Murphy (Hillsborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate two professors at the Atlantic Veterinary College at the University of Prince Edward Island.

Dr. Alastair Cribb, professor of Clinical pharmacology and Dr. Laurie McDuffee, professor of equine surgery, are the latest recipients of a federal government investment in health research from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

Between the two individuals, these professors received over \$758,000 to fund their research projects.

Dr. McDuffee will use this money to continue her research in a cell based strategy to promote proper bone healing in horses. The outcome of her research will, hopefully, be applicable to human beings as well.

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Dr. Cribb, who is also a Canadian research chair, will investigate why certain animals and people have adverse reactions to various drugs and chemicals. He hopes to help discover how safer drugs can be developed in addition to assessing the risk of chemical exposure. Much like his colleague, the results of this research will also be a benefit to human beings.

The recent support of the CIHR, coupled with the money set aside for the veterinary colleges in last week's budget, means that the Atlantic Veterinary College will be able to move forward with this kind of top notch, highly valuable research.

* * *

PEGGY ENGEN

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate my constituent, Peggy Engen, who this past Sunday was presented with the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award. This award recognizes the contributions of Canadians such as Peggy who give so much of their time to their fellow citizens through volunteer work.

Peggy has devoted over 50 years of service to the community of Tuxedo Park. She and her late husband coached several hockey, baseball and lacrosse teams. Peggy remains an active participant in the Tuxedo Park Community Association where she has volunteered in many capacities. Today she is serving her third term as president of the association.

Peggy has also helped to establish a youth shelter and has lent her support to several group homes for people with disabilities. Her sense of caring and community involvement have helped make Tuxedo Park an outstanding community in which to live.

Congratulations to Peggy for giving so much of her time and energy to her community. Her courageous leadership and unselfish service is an inspiration to all of us.

* * *

● (1405)

ELIZABETH GRANDBOIS

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past Friday, March 21, I had the honour to host the Seventh Annual International Women's Day Breakfast in Burlington. Over 200 people, including some 20 high school students, joined me in celebrating the contributions and accomplishments of women in Canada and around the world.

Our guest speaker, a woman of incredible courage and strength, Elizabeth Grandbois, inspired everyone. Diagnosed with ALS in 1997, Elizabeth has worked tirelessly to raise awareness about this terminal neuromuscular disease which affects some 1,000 Canadians each and every year. Elizabeth's Concerts of Hope have raised over \$750,000 for research and support for those who are afflicted.

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Elizabeth's story reminded all of us that courage and unrelenting determination can bring hope to others. Each of us can make a difference.

I thank Elizabeth. She inspired everybody.

* * *

[*Translation*]

LES PATRIOTES DE TROIS-RIVIÈRES

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, all of the Mauricie is deliriously happy, particularly its hockey fans, because the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières Patriotes won their fourth university hockey championship this past weekend in Fredericton.

Coach Jacques Laporte was able to instill in his team an extraordinary competitive drive that no doubt made it possible for each member of the team to give his all.

What more can be said about the merits of goalie Éric Desjardins, who was selected best player of the championships, which pitted them against our Nova Scotian friends from St. Francis Xavier University?

Or about Alexandre Tremblay, last season's top player in Canada?

Throughout the season, assistant trainers Sylvain Beauchesne, Olivier Denis and Dominique Ducharme all worked tirelessly to get the best performance from each and every team member.

Bravo, Les Patriotes, and long may you reign. Your team is fully deserving of its name.

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SEMAINE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE

Mr. Raymond Simard (Saint Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak of some of the high points of the Semaine de la Francophonie in Saint-Boniface.

On March 13, the Minister of Heritage and the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs chose Collège Louis-Riel as the venue for announcing the first component of the Action Plan for Official Languages: education.

On March 18 and 19, I had the privilege of welcoming to Saint-Boniface His Excellency Boutros Boutros-Ghali, accompanied by the Secretary of State for the Francophonie and the Minister of Veterans Affairs. Their tour included a meal at Fort Gibraltar and visits to Maison Gabrielle-Roy and the Maison des artistes francophones de l'ouest, and culminated with inauguration of the Ronald J. Duhamel scholarship at the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate two prize winners from Saint-Boniface who were honoured at the Montfort awards gala. Charles Laflèche of Momentum Healthware was the winner of the "Communications/New Technologies" award for his enterprising spirit. The warmth of welcome of the Festival du Voyageur was recognized in the "Rapprochement" category.

At the gala for small and medium businesses, Franco-Manitoba was ably represented by four notable finalists: Émeuville, les Fermes Vielfaure, JOGO Canada and Momentum Healthware.

I am proud to say that Saint-Boniface is doing its share on behalf of the Canadian francophonie.

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Police Association and the Police Association of Ontario represent thousands of front line police officers across Canada. They should be congratulated for their admirable leadership role in advancing public safety by calling on the federal government to institute a national sex offender registry, to reform the youth justice system, to toughen up our laws against organized crime and to reform our parole system.

The Canadian Alliance hopes that the police associations will also stand with the opposition in supporting today's motion calling on the federal government to determine the total costs of the firearms program, to provide a comprehensive cost benefit analysis for the program and to reduce funding to that program until this analysis has been completed.

Regardless of where Canadians stand on this important issue, it is important that all of us hold the Liberal government accountable for its spending of taxpayers' money.

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75TH ANNUAL ACADEMY AWARDS

Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past Sunday, amid all the glitz and glamour of Hollywood, Canadians once again proved we could compete with the best in the entertainment industry. Canadians featured prominently in several significant categories, including Nia Vardalos' nomination for best screenplay for the hugely successful, filmed in Toronto, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*.

Canadian winners include parts of the team from the acclaimed picture *Chicago*, again filmed in Toronto. The academy gave nods to *Chicago's* Gordon Sim for set decoration and David Lee for his audio work.

For me, the big win was Michael Donovan and his team at Salter Street in Halifax. This amazing company produced this year's best picture documentary, the critical and box office smash *Bowling for Columbine*.

Well deserved congratulations to one and all.

•(1410)

[Translation]

WILFRED LEBOUTHILLIER

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to highlight the participation of one of my constituents, Wilfred Lebouthillier of Tracadie-Sheila, in the Star Académie contest on TVA television. Since he was named to the team of finalists, his great talent as a singer and his stage presence have not gone unnoticed.

Wilfred is a terrific example of the fact that there is huge potential in New Brunswick and that with determination, dreams can come true. So, congratulations to Wilfred on his interpretation of *Jean Batailleur* by Zachary Richard.

May he take advantage of each moment at the academy and know that we cannot wait for his return in Acadia.

We are all very proud of him and want him to know that the riding of Acadie-Bathurst and New Brunswick are behind him all the way.

He is already a star to us. Good luck, Wilfred, and many thanks.

* * *

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec's ice cream industry is suffering due to inaction by the federal government. In just seven years, this industry has seen its production drop by 86%.

Mass imports of a cream substitute, butter oil and sugar to be specific, from the United States and New Zealand, have dealt this industry a hard blow. And it is Quebec's dairy producers who are being hurt the most.

The chair of the Fédération des producteurs de lait du Québec, Jean Grégoire, estimates that Quebec farmers specializing in milk production are losing \$300 million per year, due to this butter oil and sugar mixture.

In light of this situation, the federal government must amend the regulations so that this mixture is subject to tariffs as requested by members of the Fédération des producteurs de lait du Québec.

* * *

GREECE

Ms. Eleni Bakopanos (Ahuntsic, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, March 25, 2003 marks the 182nd anniversary of the independence of my country of origin, Greece.

I invite all members of the House to join all Hellenic Canadians in celebrating this anniversary in their respective ridings.

[English]

I am pleased and honoured that today's anniversary coincides with the first ever commemorative stamp issuance by Canada Post honouring Hellenism and celebrating the 75th anniversary of the American Hellenic Educational and Progressive Association, AHEPA, in Canada. This commemorative stamp will be unveiled in West Block this evening and I invite all members of the House to

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come and participate with our right hon. Prime Minister. There will be over 400 Canadians and Americans of Hellenic origin at this historic event.

I am proud of my Hellenic heritage, just as I am proud of being Canadian. Here in Canada, my second *patrida*, we uphold the very same ideals born from Greece, my country of birth: the ideals of freedom, democracy, justice and the promotion of peace worldwide.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I wish everyone:

[Editor's Note: Member spoke in Greek as follows:]

Zito i Ellas! Zito o Kanadas!

* * *

[English]

FIREARMS PROGRAM

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC): Mr. Speaker, today the Liberal members have an opportunity to right an eight year wrong. Those members of the Liberal caucus, along with members of our party, whose principles led them to oppose gun registration in 1995 are proven correct.

Since its inception, the gun registry program has been ineffectual, unenforceable and wasteful. It is time to stop the bleeding. Gun registration has already cost Canadian taxpayers \$1 billion and will cost another \$1 billion over the next number of years. Many Canadians feel this money could have been better spent.

The Liberal member for Nipissing stated today, "I think we are just in too far; you get in so far then you can't get out". He is wrong. They can get out.

Do not throw good money after bad. The next \$1 billion should pay for nurses, MRIs and marine patrol helicopters, not a Liberal policy black hole.

Also, Mr. Speaker, please join me in wishing my very dear friend and colleague, the member for St. John's West, all the best today on his 60th birthday.

* * *

MIDDLE EAST

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton West—Mississauga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the world's attention is turned to Iraq, an Israeli member of parliament is promoting the transfer or expulsion of Palestinians out of the West Bank and Gaza into Jordan.

MP Benny Elon is promoting the idea in a glossy brochure distributed to the U.S. Congress. Mr. Elon appeared at the annual convention of the Christian Coalition where he promoted the relocation of Palestinians.

Over 100 Israeli academics are circulating a letter warning about talk of transfer, a sanitized term for ethnic cleansing. The current ruling coalition government in Israel includes Mr. Elon's National Union Party which actively promotes the idea of transfer.

Oral Questions

There is concern that the Israeli army might use a U.S.-led war on Iraq as a cover to expel segments of the Palestinian society from their homes. The international community must ensure that crimes against humanity will not be tolerated and that the fourth Geneva convention is not breached.

* * *

•(1415)

CANADA-U.S. TRADE

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is fortunate that despite the outbreak of war in Iraq and increased security at the border, Canadian commerce still flows across the border to the United States.

The importance of our trade with the U.S. cannot be underestimated. Despite a slight drop in exports last year, one-third of our economy is still based on Canada-U.S. trade. That equates to over five million jobs.

Our reliance on the U.S. as a trading partner continues to grow. Without our trade surplus with the Americans, Canada's \$54 billion surplus would have been a \$40 billion deficit.

What is truly astounding about these economic numbers is that they come at a time when the Canadian government's influence on Washington is at a historic low. Meanwhile, ministers and members opposite think that it is acceptable to bad-mouth the American people and the American government.

Our trade disputes over the last few years are just the tip of the iceberg. It should come as little surprise to Canadians that when decisions are made by the Liberal government, they will come back to haunt us.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD*[English]***IRAQ**

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, last week the Prime Minister said he was against regime change in Iraq from the outside. Yesterday the foreign affairs minister said, "We as a government are supportive of the United States' desire to get rid of Saddam Hussein".

What is the government's position today on Saddam Hussein?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I always said that we went to the United Nations because since 1991 Saddam Hussein did not comply with the obligation that he took at that time to destroy the armaments of massive destruction. That was the purpose of resolution 1441 that we supported and that we were working on with the United Nations. That was the way that it had to be done, through the United Nations with the support of the United Nations. Those who have decided to go to war at this time have used 1441 as a reason.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister failed to answer my

question. Canadians want Saddam Hussein removed and the Prime Minister should stand with them.

I will give the Prime Minister one more chance to answer this question clearly. Does the Prime Minister hope to see the allies remove Saddam Hussein?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when he is threatening me I am very frightened. I am shaking in my boots.

I stated the position of the government clearly last week. I said, and I repeat, that the intervention there is to ensure that Saddam Hussein is disarmed. The question of changing regime is not a policy that is acceptable under the United Nations charter because it is a position that has been stated by this government and by the previous government, the Conservative government of 1990-91, and other leaders in the past.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, these flip-flops will not go unnoticed. The anti-American remarks from the government have not gone unnoticed, neither has its failure to stand by our friends and allies.

Today, the American ambassador stated that the United States would stand behind Canada in a crisis without debate and without hesitation, and he asked why we are not doing the same for our friends now.

When will the government do the right thing and back our American friends and allies because, frankly sir, you are embarrassing us.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. I am sorry the Leader of Opposition is embarrassed by the Speaker because I am sure his remarks were directed to the Chair, but he will ensure that if there was any suggestion that the Chair was embarrassing him in some way he will want to clarify that later. The remarks I am sure will be properly directed.

•(1420)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will never be embarrassed when, as Prime Minister of this land, I will show Canadians and the people of the world that Canada is an independent country, and Canadians know that.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the foreign affairs minister told this House, the U.S. embassy has now confirmed that in fact it did convey a formal request to the government to consider expelling Saddam's representative in Ottawa. However, the government says it wants Saddam's front man to stay. Incredibly, the minister says "to keep the lines of communication open with Saddam's regime".

Is not the real reason the government is keeping Saddam's man about town because the Prime Minister implicitly supports leaving Saddam's regime in place. Is that not the real reason?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, absolutely not. As I explained in committee this morning and as I explained to the House yesterday, explanations which I hope the opposition is interested in, in fact, we had expelled a diplomat from Iraq at the later part of last year.

Oral Questions

We are monitoring the situation and in the event that this person is undesirable or conducting himself in a way that is incompatible with his diplomatic status we will take action, as we always have, in the interests of Canada and in consultation with our allies.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, this Iraqi diplomat speaks only for Saddam Hussein whose outlawed regime is responsible for over a million deaths, attacks on three countries, genocide, the gassing of women and children, an ongoing murder rate of 5,000 people per month since 1991, torture cells and rape rooms, and now the abuse of prisoners of war. Saddam's PR man is an ambassador of evil and should be expelled.

Why does the government have so much difficulty in dealing with issues based on the basic human principles of right and wrong?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I remember the very sage words of a former foreign minister of Israel when I had this conversation with him about a similar situation. He said to me, "You do not make peace by talking to your friends. You make peace by discussing it and having communications with your enemies".

The purpose of a diplomatic system is to allow people to exchange views, even in war, so that we can deal with these terrible issues.

The government will not be pushed into taking precipitous actions that are not in the interests of Canada. We will act in the interests in Canada and in a way in which we affirm—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence acknowledges the presence of Canadian military personnel within American and British units engaged in the war in Iraq, but does not know the whereabouts of these personnel, although they are under his responsibility.

I am therefore asking the Prime Minister to tell us whether there are Canadian soldiers in Iraq at the present time. Where exactly are they, in which battalions, and under whose command?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the start of the conflict, we clearly established a policy that personnel lent to American, British or Australian units, which are perhaps in Iraq at the present time, must fulfill their duties as military personnel, as those exchanged with them here in Canada fulfill their duties as military personnel. Changing that policy at this time would be unwise.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in other words, the Prime Minister is telling us that this war is unjustified, yet Canadian troops are going to take part in that unjustified war, within Australian, British or American battalions. We are told that they are involved in logistics, like the 507th Maintenance.

Is there not something irresponsible and totally inconsistent about the Prime Minister's position? We are not at war, yet some of our soldiers are. This makes no sense.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of this crisis, our position has always been extremely responsible. I do not see the point in the Bloc Quebecois

leader's trying to divide Canadians at a time when the large majority of them support the government's decision.

• (1425)

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there are roughly thirty Canadian soldiers who are currently integrated with American and British combat units. But yesterday the Minister of National Defence candidly admitted he did not know their whereabouts.

Is it not irresponsible of the Minister of National Defence not to know where these soldiers are and not to be able to inform Parliament of the type of mission they are taking part in?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is completely inaccurate. We know exactly which units our soldiers are assigned to. For security reasons, we do not want to reveal their exact location at each moment of the day. As the Prime Minister said, this line of questioning from the Bloc over the past few days is a waste of time.

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, will the minister admit that Canadian soldiers who are integrated with American and British units are at war under American and British rules and as such, it is accurate to say in this House that the minister has completely relinquished control over his Canadian troops?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is utterly ridiculous. As I just said, we know which units our soldiers are serving in. The control is still in the hands of the Chief of Defence Staff. These soldiers are in support positions. They do not have the right to use force, except to defend themselves. I have been saying the same thing for days. That is all.

[*English*]

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the U.S. ambassador to Canada finds it ironic "that Canadians are indirectly providing more support for Bush's war in Iraq than all of the coalition partners except the U.K.". It is worse than ironic. It is compelling evidence of Canada's complicity in Bush's war. It is outright defiance of Parliament's vote for Canada's non-participation.

Will the Prime Minister give immediate notice of our military's orderly withdrawal, or simply admit that Canada is participating in this illegal war?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence explained clearly the role of these soldiers. They have been on loan for some time with the British and American armies. They have been in a support role for a long time and they are doing their jobs. They are not engaged in combat. Under instructions they can only use arms in self-defence.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the defence minister asks us to believe that the safety of 300,000 soldiers somehow depends upon 31 Canadian military officers. Canada must disengage from its military involvement. We should be focusing our efforts on the tragic humanitarian crisis that is unfolding in Iraq.

Oral Questions

Can the government for once not show some leadership and work with the humanitarian agencies that are desperately trying to address the humanitarian crisis? Will the government agree to do that?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning the ambassador to the UN, Mr. Heinbecker, briefed the cabinet about what the United Nations is doing at this time to get organized to deliver what is needed for the population who is suffering from the consequences of the war.

He was here and has been discussing the issue with the cabinet. We will deal with this as quickly as possible to ensure that humanitarian aid goes to the people who are victims of this conflict.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, there is an urgent need for food and humanitarian aid in Iraq. There is also a need for a reconstruction program that goes beyond humanitarian—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. It is impossible for the Chair to hear the right hon. member for Calgary Centre. It is important that the Chair be able to hear. Members sometimes say things that are out of order. How can the Chair make rulings on matters like that if there is all this yelling going on? We need some quiet so we can hear the right hon. member's question.

Right Hon. Joe Clark: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask about the need for urgent aid in Iraq if government members care about that at all.

There is a need for food and humanitarian aid there. There is also a need for a reconstruction program that goes beyond humanitarian aid and that is seen by the Iraqi people as being fair. A Pentagon run reconstruction program will not be seen to be fair. A UN led plan could be.

Ambassador Heinbecker met with the government today. Is the government considering plans to initiate a UN led—

•(1430)

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we met with the ambassador today and we discussed this very problem. We want it to be done in a multilateral approach. This morning on TV, Prime Minister Blair of Great Britain mentioned that the need for reconstruction and aid should be done in a multilateral way. We are in agreement with that. That is exactly the mandate that Ambassador Heinbecker received from the cabinet this morning.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, Prime Minister Blair will meet Kofi Annan on Thursday to discuss both the oil for food program and reconstruction in Iraq. Mr. Blair will also meet President Bush to use Britain's constructive influence on the Americans.

The Prime Minister will have noted that France has threatened to veto any British resolution respecting reconstruction. The Prime Minister has a close connection to the President of France.

Would he tell the House what he is doing to bring France into an agreement with a Security Council resolution that would authorize the United Nations, not the Pentagon, to lead reconstruction in Iraq?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if the leader of the fifth party will not get up tomorrow and have a completely different position because that was the case yesterday regarding the war.

Our position has always been very clear. In all of these circumstances Canada is always behind any form of aid that will go through multilaterally and not unilaterally. Reconstruction and humanitarian aid should proceed the same way. I will say so to any government that wants to have the views of the Canadian government.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in 2001, Amnesty International reported, and I quote, "...torture is used systematically against political detainees. The scale and severity of the torture in Iraq can only result from the acceptance of its use at the highest level".

The implication is clear. Saddam's regime is guilty of crimes against humanity. The evidence is overwhelming, yet the government's response is underwhelming. Why will the government not do what is right and help free the citizens of Iraq?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe this was raised in the House yesterday, and it was raised in the committee this morning. The government is more than prepared and is anxiously willing to participate in any tribunal that would be set up after this conflict to judge the perpetrators of crimes against humanity, as alleged by the opposition.

That is why we have strongly urged the establishment of an International Criminal Court. That is why our government has always been consistent on establishing a rule of law that enables us to get to these issues with a principle, a legal principle and a principle of law, and we will continue those efforts, I can assure the House of that.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in the meantime it will maintain diplomatic relations with Saddam and that is unacceptable.

The government claims that only the UN Security Council has the moral and legal authority to deal with Saddam Hussein. This is the body that allowed a million people to be massacred in Rwanda and allowed ethnic cleansing to almost wipe out the Muslim population in Yugoslavia. The UN has abandoned the people of Iraq, but that does not mean that Canada has to as well. Will the government do what is right and join the 40 nation coalition to free the people of Iraq?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with an introduction like that, let us remember that at the height of the cold war, when the United States and Russia were assuring each other of mutual destruction, they kept up diplomatic relations, for obvious reasons. Let us keep our heads. Let us work our way through this. Let us recognize that there are other paths and ways other than using violence to settle these issues.

Oral Questions

Let us recognize that we have good positions on these issues like dealing with international criminals of the nature of Saddam Hussein and we will continue to pursue those in Canada's interests and in Canadian ways.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, American supply ships that were not able to unload in Turkey are now en route to the Persian Gulf and will therefore be escorted, protected and defended as needed by Canadian warships. The Prime Minister said, "We will escort all ships".

Will the Prime Minister admit that the function of these Canadian war ships is directly linked to the war in Iraq, that the smokescreen of the war on terrorism has lifted and that Canada is clearly taking part in the war against Iraq?

• (1435)

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, Canada is proud to participate in the war on terrorism in the gulf. Do I have to repeat it a hundred times? We are proud; we are there. The risk of terrorism is higher now; we are staying there. We do not want to leave the area, as the Bloc Québécois has proposed, as soon as the risks increase. We are there, we are proud to be there and we will stay there.

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, and again today, the Minister of National Defence said that he had not withdrawn Canadian soldiers from American or British units because we must not offend—that is what he said—the Americans any further.

Does this statement by the Minister of National Defence, along with the one made today, not explain the ambiguity of Canada's position, which consists in saying we are against the war in Iraq but, in fact, taking part in that war?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no ambiguity when it comes to the government's position. There are two key principles, as the Prime Minister said.

First, we are not taking part in the war, for multilateral reasons, as the Prime Minister explained. Second, we are enthusiastically and proudly there to take part in the war on terrorism. These are two clear principles that are not ambiguous.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, today the U.S. ambassador to Canada made the following observation. He said that when Premier Klein "issues strong support for the United States, the Canadian government comes down hard on him", but when the energy minister "makes totally inappropriate remarks about the President of the United States, they totally ignore it". Just why is it that the government cracks down on Canadian friends of the United States but tolerates anti-American potshots from within its own ranks?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the comment made by Mr. Klein, I never said a word about it. In the case of members of Parliament, anybody who was in the House, who was in the corridors, who was at the caucus last week, knew

very well that I said to everybody that we have to respect the decision of the Americans, as they respect our own decisions. I said that no comment should be made against the Americans. The member of my party has received his instructions and is following them very clearly. I hope that it is noted by the people concerned.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, for months the U.S. ambassador has bit his tongue in the face of the pattern of anti-American sentiment from the Prime Minister's caucus, but finally he has lost his patience, like many Canadians who are upset with the government's policy of undermining our most important foreign relationship.

Could the Prime Minister tell us, does he agree with Ambassador Cellucci when he says that he could be doing a much better job in stopping the anti-American attacks from the Liberal Party?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the ambassador said that he was disappointed that we are not in agreement with the Americans, and we are disappointed that we could not agree. If there had been more work done at the UN, we might have been able to agree. We can disagree, but he said that the relations between Canada and the United States are very important and have to remain strong. I appreciate that he said that to a Toronto businessmen's group this morning.

* * *

[*Translation*]

IRAQ

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Canadian soldiers are actively taking part in the ground offensive in Iraq. There are Canadian pilots in the skies and Canadian marines in the Persian Gulf; in short, Canada is taking part by land, air and sea.

I would ask the Prime Minister the following question. If Canada had decided to take part in the war in Iraq, what more would we be doing?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member does not realize that we had made some commitments concerning the war on terror and are collaborating with the United States in this regard. Our ships and planes were sent there over a year ago to fight against terrorism and to restore order in Afghanistan.

We are very proud of Canada's contribution. Geographically, Afghanistan and Iraq are on opposite sides of the gulf or, if you prefer, the sea; we are there to fight against terrorism, and we are very proud of our role.

• (1440)

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Spain officially supports the war in Iraq but has not sent any military personnel. Canada has decided not to support this war, but is taking part by land, air and sea.

I am asking the Prime Minister the following question: does Canada's current participation in the war not prove that Canada is one of the 15 anonymous countries that secretly gave the United States the go-ahead before the war started?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the hon. member is willing to look so foolish. He witnessed the vote in the House a few days ago. There was nothing ambiguous about it.

* * *

[English]

FIREARMS PROGRAM

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, believe it or not, back in 1993 this Prime Minister told the *Toronto Star* that Canadians felt alienated from their political institutions and that they wanted to restore integrity to them, that they had enough of the abuses of Parliament and the arrogance of government.

For his information, Canadians still feel that way but we are wondering about him. Will the Prime Minister stop riding roughshod over Parliament and his caucus and allow Liberal MPs a free vote on the plan to dump another \$59 million into the useless firearms registry?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, if my memory serves me right, is the chief whip of his own party, charged with discipline on his side of the House. For him to remonstrate from across the way about discipline on our side, he is pontificating from afar. The hon. member across should know that his own predecessors as chief whip have sent people to the back row of his own party. Some of them are still there today, waving at me as I speak.

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, that was neither a yes nor a no, but I would like to remind the Prime Minister that he is doing exactly what he criticized the Tory government for doing in 1990. He said at that time, "You cannot say over and over that what you do does not matter, and that you are right and everyone else is wrong. That is not democracy, that is a dictatorship". What he has on that side of the House is just that: a dictatorship.

Here he has an opportunity. Will the Prime Minister keep one promise? Will he allow a free vote so that his MPs do not have to wimp out or duck out?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member across the way knows perfectly well how Parliament functions. He knows perfectly well of the confidence convention of the House. He knows how it operates. He knows better than what he is saying. I should suggest to him that he should concentrate on discipline on his own side of the House, particularly in view of the fact that so many of his own colleagues have been kicked outside of caucus back to another party and back in several times. We cannot even follow which side they are on.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order. Perhaps the Chair could remind the House that question period is intended to be one question and one answer, not a hundred questions and a hundred answers and all at different times. It is very difficult for the Chair to hear today and it is only Tuesday, so I would ask for a little co-operation from hon. members.

The hon. member for Frontenac—Mégantic.

* * *

[Translation]

JOURNÉE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE

Mr. Gérard Binet (Frontenac—Mégantic, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on March 20, as part of the Journée internationale de la Francophonie, a ceremony was held on Parliament Hill in honour of His Excellency Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Can the Secretary of State for Latin America, Africa and the Francophonie tell us what was done to promote the Journée internationale de la Francophonie with young Canadians?

Hon. Denis Paradis (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa) (Francophonie), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as part of the Journée internationale de la Francophonie, young Canadians were invited to enter a writing contest promoting the importance of French literary writing.

The winners of the contest, some thirty young Canadians, came here to Parliament to meet the Prime Minister and His Excellency Boutros Boutros-Ghali. His Excellency Boutros Boutros-Ghali also spoke to 500 young people in Farnham, in Brome—Missisquoi, to discuss the Francophonie and the world we live in.

It was a resounding success.

* * *

[English]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Agriculture Canada is using a Saskatchewan research station to test GM wheat from Monsanto. Incredibly, conventional wheat is also grown on that experimental farm, which leads to the real fear of contamination. Canadian Wheat Board customers want no part of GM wheat or conventional wheat that has been contaminated.

Why is the government putting at risk our conventional wheat, the best in the world, by testing GM wheat on experimental farms? Second, what assurances can the government give that these GM wheat tests will be discontinued immediately?

● (1445)

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the hon. member has given me the opportunity to clear up an erroneous report that was on a national television channel last night. The report said that the wheat was 3 metres apart. That is incorrect. It was 1,500 metres apart. Scientists say that it only has to be 30 metres apart, but it was 1.5 kilometres away from any other variety of wheat.

HEALTH

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry. Over three years ago, the government set up an industry dominated task force to write its own rules for voluntary labelling of genetically engineered food.

Now that the head of that group admits that it is going nowhere, that it is a joke, when will the government finally listen to the over 80% of Canadians who want to know what they eat and agree to the mandatory labelling of genetically engineered foods? When will the government stop shilling for the biotech industry and stand up for Canadians?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is probably aware, regulations require that any genetically modified product be reviewed by Health Canada prior to being sold in this country to ensure that there are no safety concerns. In fact, we have voluntary labelling requirements. We were working very hard with the Canadian General Standards Board to see if agreement could be reached around mandatory labelling provisions. No agreement, no consensus, could be reached, but Health Canada officials along with other federal government officials continue to work to see if a consensus can be reached on this difficult and important issue.

* * *

FIREARMS PROGRAM

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. On April Fool's day, the Solicitor General inherits one of the greatest frauds ever perpetrated on the Canadian public. I can only say they picked the right day.

The truth about the costs and the practicality of the gun registry have been hidden from Canadians and continue to be hidden from Canadians. Will the new Solicitor General stop this Liberal sleight of hand and guarantee public disclosure on a regular and consistent basis on all gun control costs and information?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows very well what the costs are for the gun control centre. He knows that last fiscal year we were talking about \$688 million. He knows as well that this party, this government, will be voting on the supplementary estimates (B) tonight, and on the main estimates as well. He knows that we have been reacting to the report of the Auditor General before Christmas.

As well, he knows that we have tabled a good plan of action in order to make sure that we will improve management and improve services. Having said that, it is a good and sound policy and we are starting to see the results, and this party and this government will keep talking—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Gander—Grand Falls.

* * *

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. Rex Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is widely believed that Air Canada is on the brink of bankruptcy. It has a \$12 billion debt and its CEO is on the record stating that the company business model is broken.

Oral Questions

Will the minister now bail out Air Canada to allow it to continue its core business model or will he do the right thing, like any other company would have to do, and let it file for protection under the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act?

Why will the minister not come clean and declare that Air Canada will not receive special treatment without having to go through proper business practices?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think everyone knows that the aviation industry around the world has been challenged since September 2001 and never really fully recovered. Of course the events now going on in the Middle East have exacerbated the situation, in particular for U.S. air carriers, and Air Canada has not been exempted.

The situation is serious and we are working with Air Canada and other airlines to ensure that the issue is dealt with in the appropriate fashion.

* * *

FIREARMS REGISTRY

Mrs. Betty Hinton (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have no problem with the concept of checks and balances as they relate to gun control but they do have a problem with unbalanced cheque books and billion dollar cheques for unworkable programs like firearms registration.

Canadians know that Liberals cannot grasp the difference between gun control and firearms registration. Gun control targets criminals; firearms registration targets law-abiding farmers, ranchers and duck hunters.

Will the Minister of Justice scrap his ill-conceived gun registration scheme and redirect future money to fighting crime?

● (1450)

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, licensing and registration are two important components of gun control. We do it here. We as well are not the only country to do it.

If we look at Germany, for example, it has exactly the very same system. Having said that, when we look at the results we have obtained through licensing and registration, I guess it tells a lot about what we want to do in terms of public safety.

In terms of cost, over a seven year period of time, it has been \$688 million for Canadians. We are heading in the right direction. It is a good and sound policy and we will keep talking about gun control and public safety.

Mrs. Betty Hinton (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would not be very proud of that. I certainly would not be shouting it from the rooftops.

Oral Questions

It is apparent to Canadians that the uptown Liberals across the way have never been in a rural area where firearms are actually a day to day part of everyone's life and it is painfully obvious to Canadian taxpayers that the Liberals have absolutely no regard for Canadian tax dollars.

Does the minister deny the firearms registration will cost an additional billion dollars for enforcement?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very simple. That opposition party does not believe in gun control. However I would like to refer to a press release from the member for Yorkton—Melville dated January 25, 1995. He said:

Gun controls will not improve public safety, it will put the public at more risk. Gun controls will not reduce violent crime, it will increase violence. Gun controls will not save lives, it will cost lives.

When we see such nonsense, how could they understand common sense?

* * *

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture wants to impose his income stabilization program and is raising the ire of all the provinces, especially Quebec. His stubbornness is jeopardizing existing programs that have proven effective for years.

The Minister of Agriculture must negotiate in good faith with farmers. Is he prepared to put his fiscal framework on hold for one year as the Union des producteurs agricoles of Quebec is asking him to do in order to give these negotiations a chance?

[English]

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian farm income program, which was in place in Canada for a number years, ceased as of December 31 last year. Farmers do not have a disaster income program in Canada for this year.

We will continue to work with the provinces and industry to ensure that because farmers need it and they deserve it. We will ensure that every farmer in Canada in similar circumstances, no matter where they live in Canada, will be treated the same.

[Translation]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister wants to force the application of his fiscal framework, but will he acknowledge that this is because he wants to get rid of provincial programs so that the federal government will have sole control over agriculture and be able, during future international negotiations, to lower requirements without having to consult?

[English]

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there has been more consultation on this than any income program in the 40 years that I have been involved in the agriculture industry.

Provinces can continue with whatever programs they want. We are saying that in the province of Quebec for example, the province to which the hon. member is referring, out of the \$1.60 to go with the 60¢ federal money that goes in there, the federal government is asking it to make some modest changes for 24¢ of that.

The other money they can use in whatever way they want, continue the programs they have and even do more if the province so desires.

* * *

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport seems to be sending mixed signals with regard to Air Canada, so I want to ask him a straightforward question.

Does he think that the privatization of Air Canada was a mistake and does he want to nationalize it and turn it back into a crown corporation again?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to mixed signals, the hon. member yesterday advocated the repealing of the Air Canada Public Participation Act. Does he know what that means?

Is his party officially on the record for not having Air Canada's headquarters in Montreal or maintenance base in Winnipeg or being subjected to the Official Languages Act? Perhaps he could answer that question.

•(1455)

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we believe in airline competition, not unfair regulations against one company that is supposed to be operating in the private sector.

The transport minister imposes regulations singularly on Air Canada. He tells Air Canada where to have its headquarters, where to maintain its fleet, what languages to speak, with whom to interline and with whom to share its aeroplane points. The transport minister spends more time micro-managing Air Canada than does Robert Milton, its CEO.

If the transport minister wants to re-regulate and nationalize Air Canada and turn it back into a crown corporation, why will he not just be honest about it and admit it?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member just stated in the House that as far as he is concerned the Official Languages Act is an unnecessary and unfair regulation. We on this side of the House believe in the Official Languages Act. We will support it and support it for Air Canada.

* * *

DIVORCE ACT

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, going through the court system to settle family split-ups can be costly, lengthy, strenuous and taxing.

What is the Minister of Justice doing to address this problem?

Oral Questions

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that very important question. Essentially he is talking about Bill C-22, the Divorce Act, which has passed second reading in the House.

We put in place a brand new philosophy. We want to ensure that the system is less adversarial. We will change the notion of custody and access moving toward what we call parental responsibility. We want to ensure that we will be using more mediation.

The Speaker: I remind hon. members that supplementary questions beyond the first one should be asked behind the curtain so the rest of us can hear what is going on in the House.

* * *

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, first the CBC was pulling stories off the air because of pressure from the former finance minister's leadership team. Now it is launching an investigation into Don Cherry because he dared to express an opinion on the war on Saddam.

What is Canada coming to? Why is Don Cherry being cross-checked for expressing an opinion that millions of Canadians hold, particularly when a certain leadership candidate will not allow the CBC reporters to even express their own opinions?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was just asked by one of his colleagues whether he would be a delegate for me at the convention. I want to assure the hon. House that I am not planting any of these questions. I can tell the House that I thought Ron MacLean scored a hat trick.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, according to CBC brass, *Hockey Night* was not the appropriate place for a discussion on the war on Iraq. That is pretty rich coming from a news organization that pre-empted absolutely everything from radio and television. I do not think that there was one single solitary protester that they did not interview between Victoria and St. John's.

What I want to know is this. What is next? Wayne Gretzky has expressed his support for George Bush. Is he next?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member may know that Wayne Gretzky is not between Victoria and St. John's.

* * *

YOUTH CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, BQ): The Youth Criminal Justice Act, which has been invidiously imposed upon Quebec, will come into force this April 1, despite the fact that the Quebec Appeal Court must rule on certain important legal questions, particularly those related to its compliance with the international rules on the rights of the child.

Will the Minister of Justice agree to postpone the coming into force of his repressive act until such time as the Quebec Appeal Court hands down its ruling?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the act the member is referring to is essentially one developed Canada-wide which draws a great deal from the principles and philosophy that have been in place in Quebec for many years.

I would just like to say that discussions were held last year within the framework of a federal-provincial conference. Subsequently, we deferred the implementation date to April 1 of this year, in order to make sure that all provinces could receive the necessary training. Now we are at that point, and we are prepared to proceed with enforcement of the act.

* * *

● (1500)

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, Ind. BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence.

Given the decrepit condition of the Canadian Forces' equipment and the lack of financial resources needed for any major military action, does the minister not believe that the time has come to redefine the role of the Canadian Forces and the Department of National Defence's strategy, to focus solely on peace missions, which better suit its means, from now on?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her good question.

I would say a large part of our missions focus on maintaining peace and security, such as in Afghanistan and in Bosnia, where we have thousands of soldiers. However, there is also the war on terrorism in which Canada is very involved, as I have explained several times in the House. We are also there to take part in the war on terrorism in addition to maintaining peace and security.

* * *

[*English*]

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. Rex Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls, PC): Mr. Speaker, on paper Air Canada is now worth \$300 million. Its debt is \$12 billion. The Minister of Transport says that he is keeping his options open in regard to the Air Canada monopoly. Does this include a government aid package that will be in excess of Air Canada's current market value?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that Air Canada has been involved for the past year in a restructuring process. That restructuring process is ongoing. We are in discussions with the airline industry, including Air Canada, to see what, if anything, the government can do to assist.

*Supply***PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

The Speaker: Order, please. I draw the attention of all hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Mike Currie, Minister of Energy of Prince Edward Island.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, during question period the government House leader suggested that those of us who are on the back row on the opposition side, like me, were banished for not following the instructions of the whip.

I would like the record to show that through two elections I have requested to be here because the view is wonderful.

The Speaker: I am sure all hon. members appreciate that clarification.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—SITUATION IN IRAQ

The House resumed from March 24, 2003, consideration of the motion and the amendment.

The Speaker: It being 3.00 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the hon. member for Okanagan—Coquihalla on the business of supply.

Call in the members.

● (1515)

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

(*Division No. 63*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Anders
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Bailey
Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)	Benoit
Borotsik	Breitkreuz
Burton	Chatters
Clark	Cummins
Day	Duncan
Epp	Fitzpatrick
Forseth	Gallant
Goldring	Gouk
Grewal	Grey
Hanger	Harper
Harris	Hearn
Herron	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hill (Macleod)	Hilstrom
Hinton	Jaffer
Johnston	Keddy (South Shore)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)	Mayfield
Meredith	Merrifield

Moore
Penson
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Skelton
Sorenson
Stinson
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Wayne
White (Langley—Abbotsford)

Obhrai
Rajotte
Reynolds
Schmidt
Solberg
Spencer
Strahl
Thompson (Wild Rose)
White (North Vancouver)
Williams— 60

NAYS

Members

Adams
Anderson (Victoria)
Asselin
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Barnes (London West)
Bélair
Bellemare
Bergeron
Bigras
Blondin-Andrew
Boudria
Bradshaw
Bryden
Byrne
Caplan
Carignan
Casey
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chrétien
Collenette
Copps
Cullen
Davies
Desrochers
Dhaliwal
Doyle
Drouin
Duplain
Eggleton
Eyking
Finlay
Frulla
Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gauthier
Godfrey
Goodale
Grose
Guimond
Harvey
Jennings
Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
Lalonde
Lastewka
Lee
Lill
Longfield
Macklin
Manley
Marcil
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews
McDonough
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Murphy
Nault
Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Paradis
Patry
Perron
Peterson

Allard
Assad
Augustine
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bélanger
Bennett
Bevilacqua
Binet
Bonwick
Bourgeois
Brown
Bulte
Calder
Cardin
Carroll
Castonguay
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Coderre
Comuzzi
Crête
Cuzner
Desjarlais
DeVillers
Dion
Dromisky
Duceppe
Easter
Elley
Farrah
Fournier
Fry
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gaudet
Girard-Bujold
Godin
Graham
Guay
Harb
Jackson
Jordan
Keyes
Knutson
Laframboise
Lanctôt
LeBlanc
Leung
Lincoln
MacAulay
Malhi
Marceau
Marleau
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McCallum
McGuire
McLellan
Ménard
Mitchell
Myers
Neville
Nystrom
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paquette
Parrish
Peric
Peschisolido
Pettigrew

Phinney
Pillitteri
Proctor
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Rocheleau
Roy
Sauvageau
Scott
Shepherd
St-Hilaire
St-Julien
Steckle
Stoffer
Thibault (West Nova)
Tonks
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Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Robinson
Rock
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Savoy
Sgro
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Szabo
Tirabassi
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Wasylcia-Leis
Wilfert

Meredith
Moore
Penson
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Skelton
Sorenson
Stinson
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Wayne
White (Langley—Abbotsford)

Supply

Merrifield
Obhrai
Rajotte
Reynolds
Schmidt
Solberg
Spencer
Strahl
Thompson (Wild Rose)
White (North Vancouver)
Williams— 60

NAYS

Members

Adams
Anderson (Victoria)
Asselin
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Barnes (London West)
Bélair
Bellemare
Bergeron
Bigras
Blondin-Andrew
Boudria
Bradshaw
Bryden
Byrne
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Charbonneau
Coderre
Comuzzi
Crête
Cuzner
Desjarlais
DeVillers
Dion
Dromisky
Duceppe
Easter
Elley
Farrah
Fournier
Fry
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gaudet
Girard-Bujold
Godin
Graham
Guay
Harb
Jackson
Jordan
Keyes
Knutson
Laframboise
Lancôt
LeBlanc
Leung
Lincoln
MacAulay
Malhi
Marceau
Marleau
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McCallum
McGuire
McLellan
Ménard
Mitchell
Myers
Neville
Nystrom
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paquette
Parrish
Peric

Allard
Assad
Augustine
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bélangier
Bennett
Bevilacqua
Binet
Bonwick
Bourgeois
Brown
Bulte
Calder
Caplan
Carignan
Casey
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chrétien
Collenette
Copps
Cullen
Davies
Desrochers
Dhaliwal
Doyle
Drouin
Duplain
Eggleton
Eyking
Finlay
Frulla
Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gauthier
Godfrey
Goodale
Grose
Guimond
Harvey
Jennings
Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
Lalonde
Lastewka
Lee
Lill
Longfield
Macklin
Manley
Marcil
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Mathews
McDonough
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Murphy
Nault
Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Paradis
Patry
Perron

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

[*English*]

The next 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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

• (1525)

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

(Division No. 64)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)
Borotsik
Burton
Clark
Day
Epp
Forseth
Goldring
Grewal
Hanger
Harris
Herron
Hill (Macleod)
Hinton
Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)

Anders
Bailey
Benoit
Breitkreuz
Chatters
Cummins
Duncan
Fitzpatrick
Gallant
Gouk
Grey
Harper
Hearn
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom
Jaffer
Keddy (South Shore)
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Mayfield

Supply

Peschisolido
Pettigrew
Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Robinson
Rock
Saada
Savoy
Sgro
Simard
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Stewart
Szabo
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Whelan
Wood— 183

Peterson
Phinney
Pillitteri
Proctor
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Rocheleau
Roy
Sauvageau
Scott
Shepherd
St-Hilaire
St-Julien
Steckle
Stoffer
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Wasylycia-Leis
Wilfert

DeVillers
Dion
Drouin
Easter
Eyking
Finlay
Fry
Goodale
Grose
Harb
Jackson
Jordan
Keyes
Knutson
Lastewka
Lee
Lincoln
MacAulay
Malhi
Marcil
Martin (LaSalle—Énard)
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Mitchell
Myers
Neville
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paradis
Petry
Peschisolido
Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Price
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Saada
Scott
Shepherd
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Stewart
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Whelan
Wood— 143

Dhalival
Dromisky
Duplain
Eggleton
Farrah
Frulla
Godfrey
Graham
Guarnieri
Harvey
Jennings
Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
LeBlanc
Leung
Longfield
Macklin
Manley
Marleau
Matthews
McGuire
McLellan
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Murphy
Nault
Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Peric
Peterson
Phinney
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Rock
Savoy
Sgro
Simard
St-Julien
Steckle
Szabo
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wilfert

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

[Translation]

WAYS AND MEANS

MOTION NO. 6

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.) moved that a ways and means motion to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 18, 2003, be concurred in.

The Speaker: Pursuant to the order made on Monday, March 24, 2003, the House will now proceed to the recorded division on ways and means Motion No. 6.

● (1530)

[English]

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

(Division No. 65)

YEAS

Members

Adams
Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine
Barnes (London West)
Bélair
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blondin-Andrew
Boudria
Brown
Bulte
Calder
Caplan
Carroll
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chrétien
Collenette
Coppes
Cullen

Allard
Assad
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bélangier
Bennett
Binet
Bonwick
Bradshaw
Bryden
Byrne
Cannis
Carignan
Castonguay
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Coderre
Comuzzi
Cotler
Cuzner

Abbott
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)
Bergeron
Borotsik
Breitkreuz
Cardin
Chatters
Crête
Davies
Desjarlais
Doyle
Duncan
Epp
Forseth
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gagnon (Québec)
Gaudet
Girard-Bujold
Goldring
Grewal
Guay
Hanger
Harris
Herron
Hill (MacLeod)

NAYS

Members

Anders
Asselin
Bailey
Benoit
Bigras
Bourgeois
Burton
Casey
Clark
Cummins
Day
Desrochers
Duceppe
Elley
Fitzpatrick
Fournier
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gallant
Gauthier
Godin
Gouk
Grey
Guimond
Harper
Heam
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom

Hinton
 Johnston
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
 Lalonde
 Lill
 Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
 Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
 McDonough
 Meredith
 Moore
 Obhrai
 Penson
 Picard (Drummond)
 Proctor
 Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
 Ritz
 Rocheleau
 Sauvageau
 Skelton
 Sorenson
 St-Hilaire
 Stoffer
 Thompson (Wild Rose)
 Wasylcia-Leis
 White (Langley—Abbotsford)
 Williams— 105

Jaffer
 Keddy (South Shore)
 Laframboise
 Lanctôt
 Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
 Marceau
 Mayfield
 Ménard
 Merrifield
 Nystrom
 Paquette
 Perron
 Plamondon
 Rajotte
 Reynolds
 Robinson
 Roy
 Schmidt
 Solberg
 Spencer
 Stinson
 Strahl
 Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
 Wayne
 White (North Vancouver)

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

● (1535)

[Translation]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2003

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-28, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 18, 2003

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that, because of the recorded divisions, government orders will be extended by 31 minutes.

* * *

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—FIREARMS PROGRAM

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I do not know how many times we have to stand in the House and talk about waste, mismanagement, incompetence and everything else the Liberal government does before it gets the message. It just seems to be an interminable thing that we have to talk about this time after time.

We are we are now up to, I think, our third billion dollar boondoggle. Members may recall the HRDC billion dollar boondoggle a while ago where the government had to change its mind because the money was leaking through government coffers faster than it could leak through a sieve. Then we had the heating fuel rebate where the government spent \$1.4 billion, of which only \$400 million went to the people who needed it, and \$1 billion went straight down the drain. Then of course we have our new billion

Supply

dollar scandal courtesy of the Auditor General, that wonderful servant of the people, who has told us how bad the government is on managing the books.

If anybody wants to be horrified at the incompetence, mismanagement and everything else that—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Order, please. It is very difficult for the Chair to hear the hon. member when members are talking. Could we please, colleagues, take our discussions outside, out of courtesy to the member and to the Chair.

Mr. John Williams: Madam Speaker, I appreciate you bringing the House's attention to the fact that everybody wants to hear what members have to say, especially when we are talking about what the Auditor General had to say on the government's incompetence.

For anyone who wants to read the horrific report on the management of the finances, one need look no further than the particular report that was prepared by the Auditor General and tabled last December. The whole nation was in an uproar. It is absolutely beyond comprehension to think that it got so bad. I will just take a few isolated items out of her report.

For example, her report states that program cost estimates have risen from \$119 million to over \$1 billion. How could it get so bad? It goes on to state that contrary to original announcements, the fees will not cover expenditures. Members may remember the minister of justice of the day, who is currently the Minister of Industry, telling us that we should not worry because this was a self-financing program and would only cost net \$2 million because revenues will cover expenditures. From the start, the Auditor General said that would never happen and, contrary to the original announcement, that fees would not cover expenditures.

Members may recall that the Auditor General told us that Parliament was being kept in the dark. However it would seem to us here that not only were we kept in the dark, but perhaps we were being misled at the same time because the government knew, it had the facts, and it just did not deliver them to us here in Parliament.

The Auditor General goes on to say that from the start insufficient financial information was provided to Parliament. She went on to say that supplementary estimates were inappropriately used; that accountability for all program costs was not maintained; and that financial information provided did not fairly represent the costs. It was a litany of accusations, all documented and all supported with evidence.

The report goes on to state that in 1996 the department recognized that funding assumptions were unrealistic. It puts people off government when they know that this kind of thing goes on. People say that parliamentarians have a bad name. The reason we have a bad name is that the government keeps telling us these kinds of things and the information turns out to be misleading and not supported by fact. It is fiction. I could go on and on.

What could we do with \$1 billion? How many police could we put on the streets with \$1 billion? We could put hundreds on the streets. What other ways could we improve the policing and the safety of our communities with \$1 billion? There are endless ways.

Supply

Today on Parliament Hill the Canadian Police Association is visiting parliamentarians and telling them about what it needs. I had a visit from members of the Canadian Police Association in my office this very morning. They told me that they needed to get rid of club fed, the prison with the golf course and so on, where people can enjoy life in prison. They said that they did not think that was why prisoners were sent there.

The association also told us how it needed more money for community policing. I did not hear it asking for more money for the gun registry because it knows this thing does not work. The chief of police for the City of Toronto said that he had given up on the registry because the money was being wasted and it was going down a big, wide sewer when it could be used for community policing.

I know the cities of St. Albert and Edmonton need more police but the government wants to waste money on an ineffective registry that cannot, will not and does not work. What more can I say about this infamous program?

However, today is the day. Members may remember last December, just two days after the Auditor General brought out her damning report, when the government said that because the program had the country a bit upset it would pull the \$72 million more that it needed off the table because some Liberal backbenchers might not support that. The government thought it was in trouble.

However we read in the paper last Wednesday that at the caucus meeting the Prime Minister said that this would be a confidence motion and that Liberal backbenchers would have to vote for it. Liberal backbenchers would have to hold their nose, even if it smelled, and vote because their jobs were on the line and he might call an election. He tried to scare his people. The bad news is that they seem to have listened to him. It seems that they were scared. Democracy has failed again.

•(1540)

There are some quotes from today's *National Post*. The member for Thunder Bay—Superior North in talking about the vote tonight, about whether we will give them that \$59 million that the Liberals now want to keep the registry going, another \$59 million on the registry instead of policing, said, "I'm in a dilemma". I thought he was sent here to make up his mind but he says he is in a dilemma. "I've always thought that the role of members is to blow the horn".

It is not to blow the horn, it is to use his head. I would hope that he would use his head and say to his constituents back home who say they do not want this registry, as their representative, "I will vote against this tonight. Why should I spend another \$59 million on a vehicle that is broken?"

I hope that when he runs for re-election the people who are running against him, and it does not matter what party it is, say, "Do you remember back on March 25 when you voted for another \$59 million of our money for that broken system that does not work? Why should we vote for you if you will not listen to us?"

The member for Nipissing is quoted in today's *National Post* as saying, "We have to see it through to the end. It is a disaster". I am not talking about whether he has recognized that the registry is a disaster or the fact that trying to hold together as a family over there

is a disaster. I do not know what the disaster is he is talking about but the way the government runs the registry is a disaster.

I thought we lived in a democracy, yet the Prime Minister stood up in caucus last week and was reported in the paper as saying that members have to vote for this thing or they are out of the party. That is no way to run a democracy.

The members on the backbench over there should have the freedom to make up their minds whether they like this idea or not, the same way as members on this side of the House have that liberty. They should be able to stand and say they object to \$59 million being thrown against the wall and wasted the same way as we have.

Time is short. In less than a couple of hours we will be voting on this. There is not much time to visit all the Liberal backbenchers one by one, so I appeal to them collectively to think about what they are doing. The \$59 million is \$2 for every man, woman and child in this country. That could buy a lot of public safety. That could buy a lot of policing. That could buy a lot of community support. That could buy many things to make our streets safer. This will not.

I hope those members are held accountable by their constituents when they go back home and tell them how they listened to the Prime Minister rather than listening to their constituents and voted the way the Prime Minister wanted them to so he could stay in office for another 10 months or whatever it is, rather than representing the people who sent them here to act wisely and well. It is a bad day and a sad day. I hope they vote the program down.

•(1545)

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am a little confused by my colleague's remarks. I am someone who supported the legislation in the first place. I believe it addresses a very serious problem. I believe it is addressing that problem remarkably effectively, despite the obstruction from the other side and the deliberate encouragement by the other side to block up the system which will increase the expense.

As a supporter of it, I was particularly embarrassed by the Auditor General's report which the member has just been reading from. I was saddened by the fact that additional moneys have been obtained for this program without proper attention to the House of Commons and that I did not know.

I will confess that I should have been more vigilant. I should have watched the supplementary estimates. I should have known. I would have encouraged the further expenditures but I would have watched them more closely.

I must regret that I did not do that partly because I rely on the official opposition members to do that kind of thing. I really do. I think it is their job. In previous Parliaments they have held the government to account.

We, the people on this side, commissioned the Auditor General to report four times a year instead of once a year. My colleague is the chair of the public accounts committee. He has access to all the books of the government. He and his colleagues missed this completely until our Auditor General came forward with it.

I believe the member for St. Albert is particularly at fault in this respect as chair of the committee. He is the only opposition member who is chair of a committee and that is deliberate, so that he can keep his eye on the public accounts and he missed it.

I have confessed my share of the blame in this program which I support. Will the member confess his own as chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, as a member of the official opposition which is supposed to hold the government to account, as a member of the official opposition which encouraged through false information and so on the clogging up of the system and therefore increased its expense? He had to rely on the Auditor General whom we commissioned to report every three months instead of once a year to get this information.

Where was he during this time? Can I rely on him more in the future to keep his eye on these things so that I will know when these valuable programs are being mishandled?

• (1550)

Mr. John Williams: Madam Speaker, the Auditor General says Parliament was kept in the dark and that member is still in the dark over there. He is stumbling around. He does not know what he is bumping into.

Let me be perfectly clear. The member for Yorkton—Melville has stated in the House that he has filed hundreds and hundreds of access to information requests and he has been denied each and every one. He has been up in the House on questions of privilege because he has been denied the information that he has demanded from the government and he would not get a thing.

The member would suggest that the opposition has not been doing its job when Parliament has been kept in the dark. How can the member stand there and accuse the opposition? As parliamentarians we all have the collectively responsibility of holding the government accountable. What has the member done to ensure value for money on this? I am sorry, but it is a big round zero.

That unfortunately is what we get from that whole side over there. What the government wants, the government gets. If there is the slightest murmur that the government is not going to get what it wants, it is reported in the paper that the Prime Minister thumps the desk in caucus and says, "You have got to give me what I want because I am the boss".

I would hope that each and every one of the people elected to represent their constituents, leaders of their communities, would say, "Wait a minute. Unless we feel this is a good deal, there is no deal". That is the message that I have to give to them. I hope that they learn it and it sinks in because in less than two hours from now they are going to be voting on giving \$59 million more into a sinkhole that does not work.

That is the point. We are pouring money down the drain for nothing. Canadians deserve better.

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Scarborough East.

I am pleased to join the discussion on gun control. My view is that it is good public policy that has been handled badly from a financial point of view. I deplore that, as I tried to express to my colleague.

Supply

The fact of the matter is that we do have a system which although it is incomplete, is up and running and is already producing and has been producing valuable results for some years. Those results will be even more valuable once the program is complete.

Like all good public policy, this policy was designed to address a very serious problem, one which is still with us. It can be quite simply expressed.

During the 25 years beginning in 1974, which is the most recent quarter century, 40,030 people died from gun injuries in Canada. During the same time, roughly 1,000 a year were injured. To give a sense of that, in 1997-98, 767 people were injured by guns in Canada.

If we add the injured and the dead together over the 25 years, it amounts to more 66,000 people, more than the population of the city of Peterborough which I very proudly represent with the county of Peterborough. That represents three dead and two injured today as we speak. I am assuming today is an average day. Three will die and two will be wounded from guns today. That applies seven days a week, 365 days a year.

That is the public policy. These were not people who were shot or wounded in variety store or bank holdups. This is a matter of domestic violence across the country. That is the problem which this particular legislation addresses.

To do it, under gun control, there is a two part system. There is the licensing of the gun owners and the registration of the guns. My colleague opposite, even though he is the chair of the public accounts committee and knows better, tried to suggest that all the cost involved in the program goes to the registration. That is not the case.

The opposition, it seems to me, all support the licensing of gun owners and \$2 out of every \$3 that we are talking about is in fact to do with the licensing and \$1 out of every \$3, and I agree it has been too high, in the first 10 years of the cost of the program, is projected to be for registration.

Let us think about the licensing which it seems to me the members support. Licensing is like licensing people to drive cars. It is a program that screens people who, because of mental instability, a criminal record or something of the sort should not own guns. It also trains people in the use of guns, the same way that we train people to drive cars. It is working. The opposition loves it and seems to think it is worth \$2 out of the \$3 being spent on the program.

Almost two million gun owners are now licensed. Between them they own well over five million guns. Under screening, 7,000 firearms licences have been revoked. That was over a period of five years only. That is 50 times more than were revoked through screening in the previous five years. Also as a result of licensing, 29,000 people are now prohibited from owning firearms as compared with only 15,000 just a few years ago. Licensing works.

Supply

To summarize, rigorously screening and licensing firearms owners reduces the risk for those who pose a threat to themselves and others. As I mentioned, already there is evidence that the system has been effective in preventing people who should not have them from having guns. Licensing of firearms owners also discourages casual gun ownership. Owning a firearm is a big responsibility and licensing is a reasonable requirement. While not penalizing responsible firearms owners, licensing encourages people to get rid of unwanted weapons and the like. That is one side of the program.

• (1555)

The analogy is between having a chain with a padlock and a key. With a chain and a padlock, one can close a farm gate without locking it. In this case the key to locking the farm gate is registration. There are two things. The licensing is ineffective without the registration and the registration is ineffective without the licensing.

In terms of the registration, let me give some sense of this because some colleagues keep saying that it is the gun registration program that they are against, not gun control.

Registration increases the accountability of firearms owners by linking the firearm to the owner. This encourages owners to abide by safe storage laws and compels owners to report firearms thefts where storage may not have been a contributing factor. Safe storage of firearms reduces firearms in the black market, break-ins and so on. It reduces unauthorized use of firearms, heat of the moment use of firearms and accidents, particularly involving children. Registration changes the behaviour of the owners.

Registration provides valuable ownership information for law enforcements, the police, for example, approaching a home for any circumstance. There have been many concrete examples of police officers finding registration to be valuable already. They use it because it is tied in with CPIC, 2,000 times a day, .7 second response time. They find it very valuable and they support it.

Now the police never rely entirely on information contained in the registry, partly because it is still incomplete; it is working but it is incomplete. It is helpful to know whether firearms may be present when they receive a call for domestic violence or something of that type.

Registration facilitates proof of possession of stolen and smuggled firearms and aids in prosecution of those matters. Previously, it was very difficult to prove possession of illegal rifles and shotguns. Before this legislation came in, if I was a licensed owner, driving down the 401 in my pickup and I had 100 shotguns in the back, the police could stop me and ask whose guns they were. If I said they were mine, they would ask if I was a licensed gun owner. If I said yes, the police would say, "Very good. Carry on with this pickup full of shotguns".

Now if the police had caught me coming over the border to the 401, they would have thrown me in jail for life. However, as long as I was licensed, before this legislation came into effect, I could have piles of shotguns in the back of my pickup. Therefore registration is extremely valuable in tying the owner to the gun. Registration allows police officers to follow up on thefts and things like that and to track the guns back to the registered owner.

Registration is critical in enforcing licensing. Without registration, believe it or not, there would be nothing to prevent a licensed gun owner from selling an unregistered weapon to an unlicensed individual. I could own, as a licensed gun owner, 1,000 guns. I could give 30 of them to my neighbour who had been turned down for a licence and no one would ever know that those 30 guns belonged to me.

Illegal guns start off as legal guns. Registration helps to prevent the transition from legal to illegal ownership and helps to identify where the transition to illegal ownership occurs.

My general point is that we do have a good program, which has been too expensive I do admit. However it is one which is already clearly producing results.

If we look at the gun crime figures of all sorts in the last 25 or 30 years, we will discover that in Canada there has been a steady decline in most of them throughout that time. However there are only two periods in that time when there was a marked rapid reduction. One was in the middle and late 1970s, following the last major gun control legislation, which most people appeared to think was very good. The second was, extraordinarily enough because it is still incomplete, in the late 1990s and the first part of this century. In that time there has been a marked decline in virtually all gun crimes, in gun thefts, in gun injuries and in gun murders and gun deaths of all sorts.

• (1600)

Colleagues should listen carefully to this. For the first time in the last years of that decade, handgun murders exceeded long gun murders in Canada. This had never occurred before in history. This legislation is aimed at long guns. It is not aimed at taking guns away from legitimate owners. It is aimed—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Ten minutes does pass rather fast. Questions and comments, the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, it is hard to deal with everything of course. Time is very short so I just have a couple of comments.

The member talked about the handguns used in murders. They certainly have been. The majority of them are illegal handguns that are not registered, and of course that system has been in for the last 50 or 60 years.

Supply

In the City of Toronto, near Peterborough and Scarborough, murders are often committed with handguns by various criminal elements and the registry has not stopped that. In fact police resources are being used to register guns. The victims of crimes in Toronto are afraid to make complaints to the police. The police find out about it, they go to the victims, or the victims' family or whoever and ask if they would come in and testify, and they say no. They are terrified of the criminals.

The police cannot protect them because they do not have enough resources. The police are off registering guns and making 2,000 inquiries a day. I do not know why they are sitting in their offices or in their cars making these inquiries. One would think there would be some arrests. However that is the truth of life in Toronto. People are more terrified of the criminals than they are confident of getting help from the police. Could the member talk to that for a minute?

Mr. Peter Adams: Madam Speaker, I have heard my colleague speak like this before, and I understand he was a police officer. I also understand that he was often faced with violent situations other than domestic crime. As I mentioned, however, handgun murders in Canada at the moment are slightly exceeding long gun murders, at roughly 100 a year. However the two are still in the same ballpark. That is 10% of the murders from guns of all sorts, so he is talking about 10%.

Second, he is talking about illegal guns. I would point out that car theft is a serious problem. It is a problem which sometimes when people joyride or otherwise results in death and injury. I understand that. However I would suggest to my colleague that if the cars were not registered, there would be far more cars stolen and there would be far more accidents from cars having been stolen than there are at present.

I am not suggesting that one piece of legislation can cure all these problems. There always will be illegals. My colleague should talk about long guns instead of handguns. He would agree that handgun murders are down because of handgun regulations, incomplete though they are. I hope he would agree that long gun murders and other deaths will go down as this other registration system and the associated licensing system become complete.

I hope he will vote for the additional moneys today so we do not throw away an already good program simply because, as I have accepted, it has been mishandled financially.

• (1605)

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I have a very simple question for the member, if he is able to answer it. He mentioned that there were some 1,300 firearms deaths in a year. I believe that was his figure. Would he concede that even with this program fully running, some of those will still occur? If he agrees with that, could he give me a general estimate of what percentage he thinks will be saved by this program?

Mr. Peter Adams: Madam Speaker, first, if my colleague would go to the website and look at the statistics, he would see that there already has been a significant reduction. While it is incomplete, I easily could stand and say that in four or five years there will be this sort of reduction, if I could predict that. I truly cannot do that. The fact is that while incomplete, the behaviours of thieves and other

illegal uses of guns and the behaviours of gun owners have changed to the point where there is a marked step, for the first time in 20 years, in the reduction of gun crimes.

It really suggests to me that in literally a few years time, when this program is complete, I will be able to say to him that there has been truly a very significant reduction in gun crimes of all sorts because of this linked system of licensing the owners and registering the guns, therefore tying the guns to the owners.

Mr. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this matter, which is of course quite controversial.

This is not a debate about policy. That has been done. We have had three elections in the past number of years. Each time gun control was a significant element of that election and each time the government was returned with a significant majority. It appears that the Canadian people have spoken on that issue, not once, not twice, but three times. As I see it, this is not a debate about the policy of gun control. Rather this is a debate about the costs of gun control. On that there has been some significant controversy.

The first point I want to make is with respect to the actual costs themselves. The second point is with respect to the ambiguities that are in the costs. The third point is that in retrospect the things that we have done appear to be quite dumb and we might have made better decisions on.

First with respect to the costs, I would point out that the Auditor General has done a very good job and a real service to this Parliament and Canadians in querying government spending. I think she has done that and held the government's feet to the fire in asking that the government account for its spending in this area. On the face of it, her position appears to be quite justifiable.

I will read from her notes, which state, "The Department of Justice did not provide Parliament with sufficient information to allow it to effectively scrutinize the Canadian firearms program and ensure accountability. In 1995, the Department of Justice told Parliament that the program would cost taxpayers about \$2 million. The Department now says that by 2004-05, the costs of this program could amount to more than \$1 billion. This chapter is an audit of the costs of this program and did not review the program per se. It is not about gun control. We express reservations about the cost estimates. Due to significant shortcomings in the information, we stopped our audit".

On the face of it, going from \$2 million to \$1 billion should raise the concern of every member in the House, both on the opposition side and the government side. Not only must we be good stewards of the public's money, but we also must appear to be good stewards of the public's money.

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Getting at the numbers appears to be, frankly, devilishly difficult. A consensus figure seems to be that over the past seven years the government has spent something in the order of \$688 million or roughly \$100 million a year. That sounds like a lot of money and in fact it is a lot of money. During that time revenues from the program have been about \$75 million. That leaves the actual costs in and around \$613 million over seven years or \$88 million a year. Again that is still a lot of money.

Prior to 1993 and prior to the election of this government we already had a firearms acquisition program. On that program we were already spending \$30 million a year. During the seven year period we are talking about, which has been a period of controversy, the government, whether it is this government or any other government, would have spent something in the order of \$210 million regardless.

I am trying to compare apples to apples. The extra money that was spent over the past seven years was approximately \$400 million, and that again is a lot of money. In fairness, it is not \$100 million a year, rather it is about \$58 million a year. That, in my view, is what we are debating; whether this is an appropriate use of \$58 million per year over the last seven years and is appropriate going forward.

These are the numbers as best as I can determine them. It is not about \$1 billion and it is not about \$2 million. It is about \$688 million less \$75 million that we have acquired by way of revenues, less \$210 million that we would have spent anyway or somewhere in the order of \$400 million over seven years or about \$58 million a year. It is still a lot of money but nowhere close to what the extremists would have us believe. That is my best handle on the costs as a sort of working member of this caucus. Now I will address some of the ambiguities of the costs.

•(1610)

I am not an accountant. There are a lot of things that go into these numbers about which reasonable people might well disagree. For example, the Auditor General argues that the Department of Justice is misleading when it neglects to include the extra costs of incarceration due to the sentencing of criminals who use guns in the commission of their crime. The Criminal Code is pretty clear that if persons use a firearm during the commission of a crime they will receive extra time.

Should that be included in the figures? Is that a cost of gun control? Should time before the parole board, because persons actually change their parole eligibility and, therefore, they are spending more time in prison, and those costs also be included in the costs of gun control? Are these costs appropriately allocated to the costs of gun control?

I do not know about other members, but when I am trying to figure out the costs of this program I had not anticipated that the extra costs of sentencing, parole, et cetera, would be something that should be included in the program. I would respectfully submit that reasonable people might well disagree over that.

The other thing that comes into it is the extra policing costs. Under the firearm acquisition certificate program the policing costs were picked up by the local police forces. Now, the federal government picks up the costs. Should they also be included in the costs of the

gun control program? Is that a figure that should be in the program or is that a figure that should be out of the program? Again, accountants will disagree about how this should be accounted for, let alone MPs, and other reasonable people.

Having said that there are some costs which are difficult to analyze and having said that there are some ambiguities in the costs which make it even more difficult to analyze, let us look at some of the dumb things that were done in the past few years. One of which was the implacable opposition of certain provincial governments, including a constitutional challenge to the legislation, which delayed the start-up of the legislation in the first place.

Maybe that could have been anticipated. It seems in retrospect that this is something that should have been anticipated. However, that is something that we know going forward that even if the federal government wins the case, which it did, there will not be a very happy provincial government cooperating with the federal government in the application of this program. That is a kind of cost that should have been anticipated and was not anticipated.

Similarly, should costs be included for members of particular gun lobbies that are absolutely dead set against this program regardless and have a significant ability to derail the system, to clog it up, et cetera, and in fact running up the costs? Should a government have recognized this in advance? Possibly, in retrospect, it should have.

Similarly, the government has gone through three elections. It has gone through a huge debate, enormous controversy in caucus, and it is left so that the provinces are opposed and gun groups decide the direction of this particular policy. I would respectfully submit that no government, regardless of its political stripe, could do that.

Finally, on costs of about \$400 million over seven years, I will try to compare apples to apples. The new enhanced firearms controls of the FAC process was put in place by the previous Conservative government and that accounts for about 35% of the costs. The new costs are in the licensing. As the previous speaker said, the two go hand in hand. The registering and the licensing go hand in hand and that is where we get our public safety benefit.

Unlike the previous speaker from Peterborough who spoke eloquently about the public safety benefits that are derived from this program, I have not spoken on this issue.

•(1615)

It seems strange to me that, for instance, the chief of the Toronto police force would say that this is not much of a program when the program is being hit 2,000 times a day, most significantly by his own police force. We have the support of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Police Association, and the Canadian Association of Police Boards. I appreciate the overwhelming support by the police.

The costs are significant, but they are comprehensible. There are some genuine ambiguities in the cost and in retrospect some of them—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Questions and comments. The hon. member for Yellowhead.

Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I sat and listened to my colleague very intently as he described the last three elections. I feel almost ashamed that I have to give him a bit of a history lesson on the last three elections since he has been in the House quite a bit longer than I.

If I recall, the election of 1993 was not fought on gun control. Gun control did not come in until 1995 and after. The 1993 election was fought on the removal of the GST as promised in the red book. It had nothing to do with gun control.

I find it absolutely astonishing that an individual from the other side would stand in this place and try to explain that gun control should be supported because it was promised to the electorate over three elections. In fact, the two elections after that were not won on gun control. They were won primarily because of the strength of the economy. It was luck of the draw.

I find appalling the misleading information coming from a member in this House. His debate as far as supporting a gun registry has cost \$1 billion to date and will be another \$1 billion before this thing is off the ground and running smoothly. What really disturbs me, as a senior health critic, is the fact that this money would supply 238 MRIs in this country and operate them for a full year when we only have 110 operating.

The government has turned its back on health care over the last decade and yet will stand in this place and say that gun control should be supported. I say cut the losses now before we bury another \$1 billion of taxpayer money into something that will absolutely not save one life in this country.

I would like to have my hon. colleague's response to some of his misleading comments with regard to this registry.

• (1620)

Mr. John McKay: Madam Speaker, I commend the hon. member's attention to the 1993 red book which contained the proposals for gun control. The 1993 red book was probably the most focused document of all documents in that election. It included a significant component with respect to gun control.

I do not know where the hon. member was in 1997, but I remember knocking on doors and I can recall a couple of incidents quite vividly for me, both in 1997 and in 2000, where certain individuals would respond at the door or on the phone, and they were implacably opposed to gun control. To argue that gun control has not been a part of the previous three elections is simply not right.

I take exception to the hon. member continuing to say that \$1 billion is being spent here. At least the Auditor General is honest about it. She said that if we were to accumulate all of the moneys over the past 10 years, this fiscal year, and the year 2004-05, then there would possibly be an expenditure of \$1 billion, which sounds like a lot of money. When that money is broken down over the number of years, it is not nearly as significant. Had my hon.

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colleague been listening to my speech a bit more carefully, he would have recognized that this is a cumulative figure and one which the department is trying to address. He is also ignoring the cost recovery program and the moneys already spent on the firearms acquisition certificates.

The debate is about whether the licensing part of the program is a public safety benefit to Canadians.

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, the hon. member basically contradicted the Auditor General who said \$800 million to date. He said that was not right, it was \$688 million. Of that we have to take \$75,000 that we got in fees, another \$210,000 that we would have spent anyway, and that magically is \$400 million.

I would like to ask the hon. member, according to his figures, which is accounting magic even if we accept it, is his government proud of the fact that it is 200 times over budget instead of 500 times over budget?

Mr. John McKay: Madam Speaker, I made the point that the difference between the \$2 million, to which the hon. member is referring, and the \$1 billion is quite a gap. I am perfectly prepared to concede that. I also made the point in my speech that I thought the government should have anticipated, with that implacable opposition from over there, in provincial capitals, and among gun enthusiasts, that costs would get run up and that it would not be able to—

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

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Carleton, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan.

In starting my comments I will just continue some of the discussion that has been going on here with regard to costs. The Liberal member opposite has just referred to the cost overruns and has asserted the fact that, by his math, the cost overruns are only several hundred millions, not the full \$800 million measured by the Auditor General, and that this somehow excuses things. I thought my hon. colleague on this side of the House was quite right in pointing out that it is not acceptable to have an overrun by 200 times. It would not be acceptable to have an overrun by two times, quite frankly, and it certainly would not be acceptable to withhold this information from the House as the government has done. These are all problems with the government's approach.

However, the member said something that was quite extraordinary. He said that, after all, these overruns were not really the government's fault, that they were really the fault of the various players who got involved in arguing that aspects of this law were unconstitutional, who fought against this law, and the fault of various provincial governments that opposed this law as being essentially unenforceable and an infringement of the federal government's competence and jurisdiction.

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We could probably save a lot of money if people who were accused of criminal offences did not trouble us by pleading not guilty and defending their rights. We could probably save a lot of money if people who are unjustly accused of offences did not defend themselves. We could probably save a lot of money if whenever the government said jump we simply all obeyed, but that is not the way the system runs. When something is set up that is as badly designed as this firearms registry and with the extensive infringements upon personal civil liberties and upon the jurisdictions of other levels of government that this gun registry includes, it is only natural that opponents would attempt to stop it.

Of course the government could have on its own undertaken ahead of time to seek a Supreme Court reference, for example, as to the constitutional validity of the registry. That would have eliminated costs associated with this. It could have had a period of waiting prior to implementing the registry. That would have eliminated some of the costs to which the hon. member refers. Therefore I want to suggest that for all the costs included here, and quite frankly I think that the Auditor General was correct and the hon. member is incorrect as to the level of those numbers, that is to say, it really was an overrun by 400 times, those costs really do all lie at the feet of the government.

The prepared remarks I have with regard to this legislation and today's motion deal with three topics. First I want to go through and discuss the problems in principle with the idea of a registry of this nature. Second, I will discuss the problems that exist with this particular registry. Finally, I want to cite examples that indicate that there is strong public opposition to this particular gun registry and its implementation from members of the Canadian public at large and also from members of various police forces.

Let us start with the question of problems in principle. Placing a gun in a registry by definition is going to be at best a very ineffective way of reducing or eliminating fatalities. The claim is sometimes made that if this registry would save a single life then it would be worthwhile. I am inclined to think that if the money used for this registry were invested so as to save many lives, that would be a proper use of the money, but in fact I cannot even find evidence that any lives are saved. I know that the members on the opposite side have various arguments that they present, but they are very unconvincing arguments.

The fact is that some of the lives that can be saved by proper firearms regulation are saved by, for example, safe storage practices and the encouragement of safe storage practices and by requirements for people to seek out and gain training prior to using firearms and so on. That is very much different from a registration of firearms themselves. For example, the registry does not and cannot prevent thefts. Moreover, it does nothing in terms of tracing firearms that are stolen. Safe storage practices would reduce thefts somewhat and do reduce thefts somewhat, but not the firearms registry.

• (1625)

The use of firearms in moments of anger or the use of firearms that have been improperly stored and result in accidental fatalities are again safe storage issues. Regarding the use of firearms in suicides, clearly firearms registration will do nothing about that.

The problem that exists in a country as large as Canada, with as porous a border as Canada has with the United States, ensures that we can never prevent the illegal importation of firearms through a registry, both in classifications of firearms that require registration and in firearm classifications where they are completely banned. This is simply a fundamental problem that no registry can overcome.

In general, the basic problem is that if we want to cause the criminal use of firearms to be decreased, we have to deal with the problem that criminals have certain incentives. We must change those incentives by providing greater certainty of sentencing for those who commit criminal offences with firearms and greater certainty in terms of the length of time they will serve in prison prior to being released. As long as we are lax in our policing, as we underfund our police, and as long as we are lax in sentencing and our sentencing rate is uncertain, we are going to find a situation in which firearms crimes will continue to escalate, notwithstanding any restrictions being placed through a firearms registry on legal firearms use.

Of course this is not the first firearms registry we have had in the country. I want to read a quotation from the man who set up Canada's handgun registry in the 1930s. In the 1970s, former RCMP Commissioner L.H. Nicholson had the following to say about the handgun registry that he had set up in the 1930s, and I think this indicates the fundamental problem. He said, "Had I known in 1934 what I know today, I would have had nothing to do with [the handgun registry]. Mere registration has never solved a crime and only harasses the legitimate gun owner". I think that principle applies equally, indeed more so, to the long gun registry that we are discussing today.

I want to turn to specific problems with the registry. The most obvious one is cost. I have dealt with that a bit already. Of course cost overruns on this registry have become so enormous that they have become a metaphor for so many Canadians for the lack of control of spending the government has, and well they should; it has been a billion dollars so far for something that was projected to cost the public treasury only \$2 million, the rest of its costs supposedly being financed through various licensing fees.

A further billion dollars, we are told, will very likely be needed over the next few years to complete the registration process. That is one problem. Of course that money could be used for purchasing MRIs, as was discussed earlier. It could be used for more money for better policing. Just before I came down to speak in the House today I was meeting with a couple of policeman from the Ottawa Police Service who live in my constituency. They expressed their frustration with the fact that there are insufficient funds for policing at the municipal level and also provincially and federally. Some of this money, or indeed all of this money, potentially could be used for that. That would have an effect on crime.

• (1630)

Also, there is another problem. Registering long guns does not solve the problem of violent crime in the country. It is simply the wrong focus. To make this point, I want to note that only 1.4% of violent crimes in Canada actually involve firearms, which suggests that simply providing for more certain sentencing and perhaps harsher sentencing for violent crimes in general would be the most effective way to reduce such crimes.

As for the number of robberies that are committed with long guns, in the entire country 1% of robberies are committed with long guns. Long guns are clearly not the source of that particular kind of crime. The number of robberies where victims are injured or killed with long guns is 0%.

So really this is not the proper focus. We are not achieving the goals the government set out to achieve. I think it is time to recognize that it simply does not work and I am not alone in thinking this.

I see that my time is coming to a close, so I will simply point out that the president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, Tom Kaye, has said that the firearms registry is unenforceable, that the president of the Vancouver police union has said that the government would get more bang for its buck by investing in staffing and equipment and in dealing with crimes, and that the president of the Winnipeg Police Association describes the registry as a “black hole”.

• (1635)

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, most of the provinces and territories still do not support this registry system. They want changes to it. I speak in particular of the Territory of Nunavut. Nunavut is represented in the House by a Liberal member of Parliament, and I will leave that member to speak for herself. Nunavut has a court challenge currently going through the courts, saying that in Nunavut they do not have to register their firearms.

I remember hearing the member from Scarborough talking earlier about how the court cases had driven up these costs of this system. The court cases are not going to end. Nunavut, and possibly other provinces, will once again challenge this, so that will drive up the costs. No law-abiding firearms owner is going to plead guilty to the charge of an unregistered firearm, so there is going to be a court case on each and every one of those charges. The government does not seem to understand that this quagmire of expense is going to continue on and on. I wonder if the member has any thoughts in regard to the Nunavut court challenge and what effect that will have on driving the costs up. What are the effects, in that it is against the property rights of all Canadians, including the rights of natives, to have to register their rifles?

Mr. Scott Reid: Madam Speaker, in response to my hon. colleague's question, I would simply observe that at this point anything that has the effect of stopping money from going to the firearms registry, far from costing the government money, would actually save a great deal of money. Quite frankly, a court challenge that had the effect of demonstrating that this firearms registry is unconstitutional in whole or in part would be of financial benefit to the country, as well as being of benefit in refocusing government

Routine Proceedings

attention upon the real criminal law enforcement priorities that exist in the country.

I do want to point out, of course, that it is not just Nunavut. There are many other provinces. In fact, eight other provinces oppose the firearms registry. That includes the Government of Ontario.

Just this weekend I was presented with a petition by Bob Runciman, the minister of public safety for Ontario. It was a 10,000 signature petition from constituents in his riding, in my riding and throughout eastern Ontario who are asking the federal government to abandon the firearms registry because it does not work, because it draws resources away from other priorities that are so much more important, and because it infringes upon our basic rights as Canadians. This is a widespread feeling. It is not just governments that feel this way. Citizens, rural and urban, young and old, of all races and of both genders, feel very strongly about this.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and I think that if you were to seek it you would find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, in relation to its study on the Atlantic Fishery, a group comprised of the chair, two government members and one member of each of the opposition parties of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans be authorized to travel to St. John's, Newfoundland, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Moncton, New Brunswick and Gaspé, Quebec, from May 4 to 8, 2003, and that the necessary staff do accompany the committee.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

HEALTH

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there are two more motions. I move:

That, in relation to its study on prescription drugs, a group comprised of five government members and one member of each of the opposition parties of the Standing Committee on Health be authorized to travel in one group to Victoria, Edmonton, and Winnipeg during the week of September 29, 2003, and that the necessary staff do accompany the committee.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

HEALTH

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

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That, in relation to its study on prescription drugs, a group comprised of five government members and one member of each of the Opposition parties of the Standing Committee on Health be authorized to travel in one group to Halifax, Québec and Toronto during the week of October 27, 2003, and that the necessary staff do accompany the Committee.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1640)

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—FIREARMS PROGRAM

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I would like to start off by expressing absolute shock that the government members who have spoken, and particularly the last Liberal member who spoke, would try to defend the unbelievable cost overrun on this by saying that it is not 400 times what they said, that it is only 200 times what they said. It is absolutely astounding that would be a defence.

There are two fundamental things that the government has said, quite falsely I might add, that the bill would provide. It claims the bill would provide a reduction in crime. It also claims that it would save lives. I would like to touch on each one of those today. It seems woefully inadequate that I have 10 minutes to talk about something on which the government has blown \$1 billion. It is 400 times or perhaps 500 times over budget to date and it still has a long way to go.

In terms of the reduction of crime, and we have heard it said often but it bears repeating because the Liberal members do not seem to be able to get it through their heads, criminals by definition break the law, so what good will it do to present another law for them to break? How will we reduce crime by telling them that they cannot use guns because it is against the law? The absurdity of that comment, of that very situation, should make the Liberals want to hide their heads in embarrassment. Yet somehow they keep crowing that same comment.

For 70 years we have registered handguns in this country and yet handguns are the firearms of choice for those criminals when they do use them to commit crimes. The next biggest ones are sawed off shotguns, sawed off rifles and automatic weapons, all of which are illegal in any case, so we do not need the registration of those items because they cannot be registered. In terms of a reduction in crimes, it is an absurdity.

One of the interesting things about Bill C-68 is that it makes illegal the small, purse sized pepper spray that some poor innocent woman, or perhaps man, who has to travel through a park or a dark parking lot late at night, could use as a defensive tool to try to get away from those very criminals, to use as a last resort as a defensive

tool. The Liberals in their wisdom said no. They said that they were being hard on the criminals by making their guns illegal so they had to be fair. They had to take away pepper spray from the women and men who might use them for defensive purposes in order to get away from one of these criminals. The Liberals like to balance things so they have to do that.

In terms of saving lives, let us allow for the moment, and I do not volunteer this at all, that somehow, although it has never been explained, the bill would save some unknown percentage in some unknown way of the 1,300 some odd lives that the Liberals say are lost to firearms each year and, I might add, lives that are lost through suicide, homicide, accident, legal intervention and every method possible. That is what the bill is about and that is what justifies the bill.

I remember hearing that argument back in 1995 when the bill was brought in. I did a survey in my riding. I went to great lengths and sought assistance to have as neutrally worded a question for the survey as possible. The results were overwhelmingly opposed to the government measure but there were some who said they were in favour. I remember one woman who wrote me and said “Even if it only saves one life, is it not worth it?” As a result of that letter I built my entire speech in 1995 in Parliament around that very premise. Is it worth it if it saves one life?

At that time the minister, who has gone through various portfolios and who now I believe he is industry minister, acknowledged that it would cost \$118.9 million gross, minus the fees that would be collected. I went to the head of the B.C. breast cancer detection program and I asked him to tell me something about breast cancer. He gave me some background: how many new cases there would be; how many of those would be fatalities. Having learned this, I asked him what he would do if I gave him \$118.9 million and what results would I get. He conferred with his colleagues and got back to me a few days later. He said that they had talked it over and had decided that they would target the early detection program for the high risk category of women. I said that was fine and asked him what results that would provide.

● (1645)

He said that statistically speaking they would save approximately one-third of the expected fatalities, which would be about 1,710 lives. There we have either saving some unknown percentage in some unknown way of 1,300 or saving 1,710 real lives. If the bill is about saving lives, there are a lot of better ways to spend that money. I am not picking breast cancer to be the be all and end all. Many different things have been mentioned here today, such as different hospital expenditures and crime prevention. We could spend the money in a number of ways, all of which would save far more lives than Bill C-68. I would remind members that was when it was at \$118.9 million, not \$800 million or even the \$400 million the member grudgingly acknowledges, or the billion dollars plus that in reality it will cost.

Supply

We also have to go back and talk about the concept of the support the government said it had for the bill. The support it had for the bill was particularly from people in urban centres, people who maybe had a bad experience with a firearm or simply never had a firearm and thought that if the government could do something about them it would probably make their lives better.

The government approached those people and told them that it had a program that it believed would reduce crime and save lives, erroneous though that statement may be, and that it would cost \$2 million. It then asked the people if they favoured it.

If the government were to go back in time to 1995 and say, "We have a program that we at least claim will save some lives and we claim will reduce crime, although we can't explain how, and it will cost a billion dollars," I wonder if the support would evaporate.

Even now, as the Auditor General has released these figures, that support is not only evaporating on the streets, it is evaporating on the government's own back benches.

The government has been dishonest with the people of Canada in providing the costs of this and in providing real, accurate information in terms of the effectiveness or lack thereof.

One thing that has been mentioned tonight is that this has cost a lot more money because those dirty, rotten provincial governments have not accepted this. I would remind the Liberals that when the Alberta court challenge took place, the split decision was that it was against the rights and the constitution of the province, but it overruled that in favour of the concept that if it overrode the government on Bill C-68 it would also override the handgun registry and it did not wish to do that. Therefore the court found in favour of the government, notwithstanding the fact that it agreed that it encroached on provincial jurisdiction.

Why should the provinces not accept it? The federal government was indeed encroaching on their jurisdiction. Now the government thinks the provinces should turn around and co-operate with it.

There are a number of things I would love to discuss tonight but I will end by making a couple of points. Some say that since we have spent a billion dollars already on this that it would be foolish at this point to stop. I think we should stop for two reasons: first, because of the ineffectiveness that I have outlined; and second, because this is not the end.

The government said in the beginning that it would cost \$2 million. Its own department, whose figures we do not trust any more, say that it will cost \$50 million to \$60 million a year to maintain this. That is 30 times the whole cost just to maintain it on a year by year basis. We are a long way from finished with this program.

The final point I would like to leave is to throw a question to the Liberals. I know it is their turn to question me. Maybe they will respond to this in questions and comments. Why is it that we want to force the law-abiding citizens of this country to register their recreational firearms when the government does not have the courage or the fortitude to go to already convicted sex offenders and register them in the new sex registry program? Why is it they want law-abiding citizens to register their long guns when they are not

prepared to register the sex offenders who have preyed upon innocent people in this country?

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I think we need to deal a little with the equality issue and the sentencing issue when firearms offences happen.

I have 10 first nation reserves in my riding and I know the member does as well. We had one case three years ago in Winnipeg when Chief Louis Stevenson from the Paguis First Nation was involved in pointing a firearm and subsequently shot a garbage can in a bar. He was convicted and received a fine. I heard other members talk about how they would be putting people in jail, but we seem to have a double standard happening here. Whether it was his political support or whatever, I am not sure why the sentencing was done like that, but that is a fact.

There is every reason to believe that Nunavut and the first nations across the country will not register. They already have special rules under the Firearms Act. Some things apply to non-natives and some things apply to natives. If, which seems likely, Nunavut will not have to register in the future or there will be new rules created that will give exemptions or whatever the government decides to do, this will further split and divide Canadians.

I believe the government is stirring up a hornet's nest when it does not treat Canadian equally, when it comes to what it proclaims is a serious law, like registering all the firearms in the country.

The member may wish to make additional comments in regard to that question.

• (1650)

Mr. Jim Gouk: Madam Speaker, I have heard many people echo the sentiments that my colleague has just raised.

First, we can be assured that there will be countless court challenges as a result of this mixture of application of the law. If the government thinks the costs are already out of hand because of these things, why would it do something that is absolutely guaranteed to perpetuate this and cause more court challenges?

The second point is really important. The government either believes the rhetoric it has been spinning or it does not. It either believes that firearms are dangerous unless they are registered or they are not. If they are dangerous, then it should apply to absolutely everybody. If the government tells the Nunavut and the various Indian reserves, perhaps the Métis and who knows who else it may choose to exempt, that guns are not dangerous so they do not have to register, then obviously it should apply to everyone.

Supply

In fact, if we want to start talking in terms of people in the north and aboriginal people who face a lot of challenges, along with the rest of us, in terms of education, health care and a lot of provisions, then perhaps the government, if it is really interested in the needs of those and other people, should be redirecting this incredible amount of money it has wasted, not only in the past, because it already has wasted that and there is not much we can do about it, but surely it can see that the \$60 million to \$80 million that it says it will spend per year in the future, plus the unknown hundreds of millions of dollars it will take to finish this program, could be redirected to both aboriginal and non-aboriginal alike, because we believe in equality, in order to deal with some of the social problems, some of the justice problems and the other challenges facing us, instead of squandering it on this useless program where not only is the government wasting the money but now it is dividing people.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I would like to talk about the cost, the user fees and the fees that are applied for registering a firearm or transferring it. I have heard the government members talk today about who should pay the cost, whether it is the federal government, the provinces or the police force. These are all funded by one person: the taxpayer of Canada.

Unfortunately, firearms owners are paying twice because firearms owners have to pay when they register a firearm or when they transfer one. In my riding, a lot of people on some of these farms and in other low income situations, or, in many cases, no income, are going to find this an onerous cost to their operations. As a result, some of them will just not register because of the cost.

The user fee is not for the firearm owner. The user fee is for Canadians generally, if we listen to the government's argument. It would seem strange why firearm owners are being penalized twice. It looks to me as though the real purpose of the legislation is to get rid of all the firearms in this country and get them out of the hands of private citizens.

• (1655)

Mr. Jim Gouk: Madam Speaker, what the hon. member said is right. In essence this is a download onto the provinces. The softwood lumber problems have been mishandled by the government. The fisheries problems in B.C. have been mishandled by the government. There are health care problems. The government promised 50% and it is down to 14%. There are problems with post-secondary education. I know the hon. member's riding has agricultural problems which have been mishandled by the government.

Now the government wants to come out with this ludicrous wasteful bill. It has little to endorse it and will download the cost of enforcing this unenforceable program onto our provinces. I think it is despicable.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas, Tobacco Industry.

[*English*]

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my esteemed colleague from Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine.

About nine years ago, soon after the election, the Liberal Party of Canada held a very large convention in Ottawa. I was privileged and honoured to be asked to second the resolution on gun control which was put forward by our Liberal women's commission. The resolution asked the government to see that gun control become a priority in the legislation program. I was extremely pleased, as were many of my colleagues, to see that the government brought forward a gun control bill, Bill C-68.

The present Minister of Industry who was minister of justice back then has been criticized very strongly about the gun registration program. I would like to place on the record here that his courage and determination to bring in the gun control legislation in spite of fierce opposition, sometimes from our own colleagues on the Liberal side, was praiseworthy. He stood the course. I rejoice that the bill became law.

We are now talking about the registration system and the huge cost overruns that were involved with it. The Auditor General produced a report. We have to be fair and frank. It did create a lot of disdain and shock. A great many Canadians, many from my own riding who wrote to me and called me, said it was unacceptable. After all of these years we never knew that the gun registration system would suddenly balloon into a huge expense.

The Auditor General criticized us as a government for not bringing forward to Parliament the various requests for additional funding. We should not shy away from saying that a mistake was made. We do not want to hide behind some sort of rhetoric that would avoid this question. I find that even the supporters of gun control separate the gun control issue from the fact that there were flaws in the registration system and that the costs ballooned beyond reality.

At the same time, I also note that the Auditor General never criticized the merits of the policy itself. Although she criticized the financial administration of it and the fact that we did not bring it before the House as we should have on a regular basis, she never at any time criticized the merits of gun control.

[*Translation*]

In 2001, 85 people fell ill in a meningitis epidemic in my province of Quebec. In 2002, the government justifiably spent \$125 million on an inoculation program to try to eradicate, or at least reduce, cases of meningitis.

In New Brunswick, on a highway where 43 people met their deaths in four years between 1996 and 2000, the federal government alone will spend \$400 million to widen it and prevent future deaths.

So we need to put things in perspective. Every year, 1,000 Canadians die because of firearms. Compare that to the 3,000 Canadians who die on our highways. Think of all the money, the huge amounts we spend to make our Canadian highways safe. Compare that to the money we are earmarking for firearms control. Compare that to the amount we put into preventing death and disease.

•(1700)

Just think how much is spent in all of the provinces of Canada on the administration of drivers' licences. What is the cumulative cost of drivers' licences? What is the cumulative cost of this huge administrative system? This is something we are totally open about because we feel it is a way to finance safer roads.

Without in any way minimizing the errors made in connection with the firearms program, it must be realized that there were some additional reasons for the shortcomings.

First of all, we thought the provinces would come in with us to create a joint registration system, but many of them refused.

Then, there were the numerous court challenges, which caused several years' delay.

On top of that, a number of opponents of the program, often with the support of colleagues in this House, deliberately made mistakes in their registration form. According to the Auditor General, 85% of forms had to be done by hand rather than computer because of errors, often deliberate ones.

[*English*]

The whole issue here is gun control above all, although we are using the financial administration as a cover to avoid the fact that many people who oppose it, or all that oppose it, are against gun control itself. I am going to stand here and say I am for gun control. Gun control saves lives. Even if it saved one life, gun control would be worth it.

I hope when we vote for the additional estimates that many of us will stand tall and vote for it because gun control is part of a fair, just and secure society. This is what we should want here on this side of the House.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, my colleague across the way, whom I admire and find to be a very thoughtful, careful colleague, has said that the Auditor General did not criticize the principle of firearm registration. I make quite a differentiation between gun control and firearm registration. I noted he did not make that. That of course is not the Auditor General's mandate. The Auditor General has one mandate and it is to look at the financial matters relating to firearm registration. I want him to admit that this was not the mandate of the Auditor General.

The member knows that I come from a medical background. He knows that as a surgeon I had the opportunity to deal with lives on a regular basis. I believe that the funds spent on firearm registration would be far better spent on medical issues if we went to another issue that would truly save lives, or to front line police officers if we just stayed in the realm of security and safety.

Could he admit that the Auditor General does not have a mandate to go down the road of making any pronouncement on firearm

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registration? Could we not have spent that money and saved more lives in other areas?

•(1705)

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: Mr. Speaker, that is a fair point. It is not the duty of the Auditor General to comment on policy. I just wanted to make that point. The comment related strictly to financial administration and that the issue of gun control was far broader than this, but I concede that point made by my colleague.

At the same time, should we spend that money somewhere else? I noticed my colleague referred to police services that we might put this money into. What I notice is the overwhelming members of the police organizations, all the chiefs of police, the police almost everywhere in Canada back gun control registration very strongly because they say that it is an indispensable tool to take care of the inventory of guns in our midst.

I do not want to criticize in any way but at the same time it is a fair comparison that the places where they do not have gun registration and a lack of gun control, for instance our neighbours next door, it is a free for all. I do not want to see us get into that society. The police chiefs themselves have pleaded with us for registration.

Therefore I really believe registration is an essential system and I back it 100%. If we can rectify the cost, as we will, make it accountable to Parliament, as we will, and reduce the cost of it so it is reasonable, fair and accountable, then that is the answer.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of quick questions. I saw in the spending estimates of the departments that the chiefs of police received \$100,000 from the government for some program or the other that in essence really was just a contribution to their association. I do not doubt that the same thing is happening with the Canadian Police Association. The executive needs the money from the government. The payment may be hidden in some kind of a program but that is what it is really for.

Then the member mentions the Liberal ladies club that got this thing going. That is fine and dandy for the Liberal ladies. I was never in politics before 1997. I joined the party, and the reason that I was asked to join and to run as the member of Parliament for Selkirk—Interlake was because our member, Jon Gerrard, the current Liberal leader in the province of Manitoba, was in favour of gun control and our election was fought strictly on gun control. That member, Jon Gerrard, lost the election. I would suggest that Canadians are not universally in favour of this as the member is saying.

Supply

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: Mr. Speaker, first, I find it very sad to impugn a motive on the police associations that they would take a stand because they are receiving \$100,000 or whatever money for their associations. I really believe police associations and their chiefs are honest people. I do not think they would take a policy decision as important as this on the basis of some grant that they might be receiving from one government or another. I find that offensive and I think they would as well.

As far as the Liberal ladies, I think the Liberal ladies will find that also pretty amusing. The polls show an overwhelming number of Canadians, 70%, support gun control. It could be that in certain ridings, yes, Canadians are against gun control. We have some ridings here among our colleagues where a majority are against gun control. However the great majority of Canadians show in poll after poll that they are for gun control. That is a reality. All the polls have showed it right along the way for years now and it continues that way.

• (1710)

Mr. Rob Anders: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been consultation between the parties and I believe you would find unanimous consent for the following motion: That, at the conclusion of debate on C-280 all questions necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill be deemed put, a recorded division requested and deferred until the end of Government Orders on Wednesday, March 26, 2003.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my esteemed colleague from Lac-Saint-Louis for sharing his time with him.

I also would like to thank the members from the opposition, which is quite unusual, for some of the questions that they asked of my hon. colleague from Lac-Saint-Louis concerning whether there was in fact public support for gun control and the gun registry program and whether some of the associations that have publicly supported the gun control legislation, the gun registry program, the firearms registry program, are in fact supportive. I will address most of my comments to the public support.

We have heard much in recent months from vocal opponents of Canada's gun control program. In fact some of our opponents, with the motion that is before the House right now, are trying to accomplish indirectly what they were not able to accomplish directly, which is to destroy gun control and eliminate gun control and to eliminate the firearms registry program in Canada.

Canadians do not agree. Canadians continue to support the government's multifaceted approach to public safety that is intended to reduce firearm death, injury and crime in Canada.

The program improves public safety by controlling access to firearms and ammunition, deterring their misuse and controlling specific types of firearms. The underlying philosophy behind the

Firearms Act is to prevent people who are a danger to themselves, or others from getting access to firearms.

The Government of Canada, as has been heard repeatedly by members from this side of the House, is committed to gun control and to the gun control program. This preventive approach to firearms safety is supported by a majority of Canadians. An independent Environics poll taken in January of this year 2003, not 1995, indicates that 74% of Canadians support both licensing and registration.

It also is endorsed by a wide range of public health and safety experts across the country. This includes the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Police Association, the Canadian Public Health Association, the Canada Safety Council and the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime. This is to be underlined. This is public support because the overwhelming majority of police associations do support gun control and do support the gun registry program.

Notwithstanding what has been said by members on the opposite side of the House of the official opposition, these groups are among the many prominent Canadians who continue to push for gun control in Canada and who have spoken out in support of the gun control program that the government has put into force and into operation on numerous occasions.

In both January and February, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and the Canadian Police Association publicly restated their support for the gun control program and its essential crime fighting tools.

In his remarks, David Griffin, Executive Officer for the Canadian Police Association, stated:

We know that there's been a lot of attention on the issue of costs, but it's important to realise that with any public safety program, there is a cost to ensuring public safety. The licensing of all firearms owners and the registration of all firearms are important public safety features of this program that have required a significant investment to establish. However, there are significant long-term benefits to these measures.

Police Chief Vince Bevan, Vice President of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, speaking on its behalf, said:

The new law brings us in line with other industrialised nations and is an important part of a coordinated international effort to fight the illicit trafficking of firearms and organised crime... Improving the regulation of legal firearms is critical to preventing their diversion to illegal markets.

• (1715)

In fact, Canada is one of many western nations that is taking steps to create stronger gun control. The licensing and registration components are fully in line with other countries, including Great Britain and Australia.

While Canadians have rightly expressed concerns about the rising costs associated with the program, victims of crimes are pointing out that while prevention is not cheap, it is a sound investment. In the words of Steve Sullivan of the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime:

I am alarmed that the voices of the victims of gun violence are being drowned out by the controversy over costs. We know from the polls that the majority of Canadians continue to support this law in spite of the costs, but the vocal opponents seems to be dominating the media and the political agenda. We are here to say we have fought for this law and will not waiver in our support.

Opponents of this program also argue that licensing and registration of firearms is just a big city issue. In fact, this program is helping to achieve safe communities, large or small, across the country. As recently stated by Tim Quigley, a law professor of the University of Saskatchewan:

The terrible irony is that rural Canada and the West, with the highest rates of firearm ownership and the most vocal opposition to gun control, are also the places with the highest rates of firearm deaths.

While the gun control program is still in its infancy, we are already seeing public safety benefits in the form of reductions in crimes and accidents involving firearms. According to Neil Boyd, criminology professor at Simon Fraser University:

The available evidence on gun control to date suggests that we can gain—and have gained—substantial benefits in community safety. Strengthening controls over handguns, rifles, and shotguns appears to be producing the intended results. Consider, as well, the relatively minimal intrusion of gun licensing and registration—practices that we don't even question for automobiles.

The Firearms Act is about enhancing public safety. It is about preventing firearm related deaths and accidents. Too many young people are injured and killed in preventable firearm incidents. That is why the public health sector has been steadfast in its support for the gun control program.

According to Kathy Belton, a co-director of the Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research:

Guns kill more youth in the 15 to 24 age group than cancer, drowning, and falls combined. The gun control program is still in its infancy, yet data suggests it has already caused a decline in gun deaths and crimes.

Gerald Dafoe, Chairman of the Canadian Public Health Association, recently stated:

We should not lose sight of the fact that, every year in Canada, the social and economic costs of deaths and injuries from firearms total some 6.6 billion dollars. Moreover, given the number of deaths and injuries attributable to firearms, we believe that the cost of licensing and registering firearms compares very favourably with the cost of many other preventive measures in such areas as highway safety or vaccination.

There can be no doubt that the implementation of the Firearms Act has been very challenging and remains a challenge. The government is committed to ensuring that the gun registry goes forward. As a government we are accountable to Canadians, but we will remain steadfast that gun control is a priority. It is for the majority of Canadians and we will continue to do what we can to ensure that the gun registry program continues.

* * *

• (1720)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations between the

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

That, at the conclusion of debate on Bill C-280 all questions necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill be deemed put, a recorded division requested and deferred until the end of government orders on Wednesday, March 26, 2003.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

SUPPLY

ALLOTED DAY—FIREARMS PROGRAM

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the member is misleading Canadians and anybody she speaks to when she says that the majority of Canadians support the gun registry. I have before me an Ipsos-Reid poll which clearly says that the majority of Canadians say the gun registry should be scrapped immediately.

The member referred to a poll. I have the question in front of me. I wonder if she has even read the question. She is claiming that this is support for the gun registry. That is a bogus claim because the question asks:

The government of Canada has passed a law concerning the ownership of firearms. This law requires that Canadians register each firearm that they own, prohibits certain kinds of firearms, requires that owners pass a safety test and a safety check, and that firearms are stored unloaded in a secure place. In general do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose this law?

If all of these things are mixed into a question, I myself who knows about it would say yes. This is how ridiculous it is for the member to claim that somehow Canadians support gun control. Canadians support improved public safety. Canadians support police that are able to have a proper check on their systems. That is what they want.

I would support—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Order, I am sorry to interrupt the member, but we have to give the parliamentary secretary a chance to respond to his intervention.

Mrs. Marlene Jennings: Mr. Speaker, I am amazed. Yes, I have read the poll. Yes, I have read the question. I am amazed that the member from the opposite side would claim that I am attempting to mislead Canadians.

Supply

A lot of publicity has gone on about gun control and the gun registry since the Auditor General tabled her report in December. The statements by members of the opposition in particular from the Alliance Party, both in the House and before the microphones outside the House, have received a lot coverage where they have denounced the government saying it is close to \$1 billion of wasted money. Believe me, most Canadians know exactly how to break down the question that the member just read and which was part of an Environics poll in January 2003.

I would like to add that not only does that poll break it down, it also breaks it down in terms of region.

[*Translation*]

Quebeckers support the Canadian gun control program. A survey—the survey conducted in February 2003—showed that 85% support the program. We see that 81% of Bloc supporters polled were also in favour of the program.

I am offended when a member says I tried to mislead Canadians. It is the member and his party who are trying to do that.

• (1725)

[*English*]

Mr. Garry Breitzkreuz: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make the point that the questions do not reflect how Canadians feel once they find out the costs are going to \$1 billion and they are probably going to \$2 billion or \$3 billion in the next few years according to the Canadian Taxpayers Federation and the Library of Parliament. This thing is out of control.

How much more money should be spent on this system? Will the member continue to support the gun registry if the costs go to \$2 billion and \$3 billion? It is not gun control. The surveys that are done always portray this as gun control. The gun registry is not gun control. It is a paper pushing exercise that has spun out of control. How much more money will the member be willing to put into the system before the government will say no?

Mrs. Marlene Jennings: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry but the member from the opposite side is incorrect.

As a result of all of the media coverage, Canadians know that the gun control registry will cost \$688 million in the words of the Auditor General. The member of the party opposite, the Canadian Alliance, and the media have made front page news of it over and over again. Canadians do know the costs associated with it. Given the opposition day motion today, they also know the additional money the government has said it will require in order to complete the gun registry program. When Canadians were polled, they knew the facts.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca.

I separate this issue into two issues: gun control and firearm registration, the long gun registry.

On gun control I look upon things such as safe storage, youth education, severe penalties for criminal misuse of firearms and control of military automatic weapons in public hands.

On the long gun registry side of the issue I would like to go back to the original debate in the House. At that time I admitted that because I am a hunter, I am too biased to make an unbiased observation in this debate. What I did in my speech, a very significant speech in my early parliamentary career, is I looked at the international experience in those places that had gone down the long gun registry route. It was a fascinating opportunity for me because the minister of justice was in the House at that time. He crossed the floor following my speech and our interchange was fascinating.

Let me tell the Canadian public what I found in the international experience in those countries that went down the long gun registry process and what I predicted.

The first thing I found was that the cost of the firearm registry would be enormous. That was from Australia and New Zealand, the two countries that were similar to Canada that embarked on this process. The second thing I found was that the level of compliance was surprisingly low. In other words, they could not convince 100% of the folks to comply. The third and most disturbing thing I found was that there was no change in criminal misuse of firearms in those jurisdictions.

I predicted in the House, and the record will show this, that the costs in Canada would be much higher than we were being presented with, that the level of compliance would not be as high as we were being told and finally, that there would be no impact on the criminal misuse of shotguns and rifles. Notice I used the phrase shotguns and rifles because they are long guns.

The conversation I had with the justice minister was fascinating. Because it was a private conversation, I can only give certain portions. The justice minister did say that those were good and intellectually sound arguments. He went on to say that he wanted to tell me why my arguments would not hold water. Without betraying a confidence, he said that the new computer systems were going to make it so simple to register, so easy to go through this process that we would not have the problems with cost and we would not have the problems with compliance. Therefore, he said that we would end up with criminal misuse of firearms being lower in this country.

That conversation ended with a challenge from me. I said to the justice minister that I wanted him to remember the conversation because I predicted that his comments would fail.

I do not believe in saying that I told you so and I will not say I told you so, but the predictions made at that time have come true. Sadly, I wish it were not so.

I want to spend a few minutes on the practical aspects of the registry. Remember I said that I am a hunter. I have firearms. I personally went through the registration process. I did that late in December 2002 for symbolic reasons.

I said to my constituents, "I disagree with the registry, I think it will fail and I am going to wait until the end to register". I did that. On December 14, 2002 I registered all the firearms, the long guns that I owned.

I did that through a possession only certificate. I cannot buy a new firearm in Canada. I chose to register my disturbance with this legislation by getting a possession only certificate. I have that here in front of me. It has my name and a number on it. It has my birth date, identification issues.

On December 14 I registered all the firearms that I own. I did it on the Internet. I actually did it over three days. There were three separate times that I went to the Internet.

• (1730)

It is now late March and I have received two registration certifications but I have more than two firearms. Here is the most disturbing part about this. Nowhere on these registration certificates is the number that identifies me and connects those firearms to me.

I will go through what the registration certificate states. The gun I own is a bolt action Browning rifle. It has a serial number on it that is accurate because I checked it. The certificate stated that the barrel is 470 millimetres or greater, and that is the only identifier. However the certificate has two other numbers on it. It has a registration certificate number and a firearm identification number. My .22 Browning bolt action rifle, which has been registered with this possession only certificate and a specific number, now has three other numbers connected to it.

I took this certificate to one of the police officers in my community. It is all set so that it goes into my wallet as a separate card. I asked him to tell me, if he found this firearm and I had this registration certificate, how he would identify that it belonged to me. He looked at it and said, "Well Doc, I cannot do that". Nowhere on this certificate does it say my name. Nothing on this certificate connects it to this possession only certificate. He said that he only had one method and that was to go to the CPIC computer and bang out a number, but he was not sure which number to use, the registration certificate number, the firearm identification number or the serial number. He tried the identification number and that was the one that actually did identify me.

The gun registry is not gun control. This is the issue for me that is the most striking. How many criminals will register their firearms before they commit a crime? What bank robber would go on the Internet and type in "This is Joe Bank Robber Charlie and I have a .45 automatic", give the serial number and then go rob a bank? There will be no change in the criminal misuse of firearms due to the firearms registry.

What is the Alliance calling for with this motion today? We are calling for a cost benefit analysis of the registry. We are asking that if the government thinks this idea of a registry is valid will it do a cost benefit analysis, because scientifically that is the only way we should proceed. I actually asked the justice minister if he would put a sunset clause in place if this thing fails. I think many legislative ventures should have a sunset clause.

We can go down a road with the best of intentions. I believe my Liberal colleagues, on this issue, have the best of intentions. I do not

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for one second think that they intended to waste a pile of money. I think they really believe that public safety will be served, and I said that to my colleague across the way. He and I disagree on whether the registry will be effective.

Here is the opportunity for members to vote for this motion, and if there is evidence that its cost benefit is on the positive side, I will shut up. I will never talk about the registry again. However as long as there is no evidence of criminal misuse change, as long as there is no evidence that compliance will be sufficient enough, I will talk about this until I cannot breathe.

• (1735)

Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was brought forward that the member looked at his certificate, noticed that there was no name on the certificate and he was critical of that point.

The hon. member and his party have always talked about seeking support and consideration from grassroots organizations. I wonder if he would comment on the fact that the reason there is no name on that certificate is that the stakeholder groups did not want their guns to be identified by having their names on the certificates.

Mr. Grant Hill: Mr. Speaker, I will take that opportunity. Of course the stakeholder groups were not an important part of this consultation because if they had been there would not be such a registry.

However I went to the individual who I thought would be the most useful in looking at the registration certificate. I asked a police officer whether he could identify the firearm with me.

The issue is that I could give this certificate and the firearm to a friend and, having done that, those two things together would get a nod from the officer. The officer said that if he saw those two things together he would be quite satisfied. In fact, the criminal could take this certificate and the firearm and have them together and satisfy 99% of the police officers in this country.

I will repeat again, no criminal misuse change, and if the member can tell me that there is or will be, I will be quiet.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. friend's comments and he brought forward a very practical, surgical-like dissertation on this issue.

He makes a number of very important points, not the least of which is that it is clear that it is pure, unadulterated politics that is driving the continuation of pouring money into this gun registry; gun registry being the issue, not gun control because there is no nexus whatsoever to gun control.

As my friend points out, first, there is no ability for the police to rely on this information. Second, there will be no participation by the Hell's Angels or others who might be so inclined to use guns for a criminal purpose. They will not forfeit their fingerprints before entering into somebody's house.

Supply

The practical aspect is that if in fact I took one of those same laser imprints and stuck it on this chair, my colleague from South Shore could still hit me over the head with it, even if that number was registered, even if it was punched into a computer.

I ask my friend, is there any real benefit, other than to bilk more money out of taxpayers and put more emphasis on face-saving than lifesaving, to the registry?

• (1740)

Mr. Grant Hill: Mr. Speaker, I actually do think there is a benefit in the firearms registry. The benefit is that the public has paid more attention to this issue since the funding has become evident.

Prediction is troublesome in this place but once again I predict that the Canadian public will ask for a review of this program. When will that occur? It will probably not occur from this debate nor the vote that will be taken tonight, but at the next election. That review, I believe, will be very interesting to behold.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I spent 30 years in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 14 years as a uniformed officer in the rural areas and the other 16 years on proceeds of crime, which had to do with the drug business and with commercial crime.

Handguns have been registered for the last 50 years. I never saw one case that was solved, any of the murders that happened in regard to the drug business or otherwise, by registered handguns.

The gun registry, in my opinion and from my experience, will do nothing to reduce crime in any significant way, but \$1 billion sure would have helped those heart attack victims in my riding.

Mr. Grant Hill: Mr. Speaker, that final comment gives me the opportunity to tell my other horror story about the gun registry.

I have a pistol and it was registered in my name. I could only take it from my home to the shooting club. Along came the registry and of course I registered that pistol. It came back that it was not registered as I thought it was even though I had gone through all the process. It looks like the pistol registry has somehow been lost.

As my colleague said, the registry of pistols has had no impact on the criminal misuse in Canada, but what would? Severe penalties for those who use a pistol inappropriately.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, when the former minister of justice put the bill forward I appeared in front of the justice committee as a witness and took apart the then justice minister's arguments piece by piece.

First, let us argue through the issue of public safety, which my colleagues on the other side argue very vehemently in favour of in the bill. Let us look at public safety.

The question is: Will the gun registry make our streets less safe or more safe? Let us look at the three parameters: the suicide rates, the criminal use of firearms and homicides. Let us first look at suicides. The then justice minister said that suicides would go down. I can tell the House that people contemplating suicide do not get a firearms acquisition certificate, do not wait for their obligatory background checks, and do not wait six months and then buy a rifle and blow their head off. That does not happen.

On the issue of the criminal use of firearms, as my colleague mentioned, criminals, who make up the bulk of the individuals who are using long guns in the commission of an offence, do not get the firearms acquisition certificate nor do they take the course. Most of these weapons are actually smuggled in from the United States and are used to commit those offences. The problem is that in the judicial system the penalties are not being applied. Often times weapons offences are plea bargained away or are run concurrently, not consecutively. Therefore, to use a weapon in committing a criminal offence does not often result in much of a penalty.

On the issue of homicides, if we look at Statistic Canada's own facts, we know that between 1993 and 1997 the homicide rate from long guns and handguns in Canada went down. The reasons were multifactorial, but what we can clearly say is that the gun registry had absolutely nothing to do with the decline in homicides due to firearms in Canada.

If we were to look at the international experience, it would be impossible for us to find one example in the world where a gun registry has worked to decrease homicides, to decrease criminal activity or to decrease suicides.

We are as committed as members of the government to making our streets safer. When I have discussed this with members on the other side it has been asked what the price of a life is, that if we spend a billion dollars to save one life that is money spent on a worthwhile endeavour. I would argue that there is something called opportunity costs. In other words, if we put our money in A versus B we had better get more effect in A rather than in B.

The fact is that if we are going to spend a billion dollars on a gun registry are we going to save more lives putting it there or putting it into prevention, such as preventing fetal alcohol syndrome, fetal alcohol effects, ensuring that children have proper nutrition and giving the police forces the tools and the enforcement powers to go after those individuals who are using weapons in the commission of an offence?

This party is firmly on side with making our streets safer but which ever way we look at the facts, and we are arguing about the facts, this gun registry will not make our streets safer, and we have offered solutions to make our streets safer. We certainly hope the Minister of Justice will work with us to employ those methods of prevention, treatment and stronger enforcement penalties for those criminals who are using weapons in committing offences.

• (1745)

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): It being 5:46 p.m. and today being the last allotted day for the supply period ending on March 26, 2003, it is my duty to interrupt proceedings and put forthwith any question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

* * *

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B), 2002-03

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 1B—JUSTICE

Hon. Andy Mitchell (for the President of the Treasury Board) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Vote 1b, in the amount of \$68,457,029 under JUSTICE—Department—Operating Expenditures, in the Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003, be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

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

• (1810)

[English]

Mr. John Williams: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know we are about to vote on something extremely important, which is another \$59 million for the gun registry. I would like to ask the President of the Treasury Board, can she assure us that if she gets the money today, we will never get to the \$1 billion on the registry?

The Speaker: I think the hon. member for St. Albert, who is a very experienced member, knows that he cannot ask questions under the guise of a point of order.

• (1820)

(The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 66)

YEAS

Members

Adams
Allard
Assad

Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine

Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Barnes (London West)
Bélair
Bellemare
Bergeron
Bevilacqua
Binet
Bonwick
Bourgeois
Brown
Bulte
Calder
Caplan
Carignan
Castonguay
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Coderre
Coppes
Crête
Cuzner
DeVillers
Dion
Dromisky
Duceppe
Easter
Eyking
Finlay
Fournier
Fry
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gaudet
Godfrey
Graham
Guarnieri
Guimond
Harvey
Jackson
Jordan
Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
Lalonde
Lastewka
Lee
Lincoln
MacAulay
Malhi
Marceau
Marleau
Matthews
McGuire
McLellan
Ménard
Minna
Murphy
Nault
Normand
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paquette
Parrish
Peric
Peschisolido
Pettigrew
Picard (Drummond)
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Rocheleau
Roy
Sauvageau
Sgro
Simard
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Szabo
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Valeri
Volpe
Whelan
Wood — 173

Supply

Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bélanger
Bennett
Bertrand
Bigras
Blondin-Andrew
Boudria
Bradshaw
Bryden
Byrne
Cannis
Cardin
Carroll
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chrétien
Collenette
Cotler
Cullen
Desrochers
Dhaliwal
Discepolo
Drouin
Duplain
Eggleton
Farrah
Folco
Frulla
Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gauthier
Goodale
Grose
Guay
Harb
Hubbard
Jennings
Karygiannis
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Knutson
Laframboise
Lanctôt
LeBlanc
Leung
Longfield
Macklin
Manley
Marcil
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Paradis
Patry
Perron
Peterson
Phinney
Pillitteri
Price
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Rock
Saada
Scott
Shepherd
St-Hilaire
St-Julien
Stewart
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Vanclief
Wappel
Wilfert

Supply

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Anders
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bailey	Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)
Benoit	Borotsik
Breitkreuz	Burton
Casey	Chatters
Cummins	Day
Desjarlais	Doyle
Duncan	Elley
Epp	Fitzpatrick
Forseth	Gallant
Godin	Goldring
Gouk	Grewal
Grey	Hanger
Harper	Harris
Hearn	Herron
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hill (Macleod)
Hilstrom	Hinton
Jaffer	Johnston
Keddy (South Shore)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lill	Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Mayfield
McDonough	Meredith
Merrifield	Moore
Nystrom	Obhrai
Penson	Proctor
Rajotte	Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Reynolds	Ritz
Schmidt	Skelton
Solberg	Sorenson
Spencer	Stinson
Stoffer	Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews	Vellacott
Venne	Wasylcia-Leis
Wayne	White (North Vancouver)
White (Langley—Abbotsford)	Williams — 76

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Bonin
Caccia	Dalphond-Guiral
Harvard	Loubier
O'Brien (Labrador)	Plamondon
Serré	Tremblay — 10

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 1 carried.

Mr. Paul Steckle: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I want it noted that I was in the House for the vote just taken, but I have chosen to abstain from that vote.

The Speaker: The hon. member knows that we do not record abstentions under the proceedings of the House. He is free to vote or not as he wishes.

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I want the House to note that I was in my seat, but I abstained from the last vote.

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 5B—JUSTICE

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.) moved:

Motion No. 2

That Vote 5b, in the amount of \$9,048,840 under JUSTICE—Department—Operating Expenditures, in the Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003, be concurred in.

The Speaker: The next question is on Motion No. 2. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

● (1825)

(The House divided on Motion No. 2, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 67)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allard	Anderson (Victoria)
Assad	Augustine
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bakopanos
Barnes (London West)	Beaumier
Bélaïr	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bennett
Bergeron	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bigras
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick	Boudria
Bourgeois	Bradshaw
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Byrne
Calder	Cannis
Caplan	Cardin
Carignan	Carroll
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Chrétien
Coderre	Collette
Copps	Cotler
Crête	Cullen
Cuzner	Desrochers
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Discepolo
Dromisky	Drouin
Duceppe	Duplain
Easter	Eggleton
Eyking	Farrah
Finlay	Folco
Fournier	Frulla
Fry	Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Champlain)	Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gaudet	Gauthier
Godfrey	Goodale
Graham	Grose
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond	Harb
Harvey	Hubbard
Jackson	Jennings
Jordan	Karygiannis
Keys	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lanctôt
Lastewka	LeBlanc
Lee	Leung
Lincoln	Longfield
MacAulay	Macklin
Malhi	Manley
Marceau	Marci
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews	McCallum
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	McTeague
Ménard	Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Minna	Mitchell

Supply

Murphy
Nault
Normand
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paquette
Parrish
Peric
Peschisolido
Pettigrew
Picard (Drummond)
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Rocheleau
Roy
Sauvageau
Sgro
Simard
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Szabo
Thibault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Valeri
Volpe
Whelan
Wood— 173

Myers
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Paradis
Patry
Perron
Peterson
Phinney
Pillitteri
Price
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Rock
Saada
Scott
Shepherd
St-Hilaire
St-Julien
Stewart
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Vanclief
Wappel
Wilfert

• (1830)

The next question is on opposed Motion No. 3.

[*Translation*]

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 1B—PARLIAMENT

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.) moved:

Motion No. 3

That Vote 1b, in the amount of \$639,000, under PARLIAMENT—Senate—Program expenditures, in the Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003, be concurred in.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

• (1840)

(The House divided on Motion No. 3, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 68*)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allard	Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine	Bakopanos
Barnes (London West)	Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)
Beaumier	Bélair
Bélangier	Bellemare
Bennett	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Binet
Blondin-Andrew	Bonwick
Borotsik	Boudria
Bradshaw	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carignan	Carroll
Casey	Castonguay
Catterall	Cauchon
Chamberlain	Charbonneau
Chrétien	Coderre
Collenette	Comuzzi
Copps	Cotler
Cullen	Cuzner
DeVillers	Dhalawal
Dion	Discepola
Doyle	Dromisky
Drouin	Duplain
Easter	Eggleton
Eyking	Farrah
Finlay	Folco
Frulla	Fry
Godfrey	Goodale
Graham	Grose
Guarnieri	Harb
Harvey	Hearn

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Anders
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bailey	Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)
Benoit	Borotsik
Breitkreuz	Burton
Casey	Chatters
Cummins	Day
Desjarlais	Doyle
Duncan	Elley
Epp	Fitzpatrick
Forseth	Gallant
Godin	Goldring
Gouk	Grewal
Grey	Hanger
Harper	Harris
Hearn	Herron
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hill (Macleod)
Hiltstrom	Hinton
Jaffer	Johnston
Keddy (South Shore)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lill	Lunn (Saanic—Gulf Islands)
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Mayfield
McDonough	Meredith
Merrifield	Moore
Nystrom	Obhrai
Penson	Proctor
Rajotte	Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Reynolds	Ritz
Schmidt	Skelton
Solberg	Sorenson
Spencer	Stinson
Stoffer	Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews	Vellacott
Venne	Wasylycia-Leis
Wayne	White (North Vancouver)
White (Langley—Abbotsford)	Williams— 76

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Bonin
Caccia	Dalphondu-Guiral
Harvard	Loubier
O'Brien (Labrador)	Plamondon
Serré	Tremblay— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Supply

Herron	Hubbard
Jackson	Jennings
Jordan	Karygiannis
Keddy (South Shore)	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lastewka	LeBlanc
Lee	Leung
Lincoln	Longfield
MacAulay	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Macklin	Malhi
Manley	Marci
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews	McCallum
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	McTeague
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)	Minna
Mitchell	Murphy
Myers	Nault
Neville	Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Owen	Pacetti
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Peric	Peschisolido
Peterson	Pettigrew
Phinney	Pillitteri
Pratt	Price
Proulx	Provenzano
Redman	Reed (Halton)
Regan	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Savoy	Scott
Sgro	Shepherd
Simard	St-Jacques
St-Julien	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart
Szabo	Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tirabassi	Tonks
Torsney	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Volpe	Wappel
Wayne	Whelan
Wilfert	Wood— 158

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Anders
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bailey	Benoit
Bergeron	Bigras
Bourgeois	Breitkreuz
Burton	Cardin
Chatters	Crête
Cummins	Davies
Day	Desjarlais
Desrochers	Duceppe
Duncan	Elley
Epp	Fitzpatrick
Forseth	Fournier
Gagnon (Champlain)	Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gagnon (Québec)	Gallant
Gaudet	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Godin
Goldring	Gouk
Grewal	Grey
Guay	Guimond
Hanger	Harper
Harris	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hill (Macleod)	Hilstrom
Hinton	Jaffer
Johnston	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Laframboise	Lalonde
Lancôt	Lill
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Lunny (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Marceau	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Mayfield	McDonough
Ménard	Meredith
Merrifield	Moore
Nystrom	Obhrai
Paquette	Penson

Perron	Picard (Drummond)
Proctor	Rajotte
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)	Reynolds
Ritz	Robinson
Rocheleau	Roy
Sauvageau	Schmidt
Skelton	Solberg
Sorenson	Spencer
St-Hilaire	Stinson
Stoffer	Strahl
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Toews
Vellacott	Venne
Wasylycia-Leis	White (North Vancouver)
White (Langley—Abbotsford)	Williams— 96

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Bonin
Caccia	Dalphond-Guiral
Harvard	Loubier
O'Brien (Labrador)	Plamondon
Serré	Tremblay— 10

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 3 carried.

[*English*]

The next question is on opposed Motion No. 4.

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 10B—AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.) moved:

Motion No. 4

That Vote 10b, in the amount of \$161,288,697 under AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD—Department—Grants and contributions, in the Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003, be concurred in.

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find unanimous consent to apply the vote just taken on Motion No. 3 to Motion No. 4.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous to proceed in this way?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(The House divided on Motion No. 4, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 69*)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allard	Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine	Bakopanos
Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)	Barnes (London West)
Beaumier	Bélair
Bélangier	Bellemare
Bennett	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Binet
Blondin-Andrew	Bonwick
Borotsik	Boudria
Bradshaw	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carignan	Carroll
Casey	Castonguay
Catterall	Cauchon
Chamberlain	Charbonneau
Chrétien	Coderre
Collenette	Comuzzi
Copps	Cotler
Cullen	Cuzner
DeVillers	Dhalwal
Dion	Discepolo

Doyle
Drouin
Easter
Eyking
Finlay
Frulla
Godfrey
Graham
Guarnieri
Harvey
Herron
Jackson
Jordan
Keddy (South Shore)
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Knutson
Lastewka
Lee
Lincoln
MacAulay
Macklin
Manley
Marleau
Matthews
McGuire
McLellan
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Peric
Peterson
Phinney
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Rock
Savoy
Sgro
Simard
St-Julien
Steckle
Szabo
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Wayne
Wilfert

Dromisky
Duplain
Eggleton
Farrah
Folco
Fry
Goodale
Grose
Harb
Hearn
Hubbard
Jennings
Karygiannis
Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
LeBlanc
Leung
Longfield
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Malhi
Marcil
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Minna
Murphy
Nault
Normand
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paradis
Patry
Peschisolido
Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Price
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Saada
Scott
Shepherd
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Stewart
Thibault (West Nova)
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Whelan
Wood— 158

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bailey
Bergeron
Bourgeois
Burton
Chatters
Cummins
Day
Desrochers
Duncan
Épp
Forseth
Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gaudet
Girard-Bujold
Goldring
Grewal
Guay
Hanger
Harris
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hinton

Anders
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Benoit
Bigras
Breitkreuz
Cardin
Crête
Davies
Desjarlais
Duceppe
Elley
Fitzpatrick
Fournier
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gallant
Gauthier
Godin
Gouk
Grey
Guimond
Harper
Hill (Macleod)
Hilstrom
Jaffer

Supply

Johnston
Laframboise
Lancôt
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Marceau
Mayfield
Ménard
Merrifield
Nystrom
Paquette
Perron
Proctor
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Rocheleau
Sauvageau
Skelton
Sorenson
St-Hilaire
Stoffér
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Vellacott
Wasylycia-Leis
White (North Vancouver)

Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lalonde
Lill
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McDonough
Meredith
Moore
Obhrai
Penson
Picard (Drummond)
Rajotte
Reynolds
Robinson
Roy
Schmidt
Solberg
Spencer
Stinson
Strahl
Toews
Venne
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Williams— 96

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Caccia
Harvard
O'Brien (Labrador)
Serré

Bonin
Dalphond-Guiral
Loubier
Plamondon
Tremblay— 10

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 4 carried.

The next question is on opposed Motion No. 5.

[*Translation*]

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 5B—HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.) moved:

Motion No. 5

That Vote 5b, in the amount of \$45,754,538, under HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT—Department—Grants and contributions, in the Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003, be concurred in.

[*English*]

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find unanimous consent that those who voted on Motion No. 4 be recorded as voting on Motion No. 5, with Liberal members voting yes.

● (1845)

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Dale Johnston: Mr. Speaker, Canadian Alliance members will vote no to this motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Québécois will be voting in favour of this motion.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, the members of the NDP will be voting against this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, members of the Progressive Conservative Party will vote yes to the motion.

Supply

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Guy Carignan: Mr. Speaker, I will be voting in favour of this motion.

Ms. Pierrette Venne: Mr. Speaker, I will be voting against this motion.

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

*(Division No. 70)***YEAS**

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allard	Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bakopanos	Barnes (London West)
Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)	Beaumier
Bélair	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bennett
Bergeron	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bigras
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick	Borotsik
Boudria	Bourgeois
Bradshaw	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Cardin	Carignan
Carroll	Casey
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Chrétien
Coderre	Collenette
Comuzzi	Copps
Cotler	Crête
Cullen	Cuzner
Desrochers	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Discepola	Doyle
Dromisky	Drouin
Duceppe	Duplain
Easter	Eggleton
Eyking	Farrah
Finlay	Folco
Fournier	Frulla
Fry	Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Champlain)	Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gaudet	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Godfrey
Goodale	Graham
Grose	Guarnieri
Guay	Guimond
Harb	Harvey
Hearn	Herron
Hubbard	Jackson
Jennings	Jordan
Karygiannis	Keddy (South Shore)
Keys	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lanctôt
Lastewka	LeBlanc
Lee	Leung
Lincoln	Longfield
MacAulay	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Macklin	Malhi
Manley	Marceau
Marcil	Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Matthews
McCallum	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough East)	McLellan
McTeague	Ménard
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)	Minna
Mitchell	Murphy
Myers	Nault
Neville	Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly

Owen	Pacetti
Pagtakhan	Paquette
Paradis	Parrish
Patry	Peric
Perron	Peschisolido
Peterson	Pettigrew
Phinney	Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri	Pratt
Price	Proulx
Provenzano	Redman
Reed (Halton)	Regan
Robillard	Rocheleau
Rock	Roy
Saada	Sauvageau
Savoy	Scott
Sgro	Shepherd
Simard	St-Hilaire
St-Jacques	St-Julien
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart	Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)	Thibault (Saint-Lambert)
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Tirabassi
Tonks	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Volpe
Wappel	Wayne
Whelan	Wilfert
Wood— 187	

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Anders
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Bailey
Benoit	Breitkreuz
Burton	Chatters
Cummins	Davies
Day	Desjarlais
Duncan	Elley
Epp	Fitzpatrick
Forseth	Gallant
Godin	Goldring
Gouk	Grewal
Grey	Hanger
Harper	Harris
Hill (MacLeod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom	Hinton
Jaffer	Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Lill
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Mayfield
McDonough	Meredith
Merrifield	Moore
Nystrom	Obhrai
Penson	Proctor
Rajotte	Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Reynolds	Ritz
Robinson	Schmidt
Skelton	Solberg
Sorenson	Spencer
Stinson	Stoffer
Strahl	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews	Vellacott
Venne	Wasylcia-Leis
White (Langley—Abbotsford)	White (North Vancouver)
Williams— 67	

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Bonin
Caccia	Dalphond-Guiral
Harvard	Loubier
O'Brien (Labrador)	Plamondon
Serré	Tremblay— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.) moved:

That Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003, except any vote disposed of earlier today, be concurred in.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?
[English]

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find the consent of the House that those who voted on Motion No. 5 be recorded as voting on the supplementary estimates (B) concurrence motion and the second reading vote on the supply bill, with Liberal members voting yes.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Dale Johnston: Mr. Speaker, Canadian Alliance members will vote no on those motions.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Québécois will be voting against these two motions.

[English]

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, members of the NDP will vote no.

Mr. Rick Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, Progressive Conservatives will be voting no to both these motions.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Guy Carignan: Mr. Speaker, I will be voting in favour of these motions.

Ms. Pierrette Venne: Mr. Speaker, I will be voting against these motions.

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

(Division No. 71)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allard	Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine	Bakopanos
Barnes (London West)	Beaumier
Bélair	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bennett
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick	Boudria
Bradshaw	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carignan	Carroll
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Chrétien
Coderre	Collenette
Comuzzi	Copps
Cotler	Cullen
Cuzner	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Discepolo	Dromisky
Drouin	Duplain
Easter	Eggleton
Eyking	Farrar
Finlay	Folco
Frulla	Fry
Godfrey	Goodale
Graham	Grose
Guarnieri	Harb
Harvey	Hubbard
Jackson	Jennings

Jordan
Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
LeBlanc
Leung
Longfield
Macklin
Manley
Marleau
Mathews
McGuire
McLellan
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Peric
Peterson
Phinney
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Rock
Savoy
Sgro
Simard
St-Julien
Steckle
Szabo
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wilfert

Supply

Karygiannis
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Knutson
Lastewka
Lee
Lincoln
MacAulay
Malhi
Marcil
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Minna
Murphy
Nault
Normand
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paradis
Patry
Peschisolido
Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Price
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Saada
Scott
Shepherd
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Stewart
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Whelan
Wood— 148

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Anders
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bailey	Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)
Benoit	Bergeron
Bigras	Borotsik
Bourgeois	Breitkreuz
Burton	Cardin
Casey	Chatters
Crête	Cummins
Davies	Day
Desjarlais	Desrochers
Doyle	Duceppe
Duncan	Elley
Epp	Fitzpatrick
Forseth	Fournier
Gagnon (Québec)	Gagnon (Champlain)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)	Gallant
Gaudet	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Godin
Goldring	Gouk
Grewal	Grey
Guay	Guimond
Hanger	Harper
Harris	Hearn
Herron	Hill (MacLeod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Hinton	Jaffier
Johnston	Keddy (South Shore)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lancôt
Lill	Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Marceau	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Mayfield	McDonough
Ménard	Meredith
Merrifield	Moore
Nystrom	Obhrai
Paquette	Penson

Supply

Perron
Proctor
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Rocheleau
Sauvageau
Skelton
Sorenson
St-Hilaire
Stoffer
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews
Venne
Wayne
White (North Vancouver)

Picard (Drummond)
Rajotte
Reynolds
Robinson
Roy
Schmidt
Solberg
Spencer
Stinson
Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Vellacott
Wasylycia-Leis
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Williams— 106

Finlay
Frulla
Godfrey
Graham
Guarnieri
Harvey
Jackson
Jordan
Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
LeBlanc
Leung
Longfield
Macklin
Manley
Marleau
Matthews
McGuire
McLellan
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Peric
Peterson
Phinney
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Rock
Savoy
Sgro
Simard
St-Julien
Steckle
Szabo
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wilfert

Folco
Fry
Goodale
Grose
Harb
Hubbard
Jennings
Karygiannis
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Knutson
Lastewka
Lee
Lincoln
MacAulay
Malhi
Marcil
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Minna
Murphy
Nault
Normand
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paradis
Patry
Peschisolido
Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Price
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Saada
Scott
Shepherd
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Stewart
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Whelan
Wood— 148

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Caccia
Harvard
O'Brien (Labrador)
Serré

Bonin
Dalphond-Guiral
Loubier
Plamondon
Tremblay— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard moved for leave to introduce Bill C-29, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 2003, be read the first time.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard moved that Bill C-29, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 2003, be now read a second time and referred to committee of the whole.

[*English*]

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

(Division No. 72)

YEAS

Members

Adams
Allard
Augustine
Barnes (London West)
Bélair
Bellemare
Bertrand
Binet
Bonwick
Bradshaw
Bryden
Byrne
Cannis
Carignan
Castonguay
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Coderre
Comuzzi
Cotler
Cuzner
Dhaliwal
Discepolo
Drouin
Easter
Eyking

Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bélangier
Bennett
Bevilacqua
Blondin-Andrew
Boudria
Brown
Bulte
Calder
Caplan
Carroll
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chrétien
Collenette
Coppes
Cullen
DeVillers
Dion
Dromisky
Duplain
Eggleton
Farrah

Abbott
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bailey
Benoit
Bigras
Bourgeois
Burton
Casey
Crête
Davies
Desjarlais
Doyle
Duncan
Epp
Forseth
Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gaudet
Girard-Bujold
Goldring
Grewal
Guay
Hanger
Harris
Herron
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hinton
Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lalonde
Lill

NAYS

Members

Anders
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)
Bergeron
Borotsik
Breitkreuz
Cardin
Chatters
Cummins
Day
Desrochers
Duceppe
Elley
Fitzpatrick
Fournier
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gallant
Gauthier
Godin
Gouk
Grey
Guimond
Harper
Hearn
Hill (MacLeod)
Hilstrom
Jaffier
Keddy (South Shore)
Laframboise
Lanctôt
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)

Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
 Marceau
 Mayfield
 Ménard
 Merrifield
 Nystrom
 Paquette
 Perron
 Proctor
 Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
 Ritz
 Rocheleau
 Sauvageau
 Skelton
 Sorenson
 St-Hilaire
 Stoffer
 Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
 Toews
 Venne
 Wayne
 White (North Vancouver)

MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
 Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
 McDonough
 Meredith
 Moore
 Obhrai
 Penson
 Picard (Drummond)
 Rajotte
 Reynolds
 Robinson
 Roy
 Schmidt
 Solberg
 Spencer
 Stinson
 Strahl
 Thompson (Wild Rose)
 Vellacott
 Wasylcia-Leis
 White (Langley—Abbotsford)
 Williams— 106

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
 Caccia
 Harvard
 O'Brien (Labrador)
 Serré

Bonin
 Dalphond-Guiral
 Loubier
 Plamondon
 Tremblay— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly the bill stands referred to a committee of the whole and I do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of the whole.

(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Kilger in the chair)

• (1850)

The Chair: Order, please. The hon. member for New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby.

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Chairman, I would ask the President of the Treasury Board if she can assure this House that the bill is presented in its usual form?

(On clause 2)

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, the form of this bill is essentially the same as that passed in the previous supply period.

The Chair: Shall clause 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 2 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 3 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 4 agreed to)

Supply

The Chair: Shall clause 5 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 5 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 6 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 6 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 7 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 7 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 8 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 8 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall schedule 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Schedule 1 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall schedule 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Schedule 2 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 1 agreed to)

[Translation]

The Chair: Shall the preamble carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Preamble agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Title agreed to)

[English]

The Chairman: Shall the bill carry?

Supply

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Bill reported)

Hon. Lucienne Robillard moved that Bill C-29 be concurred in at report stage.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I think you would find unanimous consent that the vote on the motion for second reading be applied to the report stage concurrence motion and to the main motion for third reading.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this way?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

(Division No. 73)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allard	Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine	Bakopanos
Barnes (London West)	Beamier
Bélair	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bennett
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick	Boudria
Bradshaw	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carignan	Carroll
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Chrétien
Coderre	Collenette
Comuzzi	Copps
Cotler	Cullen
Cuzner	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Discepolo	Dromisky
Drouin	Duplain
Easter	Eggleton
Eyking	Farrah
Finlay	Folco
Frulla	Fry
Godfrey	Goodale
Graham	Grose
Guarnieri	Harb
Harvey	Hubbard
Jackson	Jennings

Jordan	Karygiannis
Keyes	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Lastewka
LeBlanc	Lee
Leung	Lincoln
Longfield	MacAulay
Macklin	Malhi
Manley	Marcil
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Mathews	McCallum
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	McTeague
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)	Minna
Mitchell	Murphy
Myers	Nault
Neville	Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Owen	Pacetti
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Peric	Peschisolido
Peterson	Pettigrew
Phinney	Pillitteri
Pratt	Price
Proulx	Provenzano
Redman	Reed (Halton)
Regan	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Savoy	Scott
Sgro	Shepherd
Simard	St-Jacques
St-Julien	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart
Szabo	Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Tirabassi
Tonks	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Volpe
Wappel	Whelan
Wilfert	Wood — 148

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Anders
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bailey	Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)
Benoit	Bergeron
Bigras	Borotsik
Bourgeois	Breitkreuz
Burton	Cardin
Casey	Chatters
Crête	Cummins
Davies	Day
Desjarlais	Desrochers
Doyle	Duceppe
Duncan	Elley
Epp	Fitzpatrick
Forseth	Fournier
Gagnon (Québec)	Gagnon (Champlain)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)	Gallant
Gaudet	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Godin
Goldring	Gouk
Grewal	Grey
Guay	Guimond
Hanger	Harper
Harris	Hearn
Herron	Hill (MacLeod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Hinton	Jaffer
Johnston	Keddy (South Shore)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Laframboise
Lalonde	Laurent
Lill	Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Marceau	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Mayfield	McDonough
Ménard	Meredith
Merrifield	Moore
Nystrom	Obhrai
Paquette	Penson

Perron
Proctor
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Rocheleau
Sauvageau
Skelton
Sorenson
St-Hilaire
Stoffer
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Toews
Venne
Wayne
White (North Vancouver)

Picard (Drummond)
Rajotte
Reynolds
Robinson
Roy
Schmidt
Solberg
Spencer
Stinson
Strahl
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Vellacott
Wasylycia-Leis
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Williams— 106

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Caccia
Harvard
O'Brien (Labrador)
Serré

Bonin
Dalphond-Guiral
Loubier
Plamondon
Tremblay— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Lucienne Robillard moved that Bill C-29 be read the third time and passed.

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

(Division No. 74)

YEAS

Members

Adams
Allard
Augustine
Barnes (London West)
Bélair
Bellemare
Bertrand
Binet
Bonwick
Bradshaw
Bryden
Byrne
Cannis
Carignan
Castonguay
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Coderre
Comuzzi
Cotler
Cuzner
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Drouin
Easter
Eyking
Finlay
Frulla
Godfrey
Graham
Guarnieri
Harvey
Jackson
Jordan
Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
LeBlanc
Leung
Longfield

Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bélangier
Bennett
Bevilacqua
Blondin-Andrew
Boudria
Brown
Bulte
Calder
Caplan
Carroll
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chrétien
Collenette
Coppes
Cullen
DeVillers
Dion
Dromisky
Duplain
Eggleton
Farrah
Folco
Fry
Goodale
Grose
Harb
Hubbard
Jennings
Karygiannis
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Knutson
Lastewka
Lee
Lincoln
MacAulay

Macklin
Manley
Marleau
Matthews
McGuire
McLellan
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Peric
Peterson
Phinney
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Rock
Savoy
Sgro
Simard
St-Julien
Steckle
Szabo
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wilfert

Supply

Malhi
Marci
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Minna
Murphy
Nault
Normand
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paradis
Patry
Peschisolido
Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Price
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Saada
Scott
Shepherd
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Stewart
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Whelan
Wood— 148

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bailey
Benoit
Bigras
Bourgeois
Burton
Casey
Crête
Davies
Desjarlais
Doyle
Duncan
Epp
Forseth
Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gaudet
Girard-Bujold
Goldring
Grewal
Guay
Hanger
Harris
Herron
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hinton
Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lalonde
Lill
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Marceau
Mayfield
Ménard
Merrifield
Nystrom
Paquette
Perron
Proctor
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Rocheleau
Sauvageau
Skelton

Anders
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)
Bergeron
Borotsik
Breitkreuz
Cardin
Chatters
Cummins
Day
Desrochers
Duceppe
Elley
Fitzpatrick
Fournier
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gallant
Gauthier
Godin
Gouk
Grey
Guimond
Harper
Hearn
Hill (MacLeod)
Hilstrom
Jaffer
Keddy (South Shore)
Laframboise
Lancôt
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McDonough
Meredith
Moore
Obhrai
Penson
Picard (Drummond)
Rajotte
Reynolds
Robinson
Roy
Schmidt
Solberg

Supply

Sorenson	Spencer
St-Hilaire	Stinson
Stoffer	Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews	Vellacott
Venne	Wasylycia-Leis
Wayne	White (Langley—Abbotsford)
White (North Vancouver)	Williams— 106

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Bonin
Caccia	Dalphonde-Guiral
Harvard	Loubier
O'Brien (Labrador)	Plamondon
Serré	Tremblay— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

The Speaker: The next question is on the motion for concurrence in interim supply.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERIM SUPPLY

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.) moved:

That this House do concur in Interim Supply as follows:

That a sum not exceeding \$17,783,880,759.74 being composed of:

(1) three twelfths (\$10,548,447,650.75) of the total of the amounts of the items set forth in the Proposed Schedules 1 and Schedule 2 of the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2004 which were laid upon the Table Wednesday, February 26, 2003, and except for those items below:

(2) eleven twelfths of the total of the amount of Public Works and Government Services Vote 25 and Treasury Board Vote 5 (Schedule 1.1), of the said Estimates, \$735,964,166.67;

(3) nine twelfths of the total of the amount of National Defence Vote 10 and Parliament Vote 10 (Schedule 1.2) of the said Estimates, \$296,713,500.00;

(4) eighth twelfths of the total of the amount of Industry Vote 70 (Schedule 1.3) of the said Estimates, \$18,838,666.67;

(5) seven twelfths of the total of the amount of Canadian Heritage Vote 60, Human Resources Development Vote 20 and Indian Affairs and Northern Development Vote 10 (Schedule 1.4) of the said Estimates, \$13,885,083.33;

(6) six twelfths of the total of the amount of Agriculture and Agri-Food Vote 35, Canadian Heritage Vote 15, Indian Affairs and Northern Development Vote 15, Natural Resources Vote 25 and Transport Vote 35 (Schedule 1.5) of the said Estimates, \$2,373,236,000.00;

(7) five twelfths of the total of the amount of Canadian Heritage Vote 55, Environment Vote 15, Finance Vote 15, Indian Affairs and Northern Development Vote 30, Industry Vote 125, Justice Vote 1, Solicitor General Vote 5, and Transport Vote 20 (Schedule 1.6) of the said Estimates \$1,116,155,833.33;

(8) four twelfths of the total of the amount of Canadian Heritage Votes 20, 40 and 125, Citizenship and Immigration Vote 5, Fisheries and Oceans Vote 10, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Vote 45, Health Vote 5, Human Resources Development Vote 5, Indian Affairs and Northern Development Vote 5, Industry Votes 5, 35, 40, 100 and 115, Public Works and Government Services Vote 1, Transport Votes 1, 25, 30 and 55 and Treasury Board Vote 2 (Schedule 1.7) of the said Estimates, \$2,680,639,858.99;

be granted to Her Majesty on account of the fiscal year ending March 31, 2004.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

● (1900)

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

(*Division No. 75*)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allard	Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine	Bakopanos
Barnes (London West)	Beaumur
Bélair	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bennett
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick	Boudria
Bradshaw	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carignan	Carroll
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Chrétien
Coderre	Collenette
Comuzzi	Copps
Cotler	Cullen
Cuzner	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Dromisky	Drouin
Duplain	Easter
Eggleton	Eyking
Farrah	Finlay
Folco	Frulla
Fry	Godfrey
Goodale	Graham
Grose	Guarnieri
Harb	Harvey
Hubbard	Jackson
Jennings	Jordan
Karygiannis	Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Lastewka
LeBlanc	Lee
Leung	Lincoln
Longfield	MacAulay
Macklin	Malhi
Manley	Marcil
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews	McCallum
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	McTeague
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)	Minna
Mitchell	Murphy
Myers	Nault
Neville	Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Owen	Pacetti
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Peric	Peschisolido
Peterson	Pettigrew
Phinney	Pillitteri
Pratt	Price
Proulx	Provenzano

Supply

Redman
Regan
Rock
Savoy
Sgro
Simard
St-Julien
Steckle
Szabo
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wilfert

Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Saada
Scott
Shepherd
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Stewart
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Whelan
Wood— 146

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bailey
Benoit
Bigras
Bourgeois
Burton
Casey
Crête
Davies
Desjarlais
Doyle
Duncan
Epp
Forseth
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gagnon (Québec)
Gaudet
Girard-Bujold
Goldring
Grewal
Guay
Hanger
Harris
Herron
Hill (Macleod)
Hinton
Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lalonde
Lill
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Marceau
Mayfield
Ménard
Merrifield
Nystrom
Paquette
Perron
Proctor
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Rocheleau
Sauvageau
Skelton
Sorenson
St-Hilaire
Stoffer
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews
Wasylcia-Leis
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Williams— 105

Anders
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)
Bergeron
Borotsik
Breitkreuz
Cardin
Chatters
Cummins
Day
Desrochers
Duceppe
Elley
Fitzpatrick
Fournier
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gallant
Gauthier
Godin
Gouk
Grey
Guimond
Harper
Hearn
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom
Jaffer
Keddy (South Shore)
Laframboise
Lanctôt
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McDonough
Meredith
Moore
Obhrai
Penson
Picard (Drummond)
Rajotte
Reynolds
Robinson
Roy
Schmidt
Solberg
Spencer
Stinson
Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Venne
Wayne
White (North Vancouver)

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Caccia
Harvard
O'Brien (Labrador)
Serré

Bonin
Dalphond-Guiral
Loubier
Plamondon
Tremblay— 10

[English]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard moved that Bill C-30, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 2004, be read the first time.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

Hon. Lucienne Robillard moved that Bill C-30, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 2004, be now read the second time and referred to committee of the whole.

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find consent that the motion for concurrence on interim supply be applied to the motion for second reading of the supply bill.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

● (1905)

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

(Division No. 76)

YEAS

Members

Adams
Allard
Augustine
Barnes (London West)
Bélair
Bellemare
Bertrand
Binet
Bonwick
Bradshaw
Bryden
Byrne
Cannis
Carignan
Castonguay
Cauchon
Moore
Charbonneau
Coderre
Comuzzi
Cotler
Cuzner
Dhaliwal
Dromisky
Duplain
Eggleton
Farrah
Folco
Fry
Goodale
Grose
Harb
Hubbard
Jennings
Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
LeBlanc
Leung
Longfield
Macklin
Manley
Marleau
Matthews
McGuire
McLellan

Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bélangier
Bennett
Bevilacqua
Blondin-Andrew
Boudria
Brown
Bulte
Calder
Caplan
Carroll
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chrétien
Collette
Copps
Cullen
DeVillers
Dion
Drouin
Easter
Eyking
Finlay
Frulla
Godfrey
Graham
Guarnieri
Harvey
Jackson
Jordan
Keyes
Knutson
Lastewka
Lee
Lincoln
MacAulay
Malhi
Marcil
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Supply

Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
 Mitchell
 Myers
 Neville
 O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
 Owen
 Pagtakhan
 Parrish
 Peric
 Peterson
 Phinney
 Pratt
 Proulx
 Redman
 Regan
 Rock
 Savoy
 Sgro
 Simard
 St-Julien
 Steckle
 Szabo
 Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
 Tonks
 Ur
 Vanclief
 Wappel
 Wilfert

Minna
 Murphy
 Nault
 Normand
 O'Reilly
 Pacetti
 Paradis
 Patry
 Peschisolido
 Pettigrew
 Pillitteri
 Price
 Provenzano
 Reed (Halton)
 Robillard
 Saada
 Scott
 Shepherd
 St-Jacques
 St. Denis
 Stewart
 Thibault (West Nova)
 Tirabassi
 Torsney
 Valeri
 Volpe
 Whelan
 Wood— 146

NAYS

Members

Abbott
 Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
 Bailey
 Benoit
 Bigras
 Bourgeois
 Burton
 Casey
 Crête
 Davies
 Desjarlais
 Doyle
 Duncan
 Epp
 Forseth
 Gagnon (Québec)
 Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
 Gaudet
 Girard-Bujold
 Goldring
 Grewal
 Guay
 Hanger
 Harris
 Herron
 Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
 Hinton
 Johnston
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
 Lalonde
 Lill
 Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
 Marceau
 Mayfield
 Ménard
 Merrifield
 Nystrom
 Paquette
 Perron
 Proctor
 Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
 Ritz
 Rocheleau
 Sauvageau
 Skelton
 Sorenson
 St-Hilaire
 Stoffer
 Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
 Toews
 Wasylcia-Leis

Anders
 Bachand (Saint-Jean)
 Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)
 Bergeron
 Borotsik
 Breitreuz
 Cardin
 Chatters
 Cummins
 Day
 Desrochers
 Duceppe
 Elley
 Fitzpatrick
 Fournier
 Gagnon (Champlain)
 Gallant
 Gauthier
 Godin
 Gouk
 Grey
 Guimond
 Harper
 Hearn
 Hill (MacLeod)
 Hilstrom
 Jaffer
 Keddy (South Shore)
 Laframboise
 Lanctôt
 Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
 MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
 Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
 McDonough
 Meredith
 Moore
 Obhrai
 Penson
 Picard (Drummond)
 Rajotte
 Reynolds
 Robinson
 Roy
 Schmidt
 Solberg
 Spencer
 Stinson
 Strahl
 Thompson (Wild Rose)
 Venne
 Wayne

White (Langley—Abbotsford)
 Williams— 105

White (North Vancouver)

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
 Caccia
 Harvard
 O'Brien (Labrador)
 Serré

Bonin
 Dalphond-Guiral
 Loubier
 Plamondon
 Tremblay— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly the bill stands referred to a committee of the whole.

(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Kilger in the chair).

The Chair: Order. House in committee of the whole on Bill C-30, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 2004.

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Chairman, could the President of the Treasury Board assure this House and give her complete assurance that the bill is in the usual form.

(On clause 2)

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Yes, Mr. Chairman, the bill is essentially the same as that passed in the previous supply period.

The Chair: Shall clause 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 2 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 3 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 4 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 5 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 5 agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Shall clause 6 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 6 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 7 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 7 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall schedule 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Schedule 1 agreed to)

[*English*]

The Chair: Shall schedule 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Schedule 2 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 1 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the preamble carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Preamble agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Title agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

The Chair: Shall I rise and report the bill?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Bill reported)

Hon. Lucienne Robillard moved that the bill be concurred in.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

[*English*]

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, the House is in a very agreeable mood tonight so I am sure you would find consent to apply the vote on second reading on the supply bill to the concurrence motion at report stage and the main motion for third reading.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Supply

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

(*Division No. 77*)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allard	Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine	Bakopanos
Barnes (London West)	Beaumier
Bélair	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bennett
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick	Boudria
Bradshaw	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carignan	Carroll
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Chrétien
Coderre	Collenette
Comuzzi	Copps
Cotler	Cullen
Cuzner	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Dromisky	Drouin
Duplain	Easter
Eggleton	Eyking
Farrah	Finlay
Folco	Frulla
Fry	Godfrey
Goodale	Graham
Grose	Guamieri
Harb	Harvey
Hubbard	Jackson
Jennings	Jordan
Karygiannis	Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Lastewka
LeBlanc	Lee
Leung	Lincoln
Longfield	MacAulay
Macklin	Malhi
Manley	Marcel
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews	McCallum
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	McTeague
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)	Minna
Mitchell	Murphy
Myers	Nault
Neville	Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Owen	Pacetti
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Peric	Peschisolido
Peterson	Pettigrew
Phinney	Pillitteri
Pratt	Price
Proulx	Provenzano
Redman	Reed (Halton)
Regan	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Savoy	Scott
Sgro	Shepherd
Simard	St-Jacques
St-Julien	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart
Szabo	Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Tirabassi
Tonks	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Volpe
Wappel	Whelan
Wilfert	Wood — 146

Supply

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Anders
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bailey	Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)
Benoit	Bergeron
Bigras	Borotsik
Bourgeois	Breitkreuz
Burton	Cardin
Casey	Chatters
Crête	Cummins
Davies	Day
Desjarlais	Desrochers
Doyle	Duceppe
Duncan	Elley
Epp	Fitzpatrick
Forseth	Fournier
Gagnon (Québec)	Gagnon (Champlain)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)	Gallant
Gaudet	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Godin
Goldring	Gouk
Grewal	Grey
Guay	Guimond
Hanger	Harper
Harris	Hearn
Herron	Hill (Macleod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Hinton	Jaffer
Johnston	Keddy (South Shore)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lanctôt
Lill	Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Marceau	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Mayfield	McDonough
Ménard	Meredith
Merrifield	Moore
Nystrom	Obhrai
Paquette	Penson
Perron	Picard (Drummond)
Proctor	Rajotte
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)	Reynolds
Ritz	Robinson
Rocheleau	Roy
Sauvageau	Schmidt
Skelton	Solberg
Sorenson	Spencer
St-Hilaire	Stinson
Stoffer	Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews	Venne
Wasylcia-Leis	Wayne
White (Langley—Abbotsford)	White (North Vancouver)
Williams — 105	

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Bonin
Caccia	Dalphonde-Guiral
Harvard	Loubier
O'Brien (Labrador)	Plamondon
Serré	Tremblay- — 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Lucienne Robillard moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

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

(Division No. 78)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allard	Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine	Bakopanos
Barnes (London West)	Beaumier
Bélair	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bennett
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick	Boudria
Bradshaw	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carrigan	Carroll
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Chrétien
Coderre	Collenette
Comuzzi	Copps
Cotler	Cullen
Cuzner	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Dromisky	Drouin
Duplain	Easter
Eggleton	Eyking
Farrah	Finlay
Folco	Frulla
Fry	Godfrey
Goodale	Graham
Grose	Guarnieri
Harb	Harvey
Hubbard	Jackson
Jennings	Jordan
Karygiannis	Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Lastewka
LeBlanc	Lee
Leung	Lincoln
Longfield	MacAulay
Macklin	Malhi
Manley	Marcil
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews	McCallum
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	McTeague
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)	Minna
Mitchell	Murphy
Myers	Nault
Neville	Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Owen	Pacetti
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Peric	Peschisolido
Peterson	Pettigrew
Phinney	Pillitteri
Pratt	Price
Proulx	Provenzano
Redman	Reed (Halton)
Regan	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Savoy	Scott
Sgro	Shepherd
Simard	St-Jacques
St-Julien	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart
Szabo	Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Tirabassi
Tonks	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Vanclicf	Volpe
Wappel	Whelan
Wilfert	Wood — 146

Supply

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Anders
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bailey	Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)
Benoit	Bergeron
Bigras	Borotsik
Bourgeois	Breitkreuz
Burton	Cardin
Casey	Chatters
Crête	Cummins
Davies	Day
Desjarlais	Desrochers
Doyle	Duceppe
Duncan	Elley
Epp	Fitzpatrick
Forseth	Fournier
Gagnon (Québec)	Gagnon (Champlain)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)	Gallant
Gaudet	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Godin
Goldring	Gouk
Grewal	Grey
Guay	Guimond
Hanger	Harper
Harris	Hearn
Herron	Hill (Macleod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Hinton	Jaffer
Johnston	Keddy (South Shore)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lanctôt
Lill	Lunn (Saarnich—Gulf Islands)
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Marceau	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Mayfield	McDonough
Ménard	Meredith
Merrifield	Moore
Nystrom	Obhrai
Paquette	Penson
Perron	Picard (Drummond)
Proctor	Rajotte
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)	Reynolds
Ritz	Robinson
Rocheleau	Roy
Sauvageau	Schmidt
Skelton	Solberg
Sorenson	Spencer
St-Hilaire	Stinson
Stoffer	Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews	Venne
Wasylcia-Leis	Wayne
White (Langley—Abbotsford)	White (North Vancouver)
Williams— 105	

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Bonin
Caccia	Dalphond-Guiral
Harvard	Loubier
O'Brien (Labrador)	Plamondon
Serré	Tremblay— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find consent in the House to proceed immediately to the taking of the division on the main motion on Bill C-26 and the amendment to Bill C-20 and to proceed following that with the motion on Bill C-206.

The Speaker: Is there consent to proceed in this order?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

TRANSPORTATION AMENDMENT ACT

The House resumed from March 21 consideration of the motion that Bill C-26, an act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and the Railway Safety Act, to enact the VIA Rail Canada Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the second reading stage of Bill C-26.

• (1910)

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find consent that those who voted on the previous motion be recorded as voting on the motion now before the House. With the exception of the member for LaSalle—Énard, the Liberal members will be voting yes.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Dale Johnston: Mr. Speaker, Canadian Alliance members will vote against the motion with the exception of the member for Selkirk—Interlake.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Speaker, Bloc Québécois members will vote yes on the motion.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, NDP members vote yes on the motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Progressive Conservative Party will vote yes to the motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Guy Carignan: Mr. Speaker, I vote yes on the motion.

Ms. Pierrette Venne: Mr. Speaker, I vote no on the motion.

Mr. Nick Discepola: Mr. Speaker, I believe my vote was not recorded for the last motion. I would like to have my vote recorded for the motion before us this evening.

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 79*)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allard	Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bakopanos	Barnes (London West)
Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)	Beaumur
Bélaïr	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bennett
Bergeron	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bigras
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick	Borotsik
Boudria	Bourgeois
Bradshaw	Brown
Bryden	Bulte

Supply

Byrne
Cannis
Cardin
Carroll
Castonguay
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Coderre
Comuzzi
Cotler
Cullen
Davies
Desrochers
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Dromisky
Duceppe
Easter
Eyking
Finlay
Fournier
Fry
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gaudet
Girard-Bujold
Godin
Graham
Guarnieri
Guimond
Harvey
Herron
Jackson
Jordan
Keddy (South Shore)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
Lalonde
Lastewka
Lee
Lill
Longfield
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Malhi
Marceau
Marleau
McCallum
McGuire
McLellan
Ménard
Minna
Murphy
Nault
Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Paradis
Patry
Perron
Peterson
Phinney
Pillitteri
Price
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Robinson
Rock
Saada
Savoy
Sgro
Simard
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Stewart
Szabo
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Wasylycia-Leis
Whelan
Wood— 195

Calder
Caplan
Carignan
Casey
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chrétien
Collenette
Copps
Crête
Cuzner
Desjarlais
DeVillers
Dion
Doyle
Drouin
Duplain
Eggleton
Farrah
Folco
Frulla
Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gauthier
Godfrey
Goodale
Grose
Guay
Harb
Hearn
Hubbard
Jennings
Karygiannis
Keyes
Knutson
Laframboise
Lanctôt
LeBlanc
Leung
Lincoln
MacAulay
Macklin
Manley
Marcil
Matthews
McDonough
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
Neville
Nystrom
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paquette
Parrish
Peric
Peschisolido
Pettigrew
Picard (Drummond)
Pratt
Proctor
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Rocheleau
Roy
Sauvageau
Scott
Shepherd
St-Hilaire
St-Julien
Steckle
Stoffer
Thibault (West Nova)
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wayne
Wilfert

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Benoit
Burton
Cummins
Duncan
Epp
Forseth
Goldring
Grewal
Hanger
Harris
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Jaffer
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Mayfield
Merrifield
Obhrai
Rajotte
Reynolds
Schmidt
Solberg
Spencer
Strahl
Toews
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Williams— 55

Anders
Bailey
Breitkreuz
Chatters
Day
Elley
Fitzpatrick
Gallant
Gouk
Grey
Harper
Hill (Macleod)
Hinton
Johnston
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Meredith
Moore
Penson
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Skelton
Sorenson
Stinson
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Venne
White (North Vancouver)

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Caccia
Harvard
O'Brien (Labrador)
Serré

Bonin
Dalphond-Guiral
Loubier
Plamondon
Tremblay— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Transport.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from March 21 consideration of the motion that Bill C-20, an act to amend the Criminal Code (protection of children and other vulnerable persons) and the Canada Evidence Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment by the hon. member for Vancouver Island North on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-20.

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find consent in the House that the vote on the main motion on second reading of Bill C-26 be applied in reverse to the amendment at second reading of Bill C-20.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

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

Private Members' Business

(Division No. 80)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Anders
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Bailey
Benoit	Breitkreuz
Burton	Chatters
Cummins	Day
Duncan	Elley
Epp	Fitzpatrick
Forseth	Gallant
Goldring	Gouk
Grewal	Grey
Hanger	Harper
Harris	Hill (Macleod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hinton
Jaffer	Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Lunn (Saanic—Gulf Islands)
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Mayfield	Meredith
Merrifield	Moore
Obhrai	Penson
Rajotte	Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Reynolds	Ritz
Schmidt	Skelton
Solberg	Sorenson
Spencer	Stinson
Strahl	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews	Venne
White (Langley—Abbotsford)	White (North Vancouver)
Williams — 55	

NAYS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allard	Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bakopanos	Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)
Barnes (London West)	Beaumier
Bélair	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bennett
Bergeron	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bigras
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick	Borotsik
Boudria	Bourgeois
Bradshaw	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Cardin	Carignan
Carroll	Casey
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Chrétien
Coderre	Collenette
Comuzzi	Copps
Cotler	Crête
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies	Desjarlais
Desrochers	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Discepola	Doyle
Dromisky	Drouin
Duceppe	Duplain
Easter	Eggleton
Eyking	Farrah
Finlay	Folco
Fournier	Frulla
Fry	Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Champlain)	Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gaudet	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Graham	Grose
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond	Harb
Harvey	Hearn
Herron	Hubbard

Jackson	Jennings
Jordan	Karygiannis
Keddy (South Shore)	Keys
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lañtôt
Lastewka	LeBlanc
Lee	Leung
Lill	Lincoln
Longfield	MacAulay
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Macklin
Malhi	Manley
Marceau	Marci
Marleau	Mathews
McCallum	McDonough
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	McTeague
Ménard	Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Myers
Nault	Neville
Normand	Nystrom
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Owen	Pacetti
Pagtakhan	Paquette
Paradis	Parrish
Patry	Peric
Perron	Peschisolido
Peterson	Pettigrew
Phinney	Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri	Pratt
Price	Proctor
Proulx	Provenzano
Redman	Reed (Halton)
Regan	Robillard
Robinson	Rocheleau
Rock	Roy
Saada	Sauvageau
Savoy	Scott
Sgro	Shepherd
Simard	St-Hilaire
St-Jacques	St-Julien
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart	Stoffer
Szabo	Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tirabassi	Tonks
Torsney	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Volpe	Wappel
Wasylycia-Leis	Wayne
Whelan	Wilfert
Wood — 195	

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Bonin
Caccia	Dalphon-D-Guiral
Harvard	Loubier
O'Brien (Labrador)	Plamondon
Serré	Tremblay — 10

The Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

The House resumed from March 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C-206, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (persons who leave employment to be care-givers to family members), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Adjournment Debate

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Thursday, March 20, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-206 under private members' business.

• (1920)

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

*(Division No. 81)***YEAS**

Members

Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)
Bélair	Bergeron
Bigras	Bonwick
Borotsik	Bourgeois
Breitkreuz	Bryden
Cardin	Casey
Charbonneau	Crête
Davies	Desjarlais
Doyle	Duceppe
Duncan	Epp
Folco	Fournier
Gagnon (Champlain)	Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gagnon (Québec)	Gallant
Gaudet	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Godin
Gouk	Grewal
Guay	Guimond
Harris	Hearn
Herron	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hinton	Jackson
Jordan	Keddy (South Shore)
Kraft Sloan	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lancôt
Lill	Lincoln
Mackay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Marceau
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Matthews
Mayfield	McDonough
McGuire	Ménard
Meredith	Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Nystrom	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Obhrai
Paquette	Perron
Phinney	Picard (Drummond)
Pratt	Price
Proctor	Robinson
Rocheleau	Roy
Sauvageau	Schmidt
Scott	Skelton
St-Hilaire	St-Julien
Stinson	Stoffer
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tonks	Venne
Wasylycia-Leis	Wayne— 86

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Adams
Alcock	Allard
Anders	Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Anderson (Victoria)	Augustine
Bailey	Beaumier
Bélanger	Bellemare
Benoit	Bevilacqua
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Boudria	Bradshaw
Brown	Bulte
Burton	Byrne
Calder	Caplan
Carignan	Carroll
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Chatters	Coderre
Cullen	Cummins
Cuzner	Day

DeVillers	Dion
Discepolo	Dromisky
Drouin	Duplain
Easter	Eggleton
Elley	Eyking
Forseth	Frulla
Fry	Goldring
Goodale	Graham
Grey	Grose
Hanger	Harb
Harper	Harvey
Hill (Macleod)	Hubbard
Jaffer	Jennings
Johnston	Karygiannis
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Lastewka	LeBlanc
Lee	Leung
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Lunny (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Macklin	Malhi
Manley	Marcil
Marleau	McCallum
McLellan	Merrifield
Minna	Mitchell
Moore	Murphy
Myers	Nault
Neville	Owen
Pacetti	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Patry
Penson	Peschisolido
Pettigrew	Pillitteri
Proulx	Rajotte
Redman	Reed (Halton)
Regan	Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Reynolds	Ritz
Robillard	Rock
Savoy	Shepherd
Simard	Solberg
Sorenson	Spencer
St-Jacques	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart
Strahl	Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)	Tirabassi
Toews	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Whelan
White (Langley—Abbotsford)	Williams— 130

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Bonin
Caccia	Dalphond-Guiral
Harvard	Loubier
O'Brien (Labrador)	Plamondon
Serré	Tremblay— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

I wish to inform the House that because of the delay, there will be no private members' hour today.

[*Translation*]

The order is therefore deferred to a future sitting.

* * *

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

Adjournment Debate

• (1925)

[English]

TOBACCO INDUSTRY

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on December 12 of last year, I rose in the House to ask a question of the Minister of Health concerning the promise that the government had made some time previously. In fact it was the former minister of health, now the Minister of Industry, who made a promise to ban light and mild labels on cigarette packages.

Since then, I pointed out that big tobacco companies threatened the government to sue under chapter 11 of NAFTA if the ban went ahead. I asked the Minister for International Trade when the government would stand up for the health of Canadians, ban these deceptive labels and get rid of NAFTA laws that allowed big corporations to threaten to sue the Canadian government under chapter 11 for protecting the health and environment of Canadians.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health stood up and gave one of the most incomprehensible replies that I can recall in my years in the House. He basically said that this was a very complex question, it was a difficult issue and he would look into it.

Today, the hon. parliamentary secretary is here in the House and I hope he has had an opportunity over the course of the last three months to enlighten himself as to the seriousness of this issue. What we are talking about is the need to ensure that tobacco companies are unable to engage in deceptive advertising. The European Union has already moved on this front and as I understand it the European Union is banning these labels of light and mild on cigarettes this year. I believe Brazil has already banned these labels as well.

We in the New Democratic Party have to ask for what the government is waiting. Why is it allowing the tobacco lobby to push it around at the expense of the health of Canadians? The fact of the matter is that the cigarette industry is a killer industry. Far from backing off on this, health groups across Canada have urged the government to toughen up the regulation, which was proposed many months ago. In fact it was in December 2001 that the former minister of health proposed a regulation.

However, what is happening is that Canadians are dying as a result of the false belief that light and mild products are safer than full strength cigarettes. The Non-Smokers' Rights Association and many other organizations, including Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada, have urged the government to finally move ahead on this. It promised to take action. What is the delay? Why is it? Is it knuckling under to the threats of the tobacco companies that it will be sued under NAFTA's chapter 11?

We want answers to these questions and Canadians want answers to these questions today. There are major lawsuits underway already in the United States and Israel which accuse the tobacco industry of consumer fraud for its mislabelling of cigarettes. A major landmark decision just in the last few days in Chicago reaffirmed this.

I am calling on the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health to stand up on behalf of the health of Canadians and to have stronger regulations to make it clear that this is not about high tar and low tar. We should get rid of this deception, these illusions, this

dishonest, deceitful advertising by the tobacco industry, ban it once and for all and stand up and protect the health of Canadians.

• (1930)

[Translation]

Mr. Jeannot Castonguay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously I will have a little more time to answer than I had during oral question period. I will try to shed some light on this important issue raised by my colleague.

While scientists agree that cigarettes labelled light or mild are as harmful as regular cigarettes and do not reduce the number of tobacco-related deaths, we know that approximately 18% of Canadians continue to believe that they are less harmful. Tobacco producers have spent millions of dollars to promote this comforting but misleading impression regarding a dangerous product.

Obviously this is a very important issue and I agree we must act. However, as I said in my answer, it is also a very complex issue and we need to learn more about the effects these labels have on patterns of tobacco use.

On December 1, 2001, Health Canada held public consultations on the government's intentions to establish regulations that would prohibit using labels such as "light" and "mild" on tobacco product packaging.

Briefs were received and reviewed. Health Canada sponsored three studies to better understand consumers and their feelings, and to establish the effects of these labels.

Now, even if there are grounds to believe that, in the past, these labels stopped some people from quitting and that banning these labels might have beneficial effects for public health, more research is required, and it is underway.

In the meantime, Health Canada has continued its public education activities using the media, newspaper ads, pamphlets for Canadian physicians and information on the anti-tobacco web site, in order to continue to reduce tobacco use.

We continue to monitor developments and to gather information. Because we are determined to protect the health of Canadians, we will take steps as soon as we are sure they will be effective. It is important to take steps, but equally important that they be effective.

Our research continues and we want to be sure we have all the necessary information for a successful defence against the tobacco industry, should it challenge our regulations. For the moment, we will continue to inform the public on the dangers associated with use of this product.

It must be kept in mind, however, that it is essential to have a solid foundation before taking any action, and to ensure that the steps taken by Health Canada are effective and achieve our objectives.

Adjournment Debate

I hope that this sheds some light on the matter. Instead of making blind decisions, I think we need to take the trouble to seriously consider all of the implications that this could have, so that when we do come up with a position, we are on solid ground.

[English]

Mr. Svend Robinson: Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely appalling. This is a shameful betrayal of Canadian citizens and of the rights of Canadians to be protected against this deceitful and false advertising. The government is saying that it needs more time to study. How much more time will pass? How many more lives will be lost while the tobacco industry pushes this dishonest advertising on Canadians? Canadians look to the government to stand up and be counted on this issue.

Just last month the World Health Organization completed negotiations toward a treaty text for a framework convention. The text calls for a ban on misleading terms, which may very well include light and mild. Just this month, as I said before, a U.S. court found Philip Morris in violation of consumer protection laws and said that it showed a reckless disregard for consumers rights.

My question once again is for the parliamentary secretary. Why is the government waiting to take action on this? Is it because of the threats under the NAFTA, chapter 11? Why will it not act now to protect the health of Canadians?

[Translation]

Mr. Jeannot Castonguay: Mr. Speaker, once again, I would like to summarize this for all Canadians. Regardless of what cigarette packages may say, whether they are labelled “light”, “mild” or “regular”, it is important, once again, to remind Canadians that smoking is bad for their health, period.

Now, before taking more specific measures to decide what packages should say, I think we should take the trouble to figure out what effect certain messages will have.

I know that my colleague is very impatient, but obviously, if he would give us a little more time, we might be able, in the end, to allay his concerns.

However, once again, everyone agrees that smoking is not healthy. That is the message that Health Canada would like to send to Canadians.

• (1935)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:35 p.m.)

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Bill C-28. Introduction and first reading	4665
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	4665

Supply

Allotted Day—Firearms Program

Motion	4665
Mr. Williams	4665
Mr. Adams	4666
Mr. Hilstrom	4668
Mr. Gouk	4669
Mr. McKay	4669
Mr. Merrifield	4671
Mr. Gouk	4671
Mr. Reid	4671
Mr. Hilstrom	4673

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Committees of the House

Fisheries and Oceans

Mr. Regan	4673
Motion	4673
(Motion agreed to)	4673

Health

Mr. Regan	4673
Motion	4673
(Motion agreed to)	4673

Health

Mr. Regan	4673
Motion	4674
(Motion agreed to)	4674

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Supply

Allotted Day—Firearms Program

Motion	4674
Mr. Gouk	4674
Mr. Hilstrom	4675
Mr. Hilstrom	4676
Mr. Lincoln	4676
Mr. Hill (Macleod)	4677
Mr. Hilstrom	4677
Mrs. Jennings	4678

Business of the House

Mr. Hilstrom	4679
(Motion agreed to)	4679

Supply

Allotted Day—Firearms Program

Motion	4679
Mr. Breitzkreuz	4679
Mr. Hill (Macleod)	4680
Mr. Macklin	4681
Mr. MacKay	4681
Mr. Hilstrom	4682
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	4682

Supplementary Estimates (B), 2002-03

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Motion No. 1	4683
Motion No. 1 agreed to	4684

Concurrence in Vote 5b—Justice

Ms. Robillard	4684
Motion agreed to	4685

Concurrence in Vote 1b—Parliament

Ms. Robillard	4685
Motion No. 3	4685
Motion No. 3 agreed to	4686

Concurrence in Vote 10b—Agriculture and Agri-Food

Ms. Robillard	4686
Motion No. 4	4686
Motion No. 4 agreed to	4687

Concurrence in Vote 5b—Human Resources Development

Ms. Robillard	4687
Motion No. 5	4687
Motion No. 5 agreed to	4688
Ms. Robillard	4688
Motion for concurrence	4688

Bill C-29. Introduction and first reading	4690
(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)	4690

Bill C-29. Second reading	4690
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Motion agreed to	4691
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(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Kilger in the chair)	4691
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Mr. Forseth	4691
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(On clause 2)	4691
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Ms. Robillard	4691
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(Clause 2 agreed to)	4691
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(Clause 3 agreed to)	4691
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(Clause 4 agreed to)	4691
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(Clause 5 agreed to)	4691
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(Clause 6 agreed to)	4691
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(Clause 7 agreed to)	4691
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(Clause 8 agreed to)	4691
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(Schedule 1 agreed to)	4691
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(Schedule 2 agreed to)	4691
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(Clause 1 agreed to)	4691
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(Preamble agreed to)	4691
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(Title agreed to)	4691
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(Bill reported)	4692
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Motion for concurrence	4692
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Motion agreed to	4693	(Title agreed to)	4697
Third reading	4693	(Bill reported)	4697
(Bill read the third time and passed)	4694	Motion for concurrence	4697
INTERIM SUPPLY		Motion agreed to	4698
Ms. Robillard	4694	Third reading	4698
Motion agreed to	4695	Motion agreed to	4699
Bill C-30. First reading	4695	(Bill read the third time and passed)	4699
(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)	4695	Transportation Amendment Act	
Bill C-30. Second reading	4695	Bill C-26. Second reading	4699
Motion agreed to	4696	Motion agreed to	4700
(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Kilger in the chair)	4696	(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee) .	4700
Mr. Forseth	4696	Criminal Code	
(On clause 2)	4696	Bill C-20. Second reading	4700
Ms. Robillard	4696	Amendment negatived	4701
(Clause 2 agreed to)	4696		
(Clause 3 agreed to)	4696	PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS	
(Clause 4 agreed to)	4696	Employment Insurance Act	
(Clause 5 agreed to)	4696	Bill C-206. Second reading	4702
Adoption de l'article 6	4696	Motion negatived	4702
Adoption de l'article 7	4697	ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS	
(Schedule 1 agreed to)	4697	Tobacco Industry	
(Schedule 2 agreed to)	4697	Mr. Robinson	4703
(Clause 1 agreed to)	4697	Mr. Castonguay	4703
(Preamble agreed to)	4697		

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